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Motivation and High-Stakes Certification Assessment: Secondary School Students' Perceptions

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Senior secondary students' future social and economic well-being is significantly affected by their performance in high-stakes certification assessment. Motivation plays a key role in students' academic performance. In light of the dearth of literature examining students' motivation in high-stakes certification assessment, in the domain of English, and from the students' perspective, this study examined Year 12 students' motivation to achieve the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 2 English achievement standards over the period of an academic year. A contemporary person-in-context perspective was adopted in recognition that motivation is influenced by the interplay of personal, social, and contextual variables.

A mixed methods research methodology was employed in this longitudinal two-phased study. In the first phase participants completed a series of questionnaires, and in the second phase a subsample of the participants was interviewed. Students' motivation was examined primarily through the lens of self-determination theory. Self-efficacy, attribution theory, goal theories, and interest were also drawn on to explain facets of students' motivation.

Findings indicate that most students expected to pass a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and they believed it was important to pass these. Most valued English for utility reasons. Students' interest in English varied markedly across different aspects of the English programme. Gender differences in students' motivation were not apparent in relation to students' motivation-related attitudes.

External and introjected regulation were the most prevalent types of motivation influencing students' performance in NCEA English. However, their impact was not as detrimental as theory and research would have predicted. Teachers played a pivotal role in many students' motivation to achieve, especially in relation to feedback, expectations, and student-teacher relationships. Past performance was also an important influence. Difficulties with or a dislike of aspects of English and academic demands from other school subjects were identified as negatively impacting on students' motivation to achieve in English.

Overall, students' motivation was found to be complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and situation dependent. *Matthew effects* were particularly evident for high and low achievers, highlighting the bi-directional relationship between motivation and achievement. Implications for educators and researchers are discussed.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Senior secondary students' performance in high-stakes certification assessment is a perennial concern nationally and internationally (e.g., Belfield & Levin, 2007; Bjerk, 2012; Cherednichenko, 2011; Chun & Dickson, 2011; Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; Lens & Decruyenaere, 1991; Meyer, Weir, McClure, Walkey, & McKenzie, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2012a; OECD, 2013; Orfield, 2004; L. Smith, Sinclair, & Chapman, 2002; Taylor, Lokes, Gagnon, & Koestner, 2012). This concern is well-illustrated in the following statement from the New Zealand Ministry of Education:

Building a productive and competitive economy is a Government priority and achievement in education is essential to this goal. Education helps New Zealanders develop the skills needed to reach their full potential and contribute to the economy and society. To boost skills, the Government has set a Better Public Service target of 85% of 18 year-olds achieving the equivalent of NCEA [the National Certificate of Educational Achievement] Level 2 or above in 2017. A Level 2 qualification gives people opportunities in terms of further education, employment, health outcomes and a better quality of life. (Ministry of Education, 2012a, p. 1)

While there has been an international trend for more students to leave secondary school with qualifications, the social and economic costs to individuals and society for those who do not complete secondary school qualifications are significant (OECD, 2013; Orfield, 2004). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) those students who leave school without a qualification face a far greater risk of being unemployed than those who complete their secondary education. If they are fortunate enough to gain employment, they earn on average 25% less than their peers who gained a school qualification. Furthermore, the income gap between those with a higher education and those with a lower education has been found to increase with age.

While it is more difficult to measure the social costs to individuals and society of failure in the compulsory school sector, the costs are far-reaching and cumulative. For individuals these social costs include: increased risk of poor physical and mental health; poorer standard of living; a negative impact on academic and economic outcomes for the children of those who leave school without qualifications; and increased risk of being involved in crime (Archambault, Janosz, Morizot, & Pagani, 2009; Moretti, 2007; Muennig, 2007; Orfield, 2004; Wylie, 2011). For society there are the financial costs and social problems associated with these issues (Belfield & Levin, 2007). Nor are the issues limited to those who leave the school system with no qualifications. Students can gain school qualifications but may not have achieved to their full potential, instead doing just enough to pass (Balduf, 2009; Brophy, 2010; Gilman & Anderman, 2006). Although less visible and measurable, underachievement is also likely to have social and economic costs that have detrimental consequences for individuals and society (Walkey, McClure, Meyer, & Weir, 2013).

Of considerable importance in the long-term is for students to leave the school system with the motivation to continue to learn in the future; that is, to become lifelong learners (Luftenegger et al., 2012; Ministry of Education, 2007b; Ramseier, 2001). Lifelong learning is considered important if individuals are to cope and adapt in a rapidly changing world, to participate fully in society, to gain personal fulfilment, to have improved health, and to achieve social inclusion (Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2003; OECD, 2010; Wylie, 2011). Less than optimal academic achievement may place the motivation to continue to learn at risk.

The factors that impact on students' achievement in high-stakes assessment are numerous, complex, and dynamic. They include systemic, political, philosophical, institutional, cultural, social, economic, curricula, and pedagogical factors. However, at the centre of high-stakes certification assessment are the students. It is their motivation to achieve that plays an important role in their success or failure (Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). As Pintrich (2003) noted:

....researchers interested in basic questions about how and why some students seem to learn and thrive in school contexts, while other students seem to struggle to develop the knowledge and cognitive resources to be successful academically, must consider the role of motivation. (p. 667)

While concerns about students' motivation in high-stakes assessment are not new (e.g., Crooks, 1988; Harlen, 2005; M. G. Jones, Jones, & Hargrove, 2003; Roderick & Engel, 2001), much of the literature that examines students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes assessment focuses on national or state-wide standardised testing undertaken to assess students' progress in primary school and junior high school in countries such as the United States, Australia, and England. Only a small body of research exists that examines senior secondary students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment, especially from the students' perspective (Carr et al., 2005; Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; B. D. Jones, 2007; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009).

Given the widely recognised long-term social and economic impacts of less than optimal outcomes on high-stakes certification assessment for senior secondary students, it is important that students' perceptions of what influences their motivation are investigated. With greater understanding comes the opportunity for educators to identify ways in which to more effectively support students to achieve their best in high-stakes certification assessment at the senior secondary level, and thus increase the potential for students to live fuller and richer lives.

1.2. Research Aim of the Study

The aim of this longitudinal, mixed methods study is to examine students' motivation in a high-stakes certification assessment context. Specifically, the study examines senior secondary students' motivation in relation to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), with a particular focus on Year 12 students' perceptions of factors that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall.

1.3. Rationale for the Study

Motivation plays a critical and central role in learning and academic achievement (Brophy, 2010; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009; Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2014; Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009). Moreover, there is a bi-directional relationship between motivation and achievement (Schunk et al., 2014). Students who are motivated to achieve are more likely to cognitively engage with the task at hand, actively employ a range of strategies to help them learn, apply effort when needed, and persist when they encounter challenges (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Pintrich & De Groot,

1990; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). Students exhibiting these behaviours tend to achieve at higher levels (Pintrich, 2003; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008), and in turn are likely to be more motivated to achieve when encountering similar tasks in the future (Schunk et al., 2014). As Pajares and Urdan (2006) state, “it is precisely because academic motivation is so essential to academic achievement that motivation has taken a place alongside cognition as one of the most followed lines of inquiry in educational psychology” (p. vii).

While motivation has been identified as a critical factor in student achievement, until relatively recently there has been little research conducted with students in relation to their motivation on authentic academic tasks (Covington, 2002; Schunk et al., 2014). As a result much of the research has failed to capture the complexity of students’ motivation (Schunk et al., 2014). Furthermore, many studies have been cross-sectional and therefore have tended to present aspects of motivation as trait-like characteristics, thus giving the impression that these aspects of motivation are stable across time and differing contexts (Murphy & Alexander, 2000).

However, it has been increasingly recognised that motivation is dynamic and complex, and that it is influenced by the interplay of personal, social, and contextual variables, (e.g., Ames, 1992; Boekaerts, de Koning, & Vedder, 2006; Bong, 1996; Brophy, 2010; Buehl & Alexander, 2005; Hartnett, 2010; J. C. Turner & Patrick, 2008). The complexity of motivation and the variables influencing it warrant closer examination if students’ motivation to achieve is to be more fully understood. As Pintrich (2003) has noted:

Just as simple one-shot correlational studies with self-report measures will not generate much new knowledge, neither will contextual studies that simply demonstrate that student motivation is situated. Most social-cognitive models accept this and have moved on to more productive questions regarding the role of various contextual factors in shaping, facilitating, and constraining student motivation. (p. 681)

In light of these issues this study has adopted a contemporary motivation perspective which emphasises the complex and changing nature of motivation. This perspective recognises the role of personal, social, and contextual variables on students’ motivation to achieve. This contemporary perspective also reflects a person-in-context view of motivation, in recognition that motivation does not reside entirely within the students or entirely within the high-stakes assessment context of the secondary school (Nolen &

Ward, 2008; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). Instead it emerges from the interactions between students, significant others, the classroom, the school, and the assessment context (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

This study is also longitudinal, rather than cross-sectional in nature, because students are assessed at different points throughout the school year as well as at the end of the school year in NCEA. A longitudinal study also addresses the criticisms of a number of cross-sectional studies noted above; that of portraying motivation as being trait-like and stable across time and contexts. Moreover, it was decided that an in-depth study of students' motivation to achieve in a high-stakes assessment context across a school year would further flesh out the complex and contextually embedded nature of students' motivation in a real life setting.

In recognising that context plays an important role in students' motivation, there has been the growing trend to examine motivational constructs within domain-specific contexts, in recognition that they do not always generalise across domains (Green, Martin, & Marsh, 2007; Pintrich, 1994; Vispoel & Austin, 1995; Wigfield, Eccles, Maclver, Reuman, & Midgley, 1991). In light of this concern, this study focused specifically on students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment in English as a subject (as opposed to learning English as another language).

English was selected for two reasons. First, there is a dearth of international studies on secondary students' motivation in English (B. A. Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004). For example, in an analysis of achievement motivation constructs in 68 empirical studies located in a range of highly regarded academic journals, Murphy and Alexander (2000) reported that the majority of studies were undertaken in the areas of mathematics (27.8%) and science (14.0%), but only a small number were in the area of English (2.8%). There are even fewer studies in the area of high-stakes certification assessment of English (Anagnostopoulos, 2003). Second, English is widely considered as an important subject for secondary students to learn across the English-speaking world (Chouinard, Vezeau, & Bouffard, 2008; Liem, Lau, & Nie, 2008). Studying English is considered particularly important in New Zealand. At the time this study was conducted, English was the only compulsory subject in Year 12 in New Zealand state secondary schools (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-g).¹

¹ The only students exempt from being required to study English were those enrolled in Te Reo Māori.

As emphasised in the introduction, support for senior students to achieve their best in high-stakes certification assessment had been identified as important, because of the significant long-term consequences for individuals and society. However, for effective support to be provided, a sound understanding of students' motivation from their perspective is required. Their *lived experiences* and insights are crucial if interventions are to impact positively on students' motivation to achieve (Kane & Maw, 2005; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Thiessen, 2007). Thus central to this study is 'student voice'.² Student voice is based on the belief that "young people have unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling; that they warrant not only the attention, but also the responses of adults" (Cook-Sather, 2006, pp. 359-360).

Researchers have become increasingly interested in students' perspectives on learning, teaching and schools in recent years (Thiessen, 2007). However, there are very few studies that have examined senior secondary students' perspectives on motivation to achieve in high-stakes assessment (Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; B. D. Jones, 2007). There are even fewer studies that have examined students' motivation to achieve in criterion-referenced high-stakes assessment (Meyer, McClure, Walkey, Weir, & McKenzie, 2009). Moreover, it has been difficult to locate studies that examine students' motivation in high-stakes assessment within a specific subject domain, and examine it intensively and extensively over an academic year.

As highlighted in the preceding discussion, there is a clearly identified need to address senior secondary students' achievement in high-stakes certification assessment because of the consequences for both individuals and society (Ministry of Education, 2012a; OECD, 2013). One way to do this is to examine students' motivation to achieve in such assessments, as motivation has been found to significantly affect students' academic outcomes (Brophy, 2010; Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). Given that motivation is dynamic, complex, and influenced by personal, social, and contextual variables, a sound approach to better understand students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes assessment is to undertake a longitudinal study in a domain-specific context. English has been selected because of its significance and the dearth of studies in English. By drawing on students' perspectives of their motivation to achieve, there is the opportunity to identify effective ways to improve students' achievement in school assessments which have significant consequences for them.

² While the term used in the literature is 'student voice', in fact what was being sought in this study was a variety of student voices.

In addressing the research aim of examining students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment, it is anticipated that the research findings will address identified gaps in the research literature that are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two. It is also anticipated that the findings will provide New Zealand educators with a greater understanding of students' motivation to achieve in the NCEA context, especially in English, and insights into ways that they can better support students to achieve their best. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this research will highlight the usefulness of using self-determination theory as a theoretical lens through which to understand students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment. The rationale for electing self-determination theory as an overarching theoretical framework for this study is elaborated on in the following chapter.

