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Switched On:-

What factors motivate tertiary students to achieve 100% course attendance?

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
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ABSTRACT

What causes tertiary students to never miss a day of class for their entire course? This study explored the narratives of students who had achieved 100% course attendance in a provincial tertiary institution in New Zealand.

The aim of this study was to identify factors that contributed to why students decide to fully attend their chosen tertiary course and provide some understanding of the underlying motivations that contribute to the achievement of this phenomenon. Kaupapa Maori and Western research methodologies were utilised to gather data from nine participants in the School of Applied Technology in a New Zealand polytechnic. Data gathered from semi-structured interviews was collated and categorised into themes. An important consideration for this research was that the participants' voices were heard and their meanings established through a collaborative process.

This study showcased some highly motivated and inspirational students who accomplished an amazing academic achievement, against all the odds. The majority of the participants were from non-traditional and commonly categorised 'at risk' student groups. Despite the many risk factors such as negative educational experiences and influences in their past, ethnicity, age, and level of academic abilities, these participants provide some valuable information on how they succeeded.

Findings from this research provide some confirmation that students are able to succeed in their academic endeavours and achieve their dreams if their motivation, goals and beliefs are strong enough to overcome obstacles that they may encounter in their learning journey.

Finally, the intention of this study was not only to capture the participants' stories as exemplars of student success but also to inform student engagement, retention and successful

completion policies and practices in tertiary institutions. Developing and trialling new interventions based on this study could potentially improve academic outcomes for students, teaching staff and tertiary institutions with benefits for families, communities and New Zealand's social and economic future.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to:

God Almighty, the God of Israel and our Heavenly Father,
and to Yeshua Ha'Mashiach, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son and Saviour of the world,
and the Holy Spirit who gave me the wisdom, strength and help to complete this work.

And to my mokopuna:

Marshall and Malachi Strickland

who inspire me every day and made all the effort worthwhile.

They will be the ones to carry on the legacy of attaining a good education.

Aim high and go for your dreams, e kare.

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Nga mihinui ki a koutou katoa.

Approval for this research has been obtained from Massey University Human Ethics

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