1.4. Context of the Study

This study was undertaken within the context of the New Zealand Education system and the NCEA assessment system. While the primary focus of this study is not NCEA as an assessment system *per se*, an understanding of this system and its history is necessary to comprehend the various structural and contextual factors that are likely to have affected students' motivation (e.g., regular assessments throughout the year rather than just at the end of the year) (Ecclestone & Pryor, 2003; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). The reasons for focusing particularly on NCEA level 2 English are also discussed.

NCEA was introduced in 2002 in response to widespread concerns about student achievement, and a range of other philosophical, pedagogical, and assessment issues that had arisen over a number of years (Alison, 2008; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2001; Philips, 2003). Its introduction marked a major paradigm shift in the way students were to be formally assessed in their final years of secondary schooling (Zepke et al., 2006). Prior to this students had been assessed through a complex system that had a significant norm-referenced component (School Certificate), which primarily focused on external exams at the end of the school year. In contrast, NCEA is a standards-based³ system, in which students are assessed internally against internal achievement standards during the year and externally against external standards at the end of the year.

³ The Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority use the term *standards-based* to describe the NCEA assessment system. There is some confusion in the literature about the term standards-based, but it can be broadly conceived as a criterion-referenced assessment system (Zepke et al., 2006), with standards of performance specified.

While there were a number of issues associated with the introduction of NCEA, student underachievement was of considerable concern for the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, educators, and the public.⁴ A lack of student motivation was perceived to be a major cause of student underachievement. A large-scale Ministry of Education-funded study undertaken by Meyer, McClure, Walkey, McKenzie, and Weir (2006) confirmed this perception. These researchers found there was a negative relationship between students motivated to do just enough to pass and the number of NCEA credits they achieved. As Meyer et al. (2006) noted, these students risked failing, not because of a lack of ability, “but because their motivation orientation leads them to achieve less than they are capable of achieving” (p. 2).

In response to these findings, the Ministry of Education introduced certificate endorsements in 2007 for students who consistently achieved at higher levels (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-b). In a follow-up study Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) found that for students who were aware of the newly introduced incentives, the new certificate endorsements increased their motivation to achieve their best. This current study seeks to build on the findings from the longitudinal research undertaken by Meyer and her colleagues, by examining in detail students’ motivation to achieve specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall.

Another area of concern is the gender gap in NCEA achievement. Girls outperform boys by an average of eight to ten percentage points (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2012). Compared with girls, boys tend to leave school earlier and with fewer qualifications (Ministry of Education, 2007a). They are also less likely to gain University Entrance or a higher qualification (Ministry of Education, 2007a). More girls than boys achieve Merit and Excellence certificate endorsements, although the gap narrows for higher levels of NCEA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-c). While boys tend to perform as well as girls in NCEA mathematics and NCEA science, they do not perform as well as females in NCEA English (Ministry of Education, 2007a). However, it must be added that the issue of boys’ poorer performance in English is not new or solely linked to NCEA (Alton-Lee & Praat, 2000). While there may be gender differences in students’ English skills, there may also be gender differences in students’ motivation to achieve in English. This study also sought to identify any gender

⁴ See Index New Zealand as an indicator of media interest in this concern (Index New Zealand is a database containing abstracts and descriptions from approximately 1000 periodicals and newspapers).

differences and similarities in the process of examining students' motivation to achieve, although this was not the central focus of this study.

NCEA Level 2 was chosen for two reasons. First, NCEA level 2 is considered by the Ministry of Education as the minimum qualification students should attain before leaving the school system, because "a Level 2 qualification gives people opportunities in terms of further education, employment, health outcomes and a better quality of life" (Ministry of Education, 2012a, p. 1). The importance of gaining at least NCEA level 2 for financial and psychological well-being is supported by research findings (Wylie, 2011). Second, by level 2 students are familiar with NCEA as they have undertaken assessments for level 1 the previous year. Familiarity with the system limits some of the potentially confounding variables that may arise from encountering the NCEA system for the first time.

Year 12 English was chosen as the domain-specific area of focus, because at the time of this study students were required to enrol in Year 12 English in order to achieve their literacy credits.⁵ These literacy credits were critical for gaining university entrance (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-g). The fact that English was both critical for university entrance and the only compulsory subject in Year 12 was also likely to have affected students' motivation in a range of ways. For example, it was likely that many students would feel considerable pressure to pass, and consequently be anxious about failing. It was also possible that as students were required to enrol in English, a number would not be intrinsically motivated to study English. On the other hand, a number of students might have internalised the importance of English, given its compulsory status.

For the purposes of this study students from Year 12 *A Stream* English⁶ classes were targeted as potential participants, as it was considered important to examine the perceptions of a range of students. Many New Zealand secondary schools stream students into two or three streams for Year 12 English. While each school decides its own entry criteria for Year 12 *A Stream* English based on students' performance in key

⁵ Those students enrolled in Te Reo Māori were exempt from being required to study English. They were able to achieve their literacy credits in Te Reo Māori. Changes are to be introduced in 2014 that allow students to acquire literacy credits from other subjects, in addition to English. However, at least one university has now decided that as of 2016 students must have 17 NCEA credits in level 2 or 3 English (Woulfe, 2013, July 6).

⁶ *A Stream* is not an official term used by the Ministry of Education. The term *A Stream* is used here in lieu of the variety of terms used in schools to distinguish between ability groups in Year 12 English (e.g., Traditional A English).

NCEA level 1 English literacy standards, those in Year 12 A Stream English classes tend to range from “average” to “extremely capable” in English. However, some of these “average” students struggle to meet the increased demands of level 2 English achievement standards. Those students who have not passed sufficient NCEA level 1 English literacy standards are usually enrolled in B Stream English classes or “alternative” English classes. They are offered a modified English programme on the assumption they would be unable to cope with the A Stream programme.

The following subsection outlines how NCEA works for those unfamiliar with NCEA.

1.4.1. Overview of NCEA

In this subsection key aspects of NCEA are explained. Important terms are presented in italics font when initially introduced. The reason for providing this overview is to introduce the terminology associated with NCEA (e.g., credits, Merit, 2.1), as there are repeated references to NCEA terms throughout the thesis, both in the main text and in students’ quotes.

Most New Zealand secondary schools have five year or grade levels. These levels are labelled *Year 9* (aged 13-14), *Year 10* (aged 14-15), *Year 11* (aged 15-16), *Year 12* (aged 16-17), and *Year 13* (aged 17-18). Years 9 and 10 are considered to be the junior secondary level, while Years 11-13 are considered to be the senior secondary level. NCEA is the national qualification that most New Zealand senior secondary students are expected to work towards achieving in Years 11-13. There is no graduation system *per se*. Students leave school with whatever level of NCEA they have managed to achieve (e.g., level 1, 2 or 3).

NCEA is administered nationally by the *New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)*. NZQA is responsible for: setting the criteria for the *achievement standards*; designing, administering, and marking the assessments for external achievement standards; accrediting schools to assess against internal achievement standards; monitoring the consistency of internal marking; and maintaining an official database of students’ NCEA results (see the NZQA website for more details).

There are three levels in NCEA: levels 1-3. At each level students are assessed against sets of achievement standards. Students are usually assessed against NCEA *level 1* achievement standards in Year 11, NCEA *level 2* achievement standards in Year 12, and NCEA *level 3* achievement standards in Year 13. Each achievement standard “describes what a student needs to know, or what they must be able to achieve, in order to meet the standard” (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-e; n.d.-f para. 1), and each achievement standard has a defined credit value (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-f). Students must pass the assessment for the achievement standard if they are to receive the *credits* for that achievement standard. Each credit represents approximately ten hours work (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-a). To pass NCEA levels 1-3, students must achieve a specified number of credits at each level (e.g., students must gain 80 credits to pass NCEA level 1) (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-f).

When students are assessed against an achievement standard they can achieve one of four grades: *Not Achieved (N)*, if students do not meet the criteria for the standard; *Achieved (A)* for a satisfactory performance; *Merit (M)* for a very good performance; and *Excellence (E)* for an outstanding performance (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-f, Assessment Grades section, para. 3). Achieving Merit or Excellence does not alter the number of credits awarded for passing an achievement standard. However, students receiving 50 Merit credits or 50 Excellence credits at any of the three levels receive their NCEA certificate for that level endorsed with Merit or Excellence (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-d). In 2010, when the data for this study were collected, 80% of students enrolled in sufficient NCEA standards to enable them to pass were awarded NCEA level 2 (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2011). Of those, 20% of students nationally had their level 2 certificates endorsed with Merit, while 7% had their level 2 certificates endorsed with Excellence (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2011).

Students’ NCEA results are used to determine whether they are eligible to enter university or other tertiary institutions. This has been termed *university entrance* or *UE*. A critical component for university entrance is at least eight level 2 *literacy credits* (four credits in reading and four in writing)⁷ in English or Te Reo Māori (New Zealand

⁷ This will change to 10 credits from 2014 with a change in credit values (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-g).

Qualifications Authority, n.d.-g). Most students enrol in Year 12 English to achieve these literacy credits (Ministry of Education, 2013).⁸

Senior secondary students are usually assessed against a set of achievement standards aligned to each subject in which they are enrolled, although not all students are expected to be assessed against all the standards offered in each subject. Some achievement standards are *internally assessed* by teachers, while others must be *externally assessed* under examination conditions, with all students completing the same examinations across the country at the same time. Students are offered one opportunity to be reassessed against any internally assessed achievement standards achievement.

Within each subject the achievement standards have typically been individually referred to by teachers and students by shorthand labels for ease of communication, rather than using the official five digit code used by NZQA. For example, in 2010 the level 2 English achievement standard for creative writing was labelled 2.1. The '2' identifies it as a level 2 achievement standard. Table 1.1 sets out the eight English level 2 achievement standards offered in 2010, their common shorthand labels (e.g., 2.1), their official New Zealand Qualifications Authority numbers, their official descriptions,⁹ and whether they were internally or externally assessed. These standards have been listed here as there are continual references to individual achievement standards throughout this thesis (e.g., eight questionnaires are linked to achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6, and quotes from students often make reference to an achievement standard by number [*"I didn't prepare for 2.3."*]).

⁸ In 2010 there were 51,563 students enrolled in Year 12 English and 2196 enrolled in Te Reo Māori.(Ministry of Education, 2013)

⁹ The official NZQA numbers and the official descriptions were found in a range of places on the NZQA website.

Table 1.1: Number and description of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards

English Achievement Standards (NZQA Number)	Official Description of each Achievement Standard	Internally or Externally Assessed
2.1 (90375)	Produce crafted and developed creative writing.	Internal
2.2 (90376)	Produce crafted and developed formal transactional writing.	Internal
2.3 (90377)	Analyse extended written text(s).	External
2.4 (90378)	Analyse short written texts.	External
2.5 (90379)	Analyse a visual or oral text.	External
2.6 (90380)	Read unfamiliar texts and analyse the ideas and language features.	External
2.7 (90374)	Deliver a presentation using oral and visual language techniques.	Internal
2.8 (90381)	Investigate a language or literature topic and present information in written form.	Internal

1.5. The Place of the Researcher

The researcher is a critical factor in any research project. All decisions are influenced by that person's view of the world. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state, "no matter how much you [the researcher] try, you cannot divorce your research and writing from your past experiences, who you are, what you believe and what you value" (p. 38). Consequently, it is important at the outset to identify aspects of my background and my experiences that have influenced and shaped this thesis.

After a short period as a New Zealand primary school teacher I taught English in secondary schools in New Zealand and Canada. I also managed a learning support centre in a large New Zealand secondary school for students who had learning and/or behavioural difficulties. Over that time I taught students who had failed English in their first set of national exams, known in those days as School Certificate. It is through these experiences that I initially became concerned about secondary students' motivation. A number of years spent teaching in a secondary teacher education programme also increased my interest in secondary students' motivation.

My interest in secondary students' motivation was further fostered by other experiences. These included observing secondary students when assessing student

teachers on practicum in my role as an appraiser, and when undertaking school evaluations during my secondment to the Education Review Office. I became particularly concerned about secondary students' motivation in NCEA when I was a member of a local secondary school board of trustees. When reporting on student achievement, heads of departments would regularly attribute students' failure to a lack of motivation, but they did not seem aware of what they might do to alter that. Occurring in parallel were the concerns raised in the public domain about high achieving secondary students not striving to do their best in NCEA, because initially there were no incentives for them to do so.

The common thread running through all of this is my passion and commitment as an educator to search for ways to improve academic outcomes for students. It is hoped that the findings from this research will make a contribution to teachers' understanding and encourage them to explore ways that they can help enhance students' motivation to achieve.

1.6. Thesis Overview

There are eight chapters in this thesis. This first chapter has introduced this longitudinal mixed methods study, its aim, and the rationale for the research. Its place in the New Zealand context has also been explained. Chapter Two introduces a range of motivation theories, with a particular emphasis on self-determination theory, which is the overarching conceptual framework employed in this study. Furthermore, the relevant research literature on motivation and high stakes assessment pertinent to this study is examined.

Chapter Three examines the methodology underpinning this longitudinal mixed methods study. Chapter Four describes the methods and procedures employed in the pilot study and the two data gathering phases of the research. Chapter Five presents the results from Phase One of the study, while Chapter Six presents the results from Phase Two of the study. The findings presented in these two chapters are discussed with reference to the literature in Chapter Seven. The last chapter presents the conclusions, and the implications for theory, research, and practice. This chapter also makes recommendations for future research in this area.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This mixed methods study examines students' motivation in a high-stakes certification assessment context across the school year. Specifically, this longitudinal study examines senior secondary students' motivation in relation to NCEA, with a particular focus on Year 12 students' perceptions of factors that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall.

The chapter begins with an examination of motivation as a general construct, followed by an examination of specific motivation theories and constructs considered relevant to this study. These motivation theories and constructs include: self-efficacy theory, attribution theory, interest, goal theories, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and self-determination theory. The next section of the chapter explains why self-determination has been employed as the overarching theoretical framework for this study. The focus of the chapter then moves to an examination of literature specifically related to secondary school students' motivation in high-stakes certification assessment, particularly NCEA. The chapter concludes with a summary of key points and the research questions.

Throughout there is a recognition that personal, social, and contextual factors are very influential in students' motivation to achieve. These factors include students' goals and beliefs, the role of significant others (i.e., teachers, peers, and parents), and the structure and requirements of NCEA.

2.2. Introduction to Motivation

Motivation plays a critical and central role in learning and academic achievement, as it influences what, when and how students learn (Schunk et al., 2014). It is at the centre of learning and teaching (Maehr & Meyer, 1997). Motivation has been defined by Schunk et al. (2014) as "the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and

sustained” (p. 5). In expanding on this definition, they make a number of important points. First, motivation is a process rather than an outcome, and therefore its presence can only be inferred from self-reports or an individual’s actions (e.g., effort applied, persistence, choice of activities). Second, goals are an essential component of motivation as they provide the impetus and direction for action. Third, motivation requires physical and mental activity, such as effort, selecting and applying strategies, planning, and problem solving. Fourth, motivation is needed not only to initiate action, but also to sustain it. Sustaining motivation is especially critical for students when they are pursuing a long-term goal, such as passing a series of achievement standards over a year for NCEA.

While motivation has been extensively studied over the past century, a significant shift has occurred from examining achievement motivation from a reactive perspective (e.g., behavioural theories, drive theories), to examining it from an agentic and social-cognitive perspective (Bandura, 1997; Schunk et al., 2014). Contemporary theories of motivation, while diverse, share a number of assumptions (Schunk et al., 2014). These assumptions are that: motivation involves behaviour, emotions, and cognitions; it is influenced by personal, social, and contextual variables; learners construct their motivational beliefs and their motivation alters with development; motivation is reciprocally linked to learning, achievement, and self-regulation; and it reflects individual, group and cultural differences (Schunk et al., 2014). Very importantly, motivation is increasingly being recognised as a complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and situated construct (e.g., Guay, Ratelle, & Chanal, 2008; Hartnett, St. George, & Dron, 2011; Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2006; Järvelä, Volet, & Järvenoja, 2010; J. C. Turner & Patrick, 2008; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006; Vallerand, Pelletier, & Koestner, 2008).

Motivation is generally conceived as consisting of two key cognitive components: expectancies and values (Brophy, 2010; Feather, 1988; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). “Expectancies are individuals’ beliefs and judgments about their capabilities to perform tasks successfully”, while values are “individuals’ beliefs about the reasons they might engage in tasks” (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 47). Essentially an expectancy-value framework¹⁰ involves addressing two questions: “Can I do this task?” and “Do I want to

¹⁰ The expectancy x value model or framework referred to here is an informal general model (Brophy, 2010), rather than a reference to Wigfield and Eccles’s (2000) formal expectancy-value theory.

do it?” (St. George & Riley, 2008). The key motivation theories and constructs examined in this chapter involve one or both cognitive components.

The degree to which students expect to succeed, and the degree to which they value the tasks they are expected or required to undertake at school, influences their engagement, effort, persistence, and ultimately their achievement (Schunk et al., 2014). However, students’ expectancies for success and valuing of academic tasks are also influenced by numerous social and contextual factors that range from interactions with significant others and tasks within the classroom, to wider societal and cultural values and expectations (Brophy, 2010; Järvelä et al., 2010; J. C. Turner & Patrick, 2008). The nature and influence of social and contextual factors are a central concern of this current study.

Also central to this study are the students; they are adolescents who are reaching the end of their time at school. Researchers have found that as students progress through the school system, “their motivation, interests and attitudes towards school in general and learning in specific subjects deteriorates” (Hidi, 2001, p. 204). Closer examination of this issue has highlighted particular patterns. Students’ beliefs about their ability to accomplish different activities and their beliefs about the degree of control over what happens to them (i.e., competence beliefs) become increasingly differentiated across and within different achievement domains (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Chouinard & Roy, 2008; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Wigfield & Wagner, 2005).

When compared with younger children, adolescents’ intrinsic motivation, valuing of achievement, and competence beliefs are more stable (Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 2001; Wigfield et al., 1997; Wigfield & Wagner, 2005). Although more stable, competence beliefs and valuing of subjects (intrinsic and utility value) increasingly decline in particular subjects during adolescence (Chouinard & Roy, 2008; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002; Watt, 2004). However, while intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have been found to decline as students progress through school, two studies have found that intrinsic motivation increased slightly at around 16-17 years of age (Gillet, Vallerand, & Lafrenière, 2012; Gottfried et al., 2001). This slight increase is thought to be linked to students’ focus on career aspirations and greater subject choice at this level (Gillet et al., 2012; Gottfried et al., 2001).

As students’ motivation in English is a specific focus of this study, research findings in relation to students’ competence beliefs in English and valuing of English are of

particular importance. However, research findings are both limited and mixed. In a longitudinal American study of students from Grades 1 to 12, students' competency beliefs and valuing of English (language arts) declined steeply from Grade 1 to Grade 6 and then levelled off or rose slightly (Jacobs et al., 2002). In an Australian study, competency beliefs and valuing of English (both intrinsic and utility beliefs) all declined from Grade 7 to Grade 11 (Watt, 2004). In a Canadian study the utility value girls ascribed to English increased between Grades 10 and 11 (Chouinard et al., 2008). The results are difficult to compare, however, as it is unclear what was involved in these different English programmes.

A number of reasons have been proposed for the decline in students' intrinsic motivation, many of which are attributable to social and contextual factors, such as: more challenging and abstract subject matter as students move through the school system; increased salience of evaluation; increased pressure to perform well and avoid failure; increased opportunity for social comparison; greater understanding and integration of evaluative feedback; more accurate and realistic self-assessments; the structure of the secondary school system; decreased autonomy-support from teachers and parents; and increased interest in and/or commitment to non-academic activities (e.g., Brophy, 2010; Byrnes, 2008; Eccles et al., 1993; Gillet et al., 2012; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002; Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006; Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar, 2005; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009; Watt, 2004; Wigfield, Byrnes, & Eccles, 2006; Wigfield & Eccles, 1989). In addition to the concern about low levels of intrinsic motivation, a number of these factors are also relevant to this study, such as increased emphasis placed on assessment, pressure to perform well, and the degree of autonomy support provided by teachers.

2.3. Specific Motivation Theories and Constructs

The field of motivation research is replete with theories and constructs that are used to explain various aspects of achievement motivation (Bong, 1996; Murphy & Alexander, 2000; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). The growth in the number of theories and constructs is indicative of the increased awareness of the complexity and dynamic interplay of factors underlying and influencing motivation, and the difficulty of effectively capturing this complexity within a single model or theory (Bong, 1996; Murphy & Alexander, 2000). Furthermore, there is considerable overlap and interrelationships among the various theories and constructs (Murphy & Alexander, 2000). Murphy and Alexander (2000) have gone as far as to state that there is "little true independence among

achievement-motivational constructs” (p. 40). They have also noted that individuals’ motivations are influenced by various non-motivational factors, such as cognitive, strategic, and socio-cultural factors, thus further complicating the degree to which these theories and constructs can be separated out from other variables.

Of the wide array of motivation theories and constructs identified in the literature, those that are most relevant in this study are self-efficacy, attribution theory, goal theories, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, interest, and self-determination theory. Each will be discussed in the subsequent subsections. Also included in the discussion are a number of definitions, because of concerns raised over researchers failing to define the motivational constructs that they have examined in their publications (Murphy & Alexander, 2000; Schunk, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000).

2.3.1. Self-efficacy and Outcome Expectations

To be motivated to achieve in high-stakes assessment requires students to be goal-directed in their behaviour. According to Bandura (1986, 1997, 2001), goal-directed behaviour is initiated and sustained by a person’s beliefs about the anticipated outcomes of their actions (outcome expectations) and a person’s beliefs about their capability of performing the necessary actions to achieve the expected outcomes (self-efficacy). While outcome expectations and self-efficacy are positively related, self-efficacy has been found to be a much better predictor of achievement than outcomes expectations (Bandura, 1997; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989). The significance of self-efficacy as a predictor of achievement is not surprising, however. Where outcomes are highly dependent on the quality of performance, the outcomes people expect will depend markedly on how capable they believe they are at performing in a given situation (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy is a key component of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986). It has been defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Self-efficacy is context-bound, task-specific, goal-specific, and future-focused, with individuals judging their competence to master a particular task that they have yet to complete (Bandura, 1997; Bong & Clark, 1999; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Where there is a close correspondence between the measurement items and the task, self-efficacy has been found to be a good predictor of academic performance on that particular task (Bandura, 1997, 2006b; Bong, 2006). Research has consistently found academic self-efficacy to

be influential in students' academic motivation (e.g., B. A. Greene et al., 2004; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Schunk & Pajares, 2009), hence the reason for examining the role of self-efficacy in this study.

Self-efficacy judgments are about performance capabilities rather than personal characteristics (Zimmerman, 2000). They are criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced judgments (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). Very importantly, self-efficacy beliefs have generative capability, as they influence the ways in which skills and knowledge are used in a particular situation (Bandura, 1982).

Bandura (2006a) has argued that self-efficacy beliefs are a central and pervasive component of human agency, because these beliefs provide individuals with the conviction that they can effect change through their own actions and thus the motivation to act. Self-efficacy is multi-directional in its impact, as it is a product of people's interactions in the world (e.g., influenced by past successes and failures, social and contextual factors) and an influence on the nature and quality of future actions (e.g., influencing effort and strategy use) (B. A. Greene et al., 2004). Self-efficacy is also multidimensional, as it varies in relation to the perceived level of task difficulty, the degree to which individuals feel efficacious about mastering a particular task, and whether individuals feel more or less efficacious across a range of activities (Bandura, 1997). In terms of high-stakes assessment, the focus is on self-efficacy to perform academically rather than self-efficacy to learn (Schunk & Pajares, 2009).

When forming their self-efficacy beliefs, individuals draw on four primary sources of information: past performances, vicarious experiences (e.g., observing others performing tasks), verbal persuasion (e.g., teacher encouragement), and physiological state (e.g., level of anxiety) (Bandura, 1986; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Of the four, past performances have been found to be the most reliable source, as they provide authentic evidence as to whether individuals have the necessary skills to succeed (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Meece, 2006). Past performance is particularly relevant in this study as students complete a series of achievement standards over the school year. In the process they also complete a number of trial assessments and mock exams that are designed to inform them of their progress towards meeting the achievement standard assessment criteria.

The way in which these four sources inform an individual's self-efficacy beliefs is complex. Individuals must cognitively weigh and appraise a variety of aspects, such as

task difficulty, past successes, effort required, credibility of persuaders, and type and intensity of emotional responses (Schunk, 1995). Compared with younger children, adolescents tend to make more accurate predictions about their capabilities (Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Usher & Pajares, 2008). This increased accuracy has been attributed to the cognitive and emotional changes that occur as adolescents mature, and their cumulative experience with similar tasks over time (Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Steinberg, 2011; Usher & Pajares, 2008). However, Schunk and Pajares (2009) have argued that there is still much to understand about this complex calibration process.

A large number of empirical studies have confirmed that academic self-efficacy plays a critical role in academic performance (e.g., Bandura, 2006a; Bong, 2006; Multon et al., 1991; Pajares, 1996; Schunk & Pajares, 2009; Zimmerman, 2000). Self-efficacy has been found to strongly influence students' choices, goals, aspirations, outcome expectations, emotional responses, effort, persistence, use of self-regulatory learning strategies, and their levels of achievement (e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2006a; Bassi, Steca, Gian, & Caprara, 2007; Pajares, 1996; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Schunk, 1995; Schunk & Pajares, 2005; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). Moreover, self-efficacy has been found to more consistently predict educational outcomes than other motivational variables (Schunk & Pajares, 2009). However, in spite of self-efficacy playing a critical role in students' motivation and academic performance, there is little research in relation to senior secondary students' self-efficacy in high-stakes certification assessment. Only two studies were located (Bong, 2005; L. Smith et al., 2002), but their findings were not particularly relevant to this current study.

While research has repeatedly found that self-efficacy can have a marked impact on academic behaviours and outcomes, high self-efficacy will not result in success if individuals lack the requisite skills or knowledge (Schunk, 1995). Nor will high self-efficacy have any influence if the outcomes that result from completing a task are not valued (Schunk, 1995). On the other hand, low self-efficacy does not always prevent people from pursuing valued goals (Schunk & Pajares, 2005).

In the New Zealand secondary school context a number of different practices are likely to significantly influence students' self-efficacy judgments in relation to specific achievement standards. First, teachers are required to share the assessment criteria for each achievement standard with students well in advance of the actual assessment.

The criteria include the requirements for the attainment of Achieved, Merit, or Excellence grades. Second, English teachers have access through NZQA to graded and annotated exemplars (e.g., a sample of a piece of creative writing graded as a Merit), or alternatively have their own exemplars to share with students. Exemplars not only enable students to determine what is required, but also allow students to make self-efficacy judgments about their capability to produce a similar piece of work.

Third, students undertake practice assessment tasks and mock exams. These trial assessments are closely aligned to the real assessment tasks, and thus potentially provide students with useful feedback on how well they are likely to perform on the actual assessment; in essence *assessment as learning* (Crooks, 2011). Fourth, when provided, teacher feedback and encouragement are also likely to be influential. Fifth, students have already encountered similar tasks in NCEA level 1 English, albeit at a lower level, which assist in making self-efficacy judgments. Some studies (e.g., Bong, 2006) suggest that these types of practices assist students to make more informed and potentially more accurate self-efficacy judgments about their capability of achieving particular achievement standards. These self-efficacy judgments in turn affect students' motivation with regards to their cognitive engagement, effort, and persistence, and thus their achievement (Schunk et al., 2014).

Given the extensive body of empirical evidence highlighting the central role of self-efficacy in student's motivation and its importance in relation to academic behaviours and outcomes, it was assumed that self-efficacy would play a role in students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards in this study.

As studies have found that academic self-efficacy is malleable through the use of particular intervention strategies (e.g., Bong, 2006; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006), a greater understanding of students' efficacy beliefs and factors influencing those beliefs within the NCEA context, would place teachers in a better position to foster improvements in students' sense of self-efficacy and related increases in academic achievement.

2.3.2. Attributions

Attributions are an important source of self-efficacy information (Schunk et al., 2014). Causal attributions are inferences or justifications that people make about the cause of their own or others' behaviour and/or outcomes. These attributions may or may not be

actual causes (Bar-Tal, 1978; Weiner, 1986, 1995). They can have important effects on emotions, motivation, and future achievement related behaviours (Schunk et al., 2014; Weiner, 2005; Whitley & Frieze, 1985; Wolters, Fan, & Daugherty, 2013).

Attribution theory assumes individuals are motivated by a goal to gain a rational and realistic causal understanding of their environment and their own and others' behaviour, in order to predict and control events in their lives (Weiner, 1992). Within the broader attribution theoretical framework, Weiner (2000) has developed an intrapersonal and an interpersonal attribution sub-theory to explain students' motivational and emotional responses to success and failure and their subsequent academic performance. Within educational contexts, the intrapersonal theory explains how individuals attribute their success or failure on academic tasks to particular causes, the affective reactions that arise from these attributions, and the likely outcomes of these reactions (Weiner, 2000). The interpersonal theory explains how attributions significant others make in relation to students' academic successes or failures can impact on their responses to students and how students interpret these responses (Weiner, 2000, 2010).

Intrapersonal and interpersonal attributional theories are closely intertwined and in academic contexts the reaction of others can often be more important to the student than the direct experience of success or failure (Weiner, 2005). For example, students receiving sympathy and unsolicited help from a teacher after failing a task may believe they lack ability, and this assumption may influence their motivation on similar tasks in the future (Graham, 1984; Graham & Barker, 1990; Weiner, 2005).

With regard to the intrapersonal theory, the attributional process is usually invoked when an academic outcome is a surprise, involves failure, or is of considerable personal importance (Möller & Köller, 1999; Weiner, 1985; Wong & Weiner, 1981). The attributional process begins with students making a judgment about how successful they believe they have been, regardless of the result they may have been awarded (Weiner, 1985). These judgments are usually accompanied by an outcome-dependent emotional response, such as happiness at succeeding or distress at failing (Weiner, 1985, 2010).

After making a judgment about whether they think they have succeeded or failed, students draw on a range of causal antecedents to explain why they succeeded or failed, the selection of which is influenced by the outcome-dependent emotion (Weiner,

1986). The attributions individuals make depend on many factors, such as the contextual features of the situation, enduring beliefs and expectancies of the attributor, and attributional biases (Weiner, 1992). These different sources of information assist individuals to understand or rationalise why they succeeded or failed and enable them to ascribe a cause for the outcome (Weiner, 2000).

Of the many possible causes, ability, long and short-term effort, task characteristics, teachers' competence, mood and luck appear to be the most commonly ascribed causes for success or failure on achievement-related tasks (Forsyth, Story, Kelley, & McMillan, 2009; Weiner, 1983, 1986). Although Weiner (2000) recognises that specific causal attributions are important, he has argued that the way they are interpreted is far more important in understanding student motivation, emotion and subsequent behaviour. To this end he identified three underlying causal dimensions along which all causal attributions can be examined and compared (Weiner, 1986). These are locus, stability, and controllability (Weiner, 2000).

The locus dimension refers to the degree to which an attribution is perceived as internal (e.g., ability) or external to the individual (e.g., task difficulty) (Weiner, 2000), while the controllability dimension enables attributions to be categorised as more controllable (e.g., effort) or less controllable (e.g., ability) (Weiner, 1979, 1986). The stability dimension refers to the degree to which an individual perceives an attribution to be relatively stable across time and across contexts (Weiner, 1979; Weiner, 1985). The stability dimension has particular implications for students' expectancies for success or failure in the future (Graham & Williams, 2009). Students who attribute their success to stable causes are more likely to expect to succeed in the future compared with students who attribute their success to an unstable cause (Schunk et al., 2014). The same logic applies to students who fail (Schunk et al., 2014).

While not everyone agrees about the exact nature of these three dimensions, there is general agreement that they are useful for classifying attributions, and that each dimension has implications for individuals' motivation, affect, and expectancies for success (Schunk et al., 2014). They also help explain why some attributions are more facilitative or debilitating than others (Vispoel & Austin, 1995).

Students can develop dysfunctional attributions. However, these dysfunctional attributions can be successfully modified (e.g., Andrews & Debus, 1978; Craven, Marsh, & Debus, 1991; Dweck, 1975, 2006; Försterling, 1985; Perry, Stupnisky, Hall,

Chipperfield, & Weiner, 2010; T. D. Wilson, Damiani, & Shelton, 2002). One approach has been to encourage students to attribute failure to effort and/or poor strategies rather than ability (Graham & Williams, 2009; Schunk et al., 2014). Another approach has been to alter the stability dimension by teaching students to adopt an incremental (growth) rather than an entity (fixed) theory of intelligence (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Dweck, 1999, 2006).

While research has found attributions influence achievement behaviours, affect, and self-efficacy (Schunk et al., 2014), studies examining senior secondary students' attributions in relation to high-stakes certification assessment are rare. The dearth of studies is somewhat surprising, given that students would be more likely to make spontaneous attributions for success or failure in a high-stakes certification assessment context, than in a range of other academic situations.

In this study it was assumed that most students would make attributions for their perceived success or failure, given the importance of NCEA. Furthermore, it was assumed that the on-going nature of the NCEA assessment process would increase the likelihood that students' motivation would be influenced by attributions made in relation to their success or failure on similar achievement standard assessment tasks and various trial assessment tasks they would have undertaken. In addition, it was thought that teachers would be involved in making attributions about individual students' performances, and that these might influence some students' motivation. It is for these reasons attributional theory has been examined in this literature review.

2.3.3. Interest

Interest is another important construct that explains aspects of student motivation (Schiefele, 2009). While it lacks an adequate theoretical foundation (Krapp, 2002; Renninger & Hidi, 2011), researchers have found that interest influences attention (e.g., Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002; McDaniel, Waddill, Finstad, & Bourg, 2000), goals (Schunk et al., 2014; Senko & Harackiewicz, 2002), and levels of learning (e.g., Renninger & Hidi, 2002; Schiefele, 1999), which in turn all influence academic achievement (Hidi, Renninger, & Krapp, 2004; Schunk et al., 2014). Higher levels of interest are associated with greater cognitive engagement, increased learning and higher levels of achievement (Pintrich, 2003).

Interest has been defined as “the psychological state of engaging or the predisposition to re-engage with particular classes of objects, events or ideas over time” (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p. 112). In reviewing the literature, Renninger and Hidi (2011) have identified five characteristics of interest upon which many researchers agree. First, interest is content or object specific. Second, it involves a sustained interaction between the person and the environment. Third, interest involves both cognitive and affective components. Fourth, a person is not always consciously aware that their interest has been triggered or aware of their interest while engaged in an activity. Fifth, there is a physiological/neurological change that occurs when a person is interested, which is thought to be linked to the reward circuitry of the brain.

A range of factors that influence interest have been identified. People tend to be interested in activities or topics that: they believe they can master, they have chosen to engage in, are culturally and socially valued by groups with whom they identify, and are relevant to goals they hold (Bergin, 1999). People also tend to be interested in activities and topics about which they already have background knowledge (Alexander & Murphy, 1998; Renninger, 2000). People’s prior knowledge and interest assist them to more easily learn new information related to their interests and to process this new information more deeply (McDaniel et al., 2000; Silvia, 2008). However, as Brophy (2010) has noted, interest and knowledge do not guarantee high levels of achievement, as students also need the skills and strategies to use that knowledge effectively in achievement situations.

Within the field of interest, two qualitatively different types of interest have been identified and empirically verified: *situational interest* and *individual* (or personal) *interest* (e.g., Ainley, Hidi, et al., 2002; Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, & Elliot, 2002; Renninger & Hidi, 2002). Situational interest refers to “focused attention and affective reaction that is triggered by environmental stimuli, which may or may not last over time” (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p. 113). Individual interest refers to a person’s relatively enduring predisposition “to gravitate toward, respond positively to and appreciate certain classes of stimuli across situations” (Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007, p. 598). While there is debate about how situational interest and individual interest differ (Renninger, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000c), it is generally recognised that they significantly overlap and interact with one another (Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007; Hidi, 2001). Each plays an important role in enhancing learning (Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007; Renninger & Su, 2012).

In relation to situational and individual interest, Hidi and Renninger (2006) have proposed a four-phase model of interest development based on empirical research, with each phase characterised by differing amounts of knowledge, affect and value. The four phases are: triggered situational interest, maintained situational interest, emerging individual interest and well-developed individual interest.

These distinctions have practical implications for teachers, especially in relation to triggered and maintained situational interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Researchers have found a variety of ways situational interest can be stimulated, which in turn may develop into individual interest (e.g., Bergin, 1999; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman, 2001). For example, it has been found that senior secondary and college students can develop maintained situational interest for content in which they previously had not shown an interest or about which they had little knowledge, especially if they were able to see the personal importance of the task (e.g., Jang, 2008; Sansone & Smith, 2000; Sansone, Weir, Harpster, & Morgan, 1992; Sansone, Wiebe, & Morgan, 1999). There is also considerable research around what makes texts interesting for students, which is particularly relevant for English teachers (e.g., Ainley, Hillman, & Hidi, 2002; Hidi, 2001; Schraw & Lehman, 2001; Silvia, 2006).

One of the issues facing those who study interest has been the way in which interest has been conceptualised and subsequently measured (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Jetton & Alexander, 2001). Some researchers perceive interest as being synonymous with liking or enjoyment (Renninger & Hidi, 2011; Silvia, 2006). Although interest and enjoyment are correlated (Ainley & Ainley, 2011; Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, Carter, & Elliot, 2000), they are different (S. A. Turner, Jr. & Silvia, 2006). Enjoyment provides a sense of satisfaction and/or happiness from engaging in an activity, while interest involves a sense of fascination or curiosity for something (S. A. Turner, Jr. & Silvia, 2006). One can be interested in something, but not necessarily enjoy it (e.g., a dissection in a biology class). Another issue pertains to the relationship between interest and intrinsic motivation (Hidi, 2000). Currently, there is no consensus about the nature of the relationship between situational and individual interest, and intrinsic motivation (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Schiefele, 2009; Schunk et al., 2014).

Interest in most academic subjects has been found to decline as students move through the school system (Hidi, 2000; Krapp, 2002). A number of possible factors for the decline in interest for school subjects have been identified, such as the nature of

school tasks, the increasing complexity of the material being studied, increasing academic demands, lack of relevance to students' lives, and a heightened focus on social relationships (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Schunk et al., 2014; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). However, the decline may also occur as adolescents' interests become more differentiated across academic subjects (e.g., more interest in some topics in English than in other topics), they adapt their interests to their perceived academic strengths, and consider their career options (Denissen, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2007; Hidi & Ainley, 2002; Rottinghaus, Larson, & Borgen, 2003; Schiefele, 2009).

As with self-efficacy and attribution theory, there is little research in relation to the role interest plays in senior secondary students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment. With regard to this study it was thought that interest was worthy of examining in some detail, as interest or a lack of it may be a significant factor in students' motivation to achieve individual achievement standards. Given the variety of topics and texts studied in Year 12 A Stream English, it was hypothesised that students would have varying levels of interest across different achievement standards (e.g., interest in the novel studied, but a lack of interest in the short stories studied for NCEA), and a diverse range of reasons for being more or less interested in what they were learning, all of which might impact significantly on their motivation to achieve.

2.3.4. Goals

Motivation always involves goals (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). Goals have been defined as "objectives that people are trying to accomplish" (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 141). They have both a cognitive and affective component (Bandura, 1986; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009), and may involve gaining something that is personally valued or avoiding unpleasant consequences (Byrnes, 2008). Goals also have an energising function by influencing levels of effort and increasing persistence (Locke & Latham, 2002). They may also be implicit or explicit (Byrnes, 2008), and self-selected or assigned (Schunk et al., 2014). Selecting or adopting goals in which energy and time are to be invested assumes students have some belief about their capability to achieve their goals and that they value the goals they have chosen (Pajares, 1996; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002).

Of particular interest in this study are: goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), future time perspective (Husman & Lens, 1999; Lens, Simons, & Dewitte, 2002), achievement goal theory (e.g., Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Maehr & Midgley,

1991; Murayama, Elliot, & Friedman, 2012; Nicholls, 1984; Pintrich, 2000c), and multiple goals (e.g., Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Wentzel, 1991a). Each of these has been examined on the assumption that they have a role to play in students' motivation to achieve in NCEA English.

Goal Setting

Goal setting refers to the establishment of quantitative and qualitative standards of performance (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002). It has been identified as an important factor in motivation (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Setting proximal goals has been associated with high achievement (Byrnes, 2008; Morisano, Hirsh, Peterson, Pihl, & Shore, 2010). For example, a significant relationship has also been found between the ability of secondary students to set specific academic goals and their proficiency in learning another language (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). However, when proximal goals are linked to distal goals secondary students' motivation and learning are further enhanced (Simons, Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Lacante, 2004).

Goal choice and goal commitment are two critical elements in goal setting (Locke & Latham, 1990). Goal choice involves identifying a goal and determining the level that must be reached to attain the goal, while goal commitment involves a determination to achieve the goal (Locke & Latham, 1990). Factors such as past performance, self-efficacy, ability, skill level, causal attributions, importance of the goal, peer group, reward structures, nature of authority and goal assignment, and the nature of feedback provided, have been found to influence goal choice and goal commitment (Locke & Latham, 1990). Of these factors, self-efficacy is particularly critical (Locke & Latham, 1990). Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to set higher goals, and be more committed to goals they believe they can achieve (Locke & Latham, 1990; Schunk et al., 2014; Zimmerman et al., 1992).

Students are likely to be more motivated by self-selected goals than assigned goals. However, self-selected goals do not necessarily result in increased performance (Locke & Latham, 1990), especially when students have internalised the importance of an assigned goal and adopted the goal as their own. Whether goals are self-selected or assigned, feedback that conveys efficacy information and fosters a sense of achievement is important in helping students to remain committed to attaining their goals (Locke & Latham, 1990).

Goal setting is particularly relevant in this study. Success in NCEA necessitates students adopting or setting themselves the goal of passing both individual achievement standards and NCEA overall. It was also assumed some students would set themselves the goal of gaining Merits or Excellences to get their NCEA certificates endorsed, because of the benefits associated with certificate endorsement (e.g., entry into restricted university courses, scholarship funding, and pleasing parents).

Future Time Perspective

A criticism of some contemporary motivation theories is that they focus only on students' current motivation and short-term or proximal goals (Andriessen, Phalet, & Lens, 2006; Husman & Lens, 1999; Kauffman & Husman, 2004; R. B. Miller & Brickman, 2004). While this focus is important, there is also a need to recognise that "students' motivation is profoundly affected by their conceptualisations of the future" (Kauffman & Husman, 2004, p. 3). Conceptualisations of the future require a future time perspective (FTP), which has been defined as "the present anticipation of future goals" (Husman & Lens, 1999, p. 115).

Future time perspective results from goal setting and affects individuals' motivation to strive for those goals (Lens et al., 2002). It entails a sense of *possible selves*; that is an individual's ideas of "what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). FTP is influenced by sociocultural factors and age (B. A. Greene & DeBacker, 2004; Lens & Gailly, 1980; Peetsma, 2000). In adolescence the formulation of future goals coincides with adolescents' increasing ability to think hypothetically, abstractly, and to consider multiple dimensions and perspectives (Cobb, 2010).

There is both a dynamic and cognitive aspect to FTP (de Volder & Lens, 1982). The dynamic aspect involves giving high priority to future goals, while the cognitive aspect involves recognising the importance of current activities in the attainment of future valued goals (de Volder & Lens, 1982; Husman & Lens, 1999). The cognitive aspect is often termed *perceived instrumentality* or *utility* (de Volder & Lens, 1982). Closely associated with perceived instrumentality are four motivational factors: self-efficacy beliefs, expectancies, delayed gratification, and task-value (Bembenutty, 2010).

Teachers have also been found to play an important role in helping students consider the instrumental value in what they are doing, encouraging them to consider future goals, and helping them formulate plans to achieve those goals (B. A. Greene &

DeBacker, 2004; Meyer, Weir, McClure, Walkey, & McKenzie, 2007; Nieswandt & Shanahan, 2008).

With regard to research on FTP in academic settings, secondary students who attached greater value to career or life goals and perceived their schoolwork to have greater instrumental value for reaching their future goals, were found to be more motivated in their schoolwork and achieve better results than those who attached less value to future goals and perceived current academic tasks as having limited utility (Creten, Lens, & Simons, 2001; e.g., de Volder & Lens, 1982; B. A. Greene et al., 2004; Lens & Decruyenaere, 1991; Nieswandt & Shanahan, 2008; Van Calster, Lens, & Nuttin, 1987). FTP was also found to be a significant predictor of secondary students' use of deep processing, persistence when experiencing difficulties, management of study time, study behaviour, and use of self-regulation strategies (Andriessen et al., 2006; Creten et al., 2001; de Bilde, Vansteenkiste, & Lens, 2011; de Volder & Lens, 1982; R. B. Miller, Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, & Nichols, 1996).

In relation to high-stakes assessment and FTP, studies are few and far between. In one study students' motivation to study and their examination performance were found to be at their highest when they attached high value to wanting to do their best at school for their personal future and when they had a positive outlook on their personal future (Van Calster et al., 1987). However, attaching high value to school results, but having a negative outlook on the future, had the opposite effect on students' motivation to study (Van Calster et al., 1987). In another study, Elias, Mustaf, Roslan, and Noah (2011) found FTP was a better predictor of students' achievement in examinations, than a range of other motivational variables, such as mastery goal orientation, utility value, and intrinsic motivation. They found self-efficacy was the next best predictor.

In terms of this study, FTP was assumed to play an important role in students' motivation to achieve, especially where students had formulated career goals that necessitated them passing NCEA level 2 and acquiring their literacy credits for university entrance. The formulation of broad career goals was likely to have been stimulated by the fact that students had to make decisions about which subjects to select for Year 12.

Achievement Goal Theory

While goal-setting theory and FTP have important implications for students and teachers, achievement goal theory (also known as achievement goal-orientation

theory) is also highly relevant for motivation, learning, and performance in school settings (Schunk et al., 2014).

Although there are many different goal orientations, the two most extensively researched are mastery (task-involved or learning goals) and performance goals (ego-involved or ability-focused goals) (Hulleman, Schrager, Bodmann, & Harackiewicz, 2010; Maehr & Zusho, 2009). A mastery goal orientation involves a focus on “learning, mastering the task according to self-set standards or self-improvement, developing new skills, improving or developing competence, trying to accomplish something challenging, and trying to gain understanding or insight” (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 187). Students with a mastery goal orientation tend to evaluate their performance on the basis of absolute or intrapersonal standards (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Murayama et al., 2012). This orientation has been positively related to self-efficacy and to incremental (growth) beliefs about intelligence (e.g., Dweck, 1999; Multon et al., 1991; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

In contrast, a performance goal orientation involves a focus on “demonstrating competence or ability and how ability will be judged relative to others” (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 187). Those with a performance goal orientation are concerned about striving to outperform others, being judged by others as competent, or avoiding looking incompetent (Maehr & Zusho, 2009; Murayama et al., 2012; Schunk et al., 2014). Such students tend to judge their competence against normative standards (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Holding a performance goal orientation has also been associated with having an entity (fixed) belief about intelligence (Butler, 2006; Dweck, 1999). Essentially, each goal orientation involves “an integrated pattern of beliefs” that leads to qualitatively “different ways of approaching, engaging in and responding to achievement situations” (Ames, 1992, p. 261), and each helps explain students’ adaptive and maladaptive patterns of academic engagement (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007).

Achievement goal theory has evolved into a 2 x 2 model, with a distinction being made between approach and avoidance versions of mastery and performance goals (E. M. Anderman & Patrick, 2012; Bong, 2009; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Madjar, Kaplan, & Weinstock, 2011; Maehr & Zusho, 2009; Murayama et al., 2012). An examination of the research findings on the relationship of the four goals to motivation and achievement are most clear-cut for mastery-approach and performance-avoidance, mixed for performance-approach, and minimal for mastery-avoidance (Maehr & Zusho, 2009).

Extensive research has found that a mastery-approach goal orientation is correlated with greater effort and persistence, increased competence beliefs, adaptive attributions, increased intrinsic motivation, greater likelihood of selecting challenging tasks, appropriate help-seeking behaviours, more self-regulated learning, use of deeper processing strategies, and more positive attitudes to school and schoolwork (e.g., Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Bong, 2009; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & Church, 1997; Linnenbrink, 2005; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2006; Pintrich, 2000c; Urdan & Mestas, 2006; Wolters, 2004). However, researchers have failed to consistently show a positive direct relationship between this goal orientation and achievement (E. M. Anderman & Patrick, 2012; Hulleman et al., 2010; Senko, Hulleman, & Harackiewicz, 2011).

A performance-avoidance goal orientation, which focuses on striving to avoid appearing less competent than others, tends to be positively correlated with test anxiety, surface learning, self-handicapping strategies, disorganised study habits, and lower achievement (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Elliot & McGregor, 1999; Liem et al., 2008; Midgley & Urdan, 2001; Urdan, 2004; Wolters, 2004).

The research findings for a performance-approach goal orientation are less consistent or clear. Some findings indicate that this orientation can be beneficial for motivation and achievement (e.g., Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Church, Elliot, & Gable, 2001; Daniels et al., 2009; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Harackiewicz et al., 2002; Harackiewicz et al., 2000; Steele-Johnson, Beauregard, Hoover, & Schmidt, 2000). Other findings indicate that it can be detrimental (e.g., Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Midgley, Arunkumar, & Urdan, 1996; Newstead, Franklyn-Stokes, & Armstead, 1996). Inconsistent results have been attributed to the lack of clarity around how performance-approach goals have been defined and measured (Brophy, 2010; Hulleman et al., 2010; Senko et al., 2011; Urdan & Mestas, 2006). Some researchers have argued that the focus of performance-approach goals is on demonstrating competence (i.e., appearance concerns) (e.g., Grant & Dweck, 2003; Kaplan & Maehr, 2007), while other researchers have argued that the focus is on outperforming others (i.e., normative comparisons) (e.g., Elliot, 2005; Senko & Harackiewicz, 2002).

A review of the research findings associated with performance-approach goals indicate that more positive outcomes tend to be linked to a normative focus, while more negative outcomes tend to be linked to appearance concerns (Senko et al., 2011). Of

particular note is that a normative focus has been consistently and positively linked to achievement in the classroom (Cury, Elliot, Da Fonseca, & Moller, 2006; Hulleman et al., 2010; Skaalvik, 1997; Wolters, Yu, & Pintrich, 1996). It has been suggested that the desire to best others greatly increases the amount of effort applied (Senko et al., 2011).

Urđan and Mestas (2006) have also expressed concerns about survey and experimental methods masking the variety of reasons students have for adopting a performance goal orientation, believing such approaches “limit researchers’ understanding of the meaning, complexity, and effects of performance goals” (p. 364). Their concerns arose from interviewing secondary students, and discovering that students had a range of reasons for pursuing performance goals. Consequently, they have argued that the work on goal orientations also needs to be informed by students’ perceptions; an idea endorsed by others in this field of research (Brophy, 2005; Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Senko et al., 2011).

While the discussion thus far has focused on students pursuing one goal or another, there is evidence that students may adopt multiple goal orientations which may result in optimal motivation (Senko et al., 2011). Alternatively, students may shift between goal orientations when it is in their best interests academically to do so (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Pintrich, 2000b). Holding multiple academic goals or shifting between goals may be especially likely in a high-stakes assessment context when academic achievement counts for so much.

While research findings indicate that students develop personal dispositions toward particular goal orientations, research has also established that learning environments, particularly classroom goal structures, impact on students’ goal orientations (e.g., Ames, 1992; Elliot, 2005; Kaplan, Middleton, Urđan, & Midgley, 2002; Pintrich, 2000a; Urđan, 2010). Of relevance to this study is that classroom evaluation practices have been found to influence secondary school students’ goal orientations. Students who anticipated being assessed on their task performance tended to adopt a mastery goal orientation, while students who anticipated being assessed against others adopted a performance goal orientation (Butler, 2006).

A small number of studies have also examined students’ goal orientations in high-stakes certification assessment contexts (e.g., Bong, 2005; L. Smith et al., 2002). These studies are discussed in Section 2.5. With regards to this study, it was assumed

that goal orientations may be useful in explaining some factors students might identify as significantly influencing their motivation, such as a desire to do better than their friends, appear competent to teachers and peers, or to avoid failing. It was also assumed that performance goal orientations may be more prevalent than mastery goal orientations, given that a high-stakes assessment context is more likely to foster a performance goal orientation.

Multiple Goals

While there has been extensive research into competence goal orientations (i.e., mastery and performance goals), a number of researchers have also argued that other goals also need to be considered when seeking to understand the richness and complexity of students' motivational processes (e.g., Boekaerts et al., 2006; Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Ford, 1992; Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2006; Järvelä et al., 2010; Kaplan & Maehr, 2002; McInerney & Ali, 2006; R. B. Miller et al., 1996; Wentzel, 1992, 1999).

Of particular interest are social goals. Wentzel (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1996) has identified a range of social goals students might simultaneously pursue in the classroom. These include: acceptance of formal social norms and expectations of classroom life (social responsibility); seeking approval from others (e.g., teacher, peers, parents); making friends and maintaining friendships (social relationship goals); gaining recognition amongst one's peers (social status); and having fun. Of these various social goals, social responsibility and social status goals have been found to be significant predictors of school-related motivation and achievement (L. H. Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Patrick, Anderman, & Ryan, 2002; Patrick, Hicks, & Ryan, 1997; Wentzel, 1996).

Social relationships can be conducive to academic performance, with peers and teachers providing assistance and encouragement (M. Irwin, 2013; Levy-Tossman, Kaplan, & Assor, 2007; Patrick et al., 2002; Wentzel, 2005). Conversely, social relationships with peers may interfere with students' achievement of academic goals (Hofer, 2007; Townsend, 2011). However, the impact of students' social relationships on their motivation and achievement often depends on the academic and motivational attitudes of their friends (Duriez, Giletta, Kuppens, & Vansteenkiste, 2013; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

Urda and Maehr (1995) have argued that students may also pursue achievement goals for social reasons (e.g., to gain approval), rather than to master knowledge or to achieve better results than their peers. Research undertaken with secondary students indicates that gaining teacher approval made an important contribution to students' academic engagement and was associated with the reported use of self-regulatory behaviours such as adjusting studying behaviour and monitoring progress (R. B. Miller et al., 1996).

In addition to addressing multiple goals inside the classroom, adolescents often need to address multiple goals outside the classroom, which may conflict with their academic goals (Creten et al., 2001; Lens, Lacante, Vansteenkiste, & Herrera, 2005). Working more than a few hours a week has been found to interfere with students' motivation to study and academic performance (Lens et al., 2005; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2012). However, the effects of pursuing leisure goals are less clear cut (Lens et al., 2005; Ratelle, Senècal, Vallerand, & Provencher, 2005).

Given that students hold multiple goals (Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Mansfield, 2010; Pintrich, 2000b; Urda & Maehr, 1995), striving to achieve these multiple goals may create many challenges, especially if the goals are conflicting, or require significant cognitive or affective resources (Hofer et al., 2007; Wentzel, 2000). Students need to be able to co-ordinate the pursuit of their own goals and those imposed within the learning context, prioritise the various goals, shift between goals or address goals simultaneously, and allocate their effort and energy accordingly (Wentzel, 2000).

Research on multiple goals and high-stakes certification assessment appears to be very limited. Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) found that work, leisure, and home commitments varied in their impact on NCEA achievement. Their findings are discussed in more detail in Section 2.5. The issue of coping with multiple goals is particularly relevant to this study, as students need to address multiple goals if they are to meet the NCEA requirements for all their school subjects, while simultaneously addressing their non-academic goals.

2.3.5. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are constructs that have been widely used to explain two different types of motivation. Intrinsic motivation has been defined as the engagement in "an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than some separable

consequence” (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 56). Intrinsic motivation has both affective and cognitive components (Brophy, 2010). The affective components involve some degree of pleasure, enjoyment or satisfaction that is anticipated or derived from engaging in an activity, while the cognitive components are present when students find activities competence-enhancing or meaningful (Brophy, 2010). Extrinsic motivation has been defined as engaging in activity “in order to attain some separable outcome” (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 60). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are also both context and time dependent (Schunk et al., 2014).

Traditionally intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were believed to be opposite ends of the same continuum (Alderman, 2004), but they are now recognised as separate entities that may co-exist and jointly contribute to a student’s academic achievement (Hartnett, 2010; Henderlong & Lepper, 2002; Lepper et al., 2005). However, there is a widely held concern that under certain conditions extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation, particularly if the rewards are perceived to be controlling (e.g., Deci, 1971; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Deci, Ryan, & Koestner, 2001; Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973; Lepper & Henderlong, 2000). The exception appears to be those extrinsic rewards, such as positive feedback, which are perceived by students to convey information about their competence or skills (Deci & Moller, 2005). Such rewards can build self-efficacy and interest (Schunk et al., 2014).

Research has clearly demonstrated across all levels of schooling that working on a task for intrinsic reasons positively impacts on learning, achievement, and perceptions of competence, while lessening academic anxiety (e.g., Gottfried, 1985; Lepper et al., 2005; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). However, as previously noted, intrinsic motivation increasingly declines in specific academic subjects as students progress through the school system (Chouinard & Roy, 2008; e.g., Gottfried et al., 2001; Harter, 1981; Jacobs et al., 2002; Lepper et al., 2005).

Given that academic intrinsic motivation tends to decline and that students are unlikely to be always intrinsically motivated at school, researchers have recognised that particular types of extrinsic motivation can also play a part in motivating students to learn, especially if students are not intrinsically motivated to begin with (Brophy, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Schunk et al., 2014). These types of extrinsic motivation, along with intrinsic motivation and amotivation are discussed in more detail in the following section on self-determination theory.

2.3.6. Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a contemporary motivation theory incorporating intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In particular, SDT distinguishes between *autonomous motivation* comprising intrinsic motivation and more self-determining types of extrinsic motivation, and *controlled motivation* comprising less self-determined types of extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008b). This macro-theory of human motivation assumes that people “have inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that provide the motivational foundation for their autonomous motivation and healthy psychological development” (Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004, p. 33). However, SDT also recognises that social and environmental factors can nurture or undermine the inner motivational resources needed for autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Thus, identifying the proximal and distal conditions that support or thwart a person’s autonomous motivation has been of central concern for SDT researchers (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Reeve, Deci, et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2009). This concern is also important in this study.

According to SDT, there are three basic psychological needs essential for healthy psychological development and well-being: autonomy or self-determination, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2002). *Autonomy* has been defined as, “the experience of choice in the initiation, maintenance, and regulation of behaviour, and the experience of connectedness between one’s actions and personal goals and values” (Connell, 1990, pp. 62-63). It involves acting volitionally from interest and integrated values (Ryan & Deci, 2002). *Competence* has been defined as “the need to experience oneself as capable of producing desired outcomes and avoiding negative outcomes” (Connell & Wellborn, 1991, p. 51). It is associated with feeling efficacious (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). *Relatedness* has been described as, “the need to feel securely connected to the social surround and the need to experience oneself as worthy and capable of love and respect” (Connell & Wellborn, 1991, pp. 52-53). Relatedness provides the emotional security needed for people to function effectively, and is achieved through warmth, support, and nurturing by significant others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1993; Martin & Dowson, 2009).

Satisfying these three needs through intrinsic motivation, internalisation, and integration allows people to freely engage in self-determined activity (Brophy, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2009). Empirical evidence has confirmed that these three needs are

important for academic achievement and psychological well-being across a range of different cultures (e.g., Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003; Ferguson, Kasser, & Seungmin, 2011; Jang, Reeve, Ryan, & Kim, 2009; Vansteenkiste, Zhou, Lens, & Soenens, 2005).

With regards to extrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan (1985) have identified four types of extrinsic motivation. These four types of extrinsic motivation reflect the differing degrees to which individuals experience a sense of autonomy while engaging in behaviour that is extrinsically motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Ryan and Deci (2000a) have stressed that “understanding these different types of extrinsic motivation, and what fosters each of them, is an important issue for educators who cannot always rely on intrinsic motivation to foster learning” (p. 55).

These four types of extrinsic motivation have been incorporated into Ryan and Deci’s (2000a, 2002, 2009) taxonomy of human motivation, along with intrinsic motivation and amotivation, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. In examining these different types of motivation it needs to be borne in mind that they can co-occur, and thus affect the overall degree of self-determination individuals experience in any given context (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

Type of Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Type of regulation	Non-regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Associated Processes	Perceived non-contingency Low perceived competence Non-relevance Non-intentionality	Extrinsic rewards or punishments Compliance/reactance	Ego involvement Approval from self or others	Conscious valuing of activity Self-endorsement of goals Utility value	Congruence Hierarchical synthesis of goals	Interest Enjoyment Inherent satisfaction
Autonomous vs controlled	Lack of motivation	Controlled Motivation		Autonomous Motivation		
<i>Lowest Relative Relative Autonomy (Not self-determined)</i>						<i>Highest Autonomy (Fully Self-determined)</i>

Figure 2.1: Taxonomy of human motivation (adapted from Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2002, 2009)

At one end of the continuum is *amotivation*, which occurs when a person does not value a task, believes they are incompetent, or believes they have no control over

achieving a desired outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). At the other end of the continuum is *intrinsic motivation*, which arises when a person experiences interest, satisfaction, or enjoyment from engaging in an activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In between are four types of extrinsic motivation: *external regulation*, *introjected regulation*, *identified regulation*, and *integrated regulation*.

External regulation involves being externally controlled by the promise of rewards or the threat of punishment, while introjected regulation involves acting from partially internalised, but not personally endorsed, external regulation (Reeve, Deci, et al., 2004). With introjected regulation, individuals feel internally controlled or pressured to act in certain ways in order to enhance their sense of pride, avoid guilt or shame, or to gain approval from others (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Introjected regulation has been associated with maladaptive coping strategies and fear of failure (Ryan & Connell, 1989). In the case of introjection there is a conflict between the need for autonomy and the need for relatedness (Koestner & Losier, 2002).

Identified regulation is a more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation that involves adopting a goal because it has personal value or utility. Identified regulation has been positively correlated with perceived instrumentality (de Bilde et al., 2011). In particular, identified regulation is associated with adaptive motivational behaviour and interest in academic settings (Andriessen et al., 2006; de Bilde et al., 2011; Lens et al., 2002).

Integrated regulation is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). It involves identified regulations being internalised and fully aligned with an individual's other values and needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Identification and integration are more likely to occur when a person believes the behaviours are valued by significant others with whom the person feels connected (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In both cases there is a congruence between the need for autonomy and relatedness (Koestner & Losier, 2002).

Research findings indicate that more autonomous forms of motivation (i.e., intrinsic, integrated, and identified regulation, which reflect an internal locus of causality) are associated with a number of positive academic outcomes, such as greater engagement with academic activities (Koestner & Losier, 2002); greater persistence on academic tasks (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997; Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, & Deci, 2004); better performance (Fortier, Vallerand, & Guay, 1995; Guay & Vallerand, 1997; Miserandino, 1996; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005); increased conceptual

understanding, more positive coping styles, and more enjoyment of school (Ryan & Connell, 1989); higher quality of learning (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987); and a decreased risk of dropping out of school (Hardre & Reeve, 2003). On the other hand, external regulation is associated with lower levels of interest, valuing, and effort on school tasks (Ryan & Connell, 1989).

A closer examination of autonomous motivation in two longitudinal studies has led Koestner, Losier and colleagues to conclude that identification, rather than intrinsic motivation, is more important for long term adaption in the academic domain (Koestner & Losier, 2002). Intrinsic motivation involves a short-term focus on the immediate experience, whereas identification involves a long-term focus on the significance of what one is currently doing (Koestner & Losier, 2002). Consequently, Koestner and Losier (2002) have argued that internalisation needs to be promoted, even if students are intrinsically motivated. Burton, Lydon, D'Alessandro, and Koestner (2006) also found students' levels of identified regulation were a much better predictor of their subsequent academic performance than their levels of intrinsic motivation. Given these findings, Koestner and Loiser's (2002) arguments, and the importance of achieving NCEA for students' career goals, it was anticipated that identified regulation might prove to be a stronger factor in students' motivation to achieve in this study, than intrinsic motivation.

Self-determination theory assumes that these different types of motivation are more influential than the amount of motivation in predicting important outcomes for individuals (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). While there is considerable empirical support for this assumption (e.g., Gottfried, 1985; Guay & Vallerand, 1997; Otis, Grouzet, & Pelletier, 2005; Vansteenkiste, Sierens, Soenens, Luyckx, & Lens, 2009), some studies have found that both quality and quantity of motivation affect secondary school students' academic outcomes (Ratelle, Guay, Vallerand, Larose, & Senecal, 2007; Wormington, Corpus, & Anderson, 2012). For example, Ratelle et al. (2007) found that students exhibiting a combination of high levels of autonomous motivation and high levels of controlled motivation displayed high levels of persistence and academic achievement, low absenteeism, and high cognitive and affective functioning.

Ratelle et al. (2007) were unable to identify a purely autonomous profile in secondary school students, but found evidence of this profile in college students. They suggested that the motivation profiles are context sensitive and that the high autonomous and

high controlled motivation profile reflects the extrinsic control and rigid constraints evident in many secondary schools. On the other hand, Wormington et al. (2012) found an autonomous profile amongst secondary school students, albeit a rare occurrence. They too found that high quantity motivation profiles (high autonomous and high controlled), along with good quality motivation profiles (high autonomous motivation and low controlled), were correlated with better academic performance, when compared with poor quality and low quantity profiles.

In another study, Gillet et al. (2012) found that senior secondary school students' non-self-determined types of extrinsic motivation (i.e., external and introjected regulation) were systematically higher than students' intrinsic and self-determined types of extrinsic motivation (i.e., identified and integrated regulation). These researchers expressed concern at this finding, because non-self-determined types of extrinsic motivation are associated with more negative outcomes for students. However, they found that amotivation remained low throughout students' years at school.

In relation to social and environmental factors, structures, rewards, support, and controls present in schools have been found to significantly influence students' intrinsic motivation and their internalisation of transmitted values, attitudes, and regulations; that is their autonomous motivation (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994; Deci et al., 1999; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Flink, Boggiano, & Barrett, 1990; Reeve, 2009; e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2009). Of these factors, autonomy support appears to be particularly beneficial in nurturing students' intrinsic motivation and internalisation processes (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Reeve, 2002).

Teacher-provided autonomy support has been found to be positively associated with secondary school students' autonomous motivation orientations (Hardre & Reeve, 2003; Vallerand et al., 1997), academic achievement (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004), adaptive patterns of learning (Shih, 2008), perceived competence (Hardre & Reeve, 2003; Trouilloud, Sarrazin, Bressoux, & Bois, 2006), conceptual understanding (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004), and satisfaction with school (Ferguson et al., 2011). Conversely, controlling teachers have been found to negatively affect students' motivation and achievement (Deci et al., 1999; Reeve, 2009).

Autonomy-supportive teachers offer choice, provide meaningful rationales for completing uninteresting tasks, identify and nurture students' interests, acknowledge learners' perspectives and feelings, provide encouragement, and use minimal amounts

of controlling language (e.g., Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Deci et al., 1994; Deci et al., 1991; Jang, 2008; Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Reeve, Jang, et al., 2004; Reeve, Jang, Hardre, & Omura, 2002). Such actions also help to address students' needs for competence and relatedness. Very importantly, secondary teachers can be effectively taught to be more autonomy-supportive (Reeve, Jang, et al., 2004).

Teacher-provided structure has also been found to play an important role in students' perceived competence and autonomy (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Jang et al., 2010; Sierens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, Soenens, & Dochy, 2009; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). Teacher-provided structure involves clear instructions and expectations; strong guidance; constructive, informational feedback; appropriate pacing of lessons; the provision of optimal challenges; and the provision of help and assistance when needed (Brophy, 2010; Jang et al., 2010; Koestner & Losier, 2002; Reeve, Deci, et al., 2004; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). Teacher-provided autonomy support and structure are positively correlated, complementary, and uniquely predictive of student engagement (Jang et al., 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012).

Relatedness is also important (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1993; Osterman, 2000; Wentzel, 2010). Students who feel emotionally secure and supported by their teachers are more likely to internalise school-related behavioural regulations, experience a greater sense of autonomy, show increased academic engagement, and an increased expectancy for success (Ahmed, Minnaert, van der Werf, & Kuyper, 2010; Goodenow, 1993; Osterman, 2000; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994). A recent review of 71 empirical studies on the effects of need supportive teaching (i.e., autonomy support, structure, and relatedness) provides further confirmation of a clear positive association between need supportive teaching, adolescent students' motivation, and school engagement (Stroet, Opdenakker, & Minnaert, 2013). However, the authors found less consistent evidence confirming the effectiveness of each of the specific components of need supportive teaching (Stroet et al., 2013).

In addition to autonomy support from teachers, autonomy support from parents has also been found to positively influence secondary school students' autonomous academic self-regulation, academic motivation, and psychological well-being (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Guay & Vallerand, 1997; Niemiec et al., 2006; Ryan et al., 1994; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

While there have been many studies that have examined secondary school students' academic motivation from a self-determination perspective, none were located that used SDT as the theoretical framework to examine secondary students' motivation in high-stakes certification assessment. However, in a review of the impact on self-determination of high-stakes assessment in general, Ryan and Deci (2009) have noted that "a plethora of studies have confirmed that working to earn rewards or avoid punishments has negative effects on autonomous motivation, learning, and psychological well-being" (p. 186). They also noted that the impact is much greater on those who work towards rewards but failed to attain these rewards.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

As no single theory adequately explains all types of motivation (Bong, 1996; Murphy & Alexander, 2000), this study has been informed and underpinned by all the motivation theories and constructs discussed in this chapter. However, self-determination theory (SDT) is the overarching theoretical framework that has guided this study.

SDT is a well-validated theory and has provided a conceptual lens for over 200 empirical studies in education (Guay et al., 2008). In SDT motivation is conceptualised as multidimensional which provides greater scope for understanding the complexities of students' motivation and the social and environmental factors that influence their motivation (Otis et al., 2005). In particular SDT focuses on the three key psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and differentiates between different types of extrinsic motivation, as well as recognising intrinsic motivation and amotivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). As a consequence, this theory is particularly helpful in explaining why students might willingly engage in activities and pursue their academic goals within what is essentially a pressured and controlled environment, when they may not find learning intrinsically motivating (Brophy, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Furthermore, SDT recognises that motivation is malleable, which is evident when individuals internalise and integrate the regulation of socially valued behaviours (e.g., school related behaviours), and respond to autonomy-supportive or controlling teachers and parents (Otis et al., 2005). It has practical utility and it has greater explanatory power than a number of other motivation theories for this particular study.

In relation to the use of SDT as an analytical tool, few studies have used SDT to examine students' open-ended responses. Most studies employing SDT as their theoretical framework have relied exclusively on quantitative measures, such as the

Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1993), and the Academic Self-Regulation Scale (Alivernini, Lucidi, & Manganeli, 2008; Ryan & Connell, 1989). Yet SDT provides a useful lens through which to examine students' open-ended responses, because of its capacity to capture some of the complexity and multidimensional nature of students' motivation. Using SDT in this way extends its usefulness as an analytic tool to understand students' motivation to achieve in a high-stakes certification assessment context.

While SDT has been employed as the overarching theoretical framework for this study, as noted above other relevant motivation theories and constructs have also been employed when their explanatory power was considered useful. As Pintrich (2003) has explained, people are motivated through multiple pathways: their self-efficacy beliefs, their goals, their personal interests, their values, and contextual factors. Given the complexity of motivation, he has argued that:

At this point in the development of motivational science, it seems more productive to attempt to understand these multiple pathways through research that examines how different personal and contextual factors interact to generate different patterns of motivated behavior. This strategy would seem to be more fruitful than attempts to prove or falsify the importance of single constructs, such as self-efficacy, in relation to other factors, or to pit personal and contextual factors and explanations against each other (Pintrich, 1994, 2000b). (Pintrich, 2003, p. 671)

Consequently, self-efficacy theory, attribution theory, achievement goal theory, future time perspective, goal setting, and situational and individual interest are also drawn on to explain aspects of students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards when needed.

2.5. High-stakes Assessment and Motivation

High-stakes certification assessment is a mandatory and integral part of many secondary school systems internationally (e.g., New Zealand, Australia, England, Scotland, South Africa, Canada, Israel, Ireland, Sweden, Wales, and Finland). These assessments are used to determine which students are eligible for entry into tertiary institutions and a range of occupations. Doing poorly on such assessments or not completing these assessments can have serious social and economic short- and long-

term consequences for students, as highlighted in Chapter One (e.g., Ministry of Education, 2012a; OECD, 2013).

Much of the research on the impact of high-stakes assessment on school students' motivation has focused on assessments undertaken throughout a child's schooling (e.g., assessments related to the No Child Left Behind Act in the United States and the estimated 105 high-stakes tests undertaken by children across their years of schooling in England) (e.g., Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; M. G. Jones et al., 2003; Madaus, Russell, & Higgins, 2009; Ryan & Brown, 2005; Ryan & Weinstein, 2009). These types of high-stakes assessment programmes differ quite markedly from high-stakes certification assessments for school exit qualifications, as their prime focus is usually on making teachers and schools directly accountable for improving student achievement (James, 2000; Madaus et al., 2009; McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Heilig, 2008; Paris & McEvoy, 2000; Ryan & Brown, 2005), rather than awarding school qualifications. They are often used as a mechanism for allocating funding and for retaining students, especially in the United States (Allensworth & Nagaoka, 2010; McNeil et al., 2008; Paris, 2000; Ryan & Brown, 2005). These assessment programmes also tend to be targeted at much younger students to assess their progress through the school system.

While many of the findings from studies examining these types of high-stakes assessment programmes have limited applicability to this study, on balance they have tended to suggest that high-stakes assessment has more negative than positive effects on students' motivation to achieve, especially for those students who are not high achievers (e.g., Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2012; Reay & Wiliam, 1999; Roderick & Engel, 2001).

There is also a body of literature focused on university students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes university assessments. While there are some common components (e.g., examinations), the context and purpose of assessment also differ from those of secondary schools in a number of ways (Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2003). For example, university students often have more flexibility in what they study (courses and topics), where and when they study, and whether they attend classes; that is they can be more autonomous. Although much of this research has limited relevance for this current study, two studies that examined students' motivation in a university assessment context from the students' perspective are particularly noteworthy. Both Hartnett (2010)

and Hwang and Vrongistinos (2006) found that students' motivation was influenced by a range of factors and that their motivation was complex and multidimensional.

While a number of studies have been undertaken on the impact of high-stakes assessment on students' motivation, few were found that focused specifically on the impact of high-stakes certification assessment on senior secondary students' motivation to achieve (Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; Meyer, McClure, et al., 2009; Putwain, 2009). Even fewer studies appear to have been undertaken on the impact of standards-based high-stakes assessment on students' motivation to achieve at the senior secondary level (Zepke et al., 2006). Of those examining senior students' motivation in standards-based, high-stakes certification assessment, it is rare to find studies that have focused on the students' perspective. As Meyer, McClure, et al. (2009) have noted, "there is little research examining how students perceive criterion-referenced [standards-based] assessment systems in terms of their own motivation" (p. 275). Furthermore, none appear to have employed SDT as a theoretical framework.

Not only has it been difficult to locate studies on the impact of high-stakes certification assessment on students' motivation to achieve, but also it has often been difficult to draw comparisons between those few studies located and this study. The reason for this difficulty is that high-stakes certification assessment systems can differ markedly from one country or state to another (Strachan, 2001). For example, unlike NCEA, some secondary school qualification assessment systems are norm-referenced. Norm-referencing has been found to foster social comparison and competition between students and result in undesirable outcomes for most students (Crooks, 1988). Another point of difference is that some assessment systems rely solely on external examinations undertaken by authorities outside the school, while others, such as NCEA, include some internal assessment undertaken by classroom teachers. Ultimately, different assessment policies, structures, and processes shape students' and teachers' behaviours in a variety of different ways (e.g., Crooks, 1988; Ecclestone & Pryor, 2003; Harlen, 2005; M. G. Jones et al., 2003; Madaus et al., 2009; Mansel, James, & Assessment Reform Group, 2009; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009; Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002; Roderick & Engel, 2001; Ryan & Brown, 2005; Ryan & Weinstein, 2009; Zepke et al., 2006).

Although it has been difficult to locate many studies that have examined students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment, and to compare their findings with the New Zealand context, what is clear from the wider body of literature

on high-stakes assessment is that one of the most salient factors affecting students' academic motivation is the way in which they are assessed (Ames, 1992). The remainder of this section examines relevant research in relation to high-stakes certification assessment and senior secondary students' motivation to achieve.

In a study examining students' perceptions of the stress experienced in relation to the General Certificate of School Education in England, Putwain (2009) found that students assessed as having high levels of stress felt very pressured by the multiple demands of deadlines for coursework and examinations across various subjects. However, practice examinations were perceived as valuable as they helped students gain familiarity with the format and types of questions they would encounter. These students were also very concerned and anxious about failing, particularly because of the implications for their future and the possibility of negative judgments from significant others. As a consequence they were motivated to get good grades to avoid disappointing themselves or significant others. Putwain (2009) concluded that introjected regulation was at the fore for a number of these students.

In relation to achievement goal orientation, research has indicated that a performance goal orientation is likely to be fostered in high-stakes assessment contexts when results are significant and it is important to demonstrate competence (E. M. Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Patrick, Anderman, Ryan, Edlin, & Midgley, 2001), although this may only hold true for performance-avoidance goal orientations in senior secondary qualifications assessment situations. L. Smith et al. (2002), in their study of students in New South Wales in their final year at school, found that mastery orientations remained steady, performance-approach orientations decreased, but performance-avoidance goal orientations increased as students approached their final Higher School Certificate examinations. It was surmised that students were preoccupied with performance outcomes and avoiding failure (L. Smith et al., 2002).

On the other hand, in a study of Korean secondary school girls, Bong (2005) found that these students' mastery and performance goal orientations remained relatively stable over the school year, despite students perceiving their school environment to be increasingly performance goal oriented with high-stakes examinations being emphasised. While there are logical reasons and empirical evidence to suggest high-stakes assessment can impact negatively on goal orientations, Maehr and Zusho (2009) have argued that "goal theory has remained mostly silent about burning issues

facing the field of education” (p. 94) and list high-stakes testing as one of those burning issues.

In a systematic review of international research on the impact of summative assessment and testing on students’ motivation across all levels of schooling, undertaken by the Assessment and Learning Synthesis Research Group in the UK, Harlen and Deakin Crick (2002) found that repeated test practice lowered the self-image of lower achieving students; feedback played an important role in future learning; feedback on similar tasks in the past was used to determine the amount of effort to expend on future tasks; and high-stakes assessment generated high levels of anxiety, especially in girls. Interestingly, their review only located 19 empirical studies that specifically examined the impact of high-stakes assessment on school children’s motivation. Only five of those studies focused specifically on secondary school students, the oldest of which dated back to 1979. Only two focused specifically on motivation which involved examinations; one of which examined students’ motivation in mathematics in Morocco, and the other focused on students’ motivation in a norm-referenced examination system in 1986.

From the examination of the body of literature focused on high-stakes assessment and students’ motivation, there is a clearly identifiable gap in the literature, particularly in relation to standards-based, high-stakes certification assessment. There is also an identifiable gap in the literature examining students’ motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment from the students’ perspective (B. D. Jones, 2007). Longitudinal and domain-specific studies in high-stakes certification assessment in English are difficult to locate. Nor were any studies employing SDT as a theoretical framework located. This study sought to add to this very limited body of research.

2.5.1. NCEA and Motivation

High-stakes certification assessment under the NCEA system is a prolonged event that begins in Year 11 and continues across each year for three consecutive years for many students (some exit at the end of Year 12 after NCEA level 2)¹¹. As a consequence, high-stakes assessment dominates students’ school lives for these three years, with the continual focus on internal assessment during the year and external assessment at the end of each school year in each subject in which they are enrolled. The salience of

¹¹ New Zealand is one of the few Western countries, if not the only one, that assesses senior secondary students for certification purposes at three year levels. Most focus on one or two year levels.

rewards (i.e., passing achievement standards, acquiring certificates, being awarded university entrance, and certificate endorsements) is an inherent part of this context. Equally, punishment in the form of failure and pressure to perform are also an inherent part of this context. However, although it is a demanding system, students have some choice about which achievement standards they wish to be assessed against. They also have one opportunity to be reassessed against each internally assessed achievement standard, thus allowing students to improve on their previous performance (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2013).

While there have been a number of studies undertaken on aspects of NCEA (e.g., Agnew, 2011; Hipkins, 2007, 2013; Hipkins & Hodgen, 2011; Rawlins, 2007; Shulruf, Hattie, & Tumen, 2008), very few have focused on its impact on student motivation and only two appear to be directly relevant to this study.

The first study arose from significant concerns about students' motivation in relation to NCEA, resulting in a Ministry of Education funded, large-scale, longitudinal study undertaken by a team of researchers at the Victoria University of Wellington. The study examined students' motivations to achieve NCEA in general, rather than in specific subjects. The findings were based on survey data, focus group interviews, and achievement data. The initial findings (Meyer et al., 2006) led to policy changes with the introduction of NCEA certificate endorsements. These incentives were aimed at encouraging students to do more than the minimum just to pass. In addition to the publication of the initial findings, two other reports have since been produced from this longitudinal study (Meyer et al., 2007; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009), as well as a number of publications (Hodis, Meyer, McClure, Weir, & Walkey, 2011; McClure et al., 2011; Meyer, McClure, et al., 2009; Walkey et al., 2013).

The key finding was that students' self-ratings on survey items related to *doing my best* and *doing just enough* were the strongest predictors of students' NCEA results. *Doing just enough* was a stronger negative predictor of the number of credits achieved and the grades awarded, while *doing my best* was a stronger positive predictor of the higher grades awarded and the number of credits achieved (Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). According to Hodis et al. (2011), *doing my best* is associated with a performance-approach goal orientation, while *doing just enough* is associated with a performance-avoidance goal orientation. Girls were more likely to want to do their best, while boys were more likely to indicate that they wanted to do just enough to pass. However, it is quite possible that there are other theoretical explanations for these two different

motivation profiles that provide greater insights or a more nuanced understanding of students' motivation. For example, *doing my best* may be linked to introjected, identified, or integrated regulation, while *doing just enough* may be linked to external or introjected regulation.

Also of note was a tendency for those students who had lower academic aspirations (i.e., *doing just enough*) to believe their teachers did not care about their learning (Walkey et al., 2013). In contrast, *doing my best* was positively correlated with perceptions that teachers were caring and interested (Walkey et al., 2013). What is not clear though is why students gave the responses they did to the survey items linked to *doing my best* and *doing just enough*. It is possible that a more complex set of factors exist and that these need to be understood if interventions are to be put in place to support students to achieve their best.

Focus group interview data highlighted a number of factors influencing students' motivation to achieve, such as having pride in one's achievement, wanting to do the best one can, knowing one had worked hard, entrance to university and university scholarships, future employment, parental expectations, siblings' academic achievement, friends; teachers, and pressure of exams (Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). Interestingly, Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) identified the first three factors as examples of intrinsic motivation, when in fact it is possible that some of these were examples of types of extrinsic motivation. For example, *wanting to do the best one can* could be classified as introjected regulation if wanting to do one's best was for ego-enhancement reasons. It could also be classified as integrated regulation if doing one's best reflects a person's view of themselves. Of greater significance was the fact that, although the factors identified in the focus group interviews were analysed for themes, it was unclear which factors students considered most influential and why some of these factors were influential.

In reporting these findings, the researchers emphasised the importance of focusing on specific task-related aspirations, rather than on general academic aspirations (Walkey et al., 2013). As they state, "methodologically, student responses to broad questions about generic achievement motivation constructs appear to be less predictive than self-report measures that frame student motivation ratings in terms of actual performance in their assessments" (Walkey et al., 2013, p. 313). This finding is particularly pertinent to this study, where the focus is clearly on specific task-related aspirations, rather than general academic aspirations.

Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) also examined students' attributions for the best and worst NCEA grades. Students who attributed their best grades in NCEA to ability and effort were found to achieve more achievement standard credits in total and were more likely to gain more achievement standards with Merits and Excellences, than students who attributed their best grade to other causes. Students who attributed their worst grades to a lack of ability, a lack of effort, task difficulty, and their teachers were found to achieve more achievement standard credits and more Merits and Excellences than those who attributed their worst marks to bad luck, family/whānau, and friends (Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). Unlike some studies which have found no noticeable gender differences (Meece, Bower Glienke, & Burg, 2006), Meyer and her colleagues (Meyer et al., 2007; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009) found girls tended to attribute their best grade to effort, and attribute failure to lack of ability and task difficulty, more often than did boys.

Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) also found that the students who were aware of the newly introduced endorsement of NCEA certificates in 2007 and who indicated these endorsements definitely mattered to them, gained more internal and external achievement standards with Excellence, than other students. Overall, Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) found knowledge of certificate endorsement was generally associated with more positive motivational orientations over a two year period. It was anticipated that certificate endorsement may also feature as a significant factor in this current study, as there are many potential benefits for those students who have their NCEA certificate endorsed.

In relation to involvement in activities outside school, Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) found that students who were in part-time work and worked up to ten hours achieved more NCEA credits than those who worked more than ten hours a week or did not work at all. A similar pattern emerged for those students involved in school-related extracurricular activities for up to 15 hours a week. These results were also of interest, as it was assumed work commitments and other activities might be identified by some students in this current study as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve.

The second relevant study is a cross-sectional study that examined factors affecting 497 students' motivation to achieve Excellence in NCEA level 1 English. In this study, Garden (2012) identified six influential factors through a quantitative questionnaire and interview data: high aspirations, perceptions of lack of ability, motivation in English and teacher effectiveness, learning goals, performance goals, and absence of academic goals to achieve Excellence. Garden (2012) found many students believed they were

incapable of achieving Excellences in externally assessed English achievement standards, that students were reluctant to take responsibility for their own learning, that they were dependent on external influences such as teachers and parents for their motivation, and had difficulty setting clear achievement goals. Furthermore, she found no gender differences in students' beliefs.

From questionnaire data, Garden (2012) established that most students believed their parents expected them to put all their effort into their studies, thought it was important to get feedback from their teacher on how they could improve, and gained satisfaction from gaining an Excellence. A third of students had doubts about their ability to gain Achieved in English, and just under half had doubts about their ability to gain Excellences in NCEA level 1 English. Most students indicated that English was not their favourite subject, and nearly 60% did not find English interesting. However, two thirds of students liked the way their English teacher taught. Nearly half the students reported being distracted from their studies by other things they wanted to do. Interview data indicated that it was the quality of the relationship with their English teacher, the feedback and support provided by their teacher, their teacher's expectations, and their teacher's enthusiasm for English that influenced students' motivation to achieve Excellence. Students also appreciated seeing exemplars to understand what an Excellence piece of work looked like. Some commented on being motivated to compete against their friends.

The aspects listed above were also anticipated as being relevant to this study. What is unclear from Garden's (2012) study though, are which factors were most significant and why. Furthermore, the interview data failed to clarify in any detail some of the survey findings, such as why English was not students' favourite subject, or why they did not find it interesting. Surprisingly, one issue that was absent from the list was the continuous NCEA assessment demands that students face across all their subjects. While Garden (2012) briefly acknowledged that this was potentially problematic, little weight is given to the issue of limited time and resources. It appears students' performance in English was seen in isolation from the wider assessment context in which students were positioned.

The findings of both studies provide valuable information about students' motivation to achieve NCEA, and enable comparisons to be made with the findings of this current study. However, there are also aspects of students' motivation to achieve in NCEA that were not addressed by these two studies, such as examining students' motivation

to achieve specific achievement standards, examining students' perceptions over a school year in detail to gain greater clarity around the complex and diverse factors influencing students' motivation, and establishing what factors students considered most influential. Such an in-depth study across a school year is important in providing detailed insights into the complex and multidimensional nature of students' motivation in a context that has significant implications for students.

2.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced motivation and highlighted the concerns raised in research about the decline of adolescents' academic motivation as they progress through the school system. It then examined a range of key motivation theories and constructs that are widely recognised as relevant to students' motivation to achieve in the secondary school environment, and examined the associated empirical evidence. These theories included self-efficacy theory, attribution theory, achievement goal theory, future time perspective, goal setting, situational and individual interest, and self-determination theory (SDT). Each of these theories recognises social and contextual factors to a greater or lesser degree and also recognises ways in which student motivation can be positively enhanced, particularly through the actions of teachers.

Of these motivation theories, SDT was singled out as the overarching theoretical framework for this study. It was selected because of its capacity to explain different types of motivation, students' basic psychological needs, and the role of social and contextual influences that address or thwart these psychological needs; all of which were relevant in this study.

Each of the other theories and constructs discussed were also considered to be relevant to this study, as not all aspects of students' motivation could be effectively explained through the lens of SDT. It was assumed students' self-efficacy would be influential in their motivation, and that this self-efficacy was likely to be influenced largely by past performance on very similar tasks and also by teachers' comments. Given the significance of NCEA, it was also anticipated that students would make attributions about their perceived success or failure on assessment tasks related to NCEA English. These attributions would in turn influence students' motivation on similar NCEA English assessments. Students' interest or lack of it in aspects of English was also thought to potentially influence students' motivation to achieve particular achievement standards and English overall.

It was assumed that students would have selected or adopted goals in relation to NCEA and that some of these goals were likely to be relevant to their future career aspirations. It was also thought that students may develop a performance approach or performance avoidance goal orientation, given the emphasis that teachers, schools and parents placed on passing NCEA. In addition, it was assumed students would possess multiple goals that may create pressure and conflict for them, and thus impact on their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards.

In examining empirical research which drew on these motivation theories and constructs to explain students' academic motivation, it became apparent that there were few studies that examined senior secondary students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment. In particular, no studies could be located which used SDT as the key theoretical framework, especially to analyse students' qualitative responses. This dearth of studies was surprising, given the significance for individuals and society of students attaining school exit qualifications.

While the findings from the few international studies located were discussed, it was noted that some of the findings had limited applicability, as high-stakes certification assessment varies from one country to another. However, two studies on students' motivation in relation to NCEA were examined in more detail. While both studies provided valuable insights into aspects of students' motivation, there were identifiable gaps. Only one study examined students' motivation in relation to English and that study did not look at specific aspects of English. Neither study examined students' motivation to achieve specific achievement standards. Nor did either study examine students' perceptions in detail throughout the school year to gain greater clarity around the complex and diverse factors influencing students' motivation to achieve. Most importantly, neither study established what factors students considered most influential in their motivation to achieve NCEA.

In light of the importance of the topic, the limited number of studies available, and the identifiable gaps within the studies conducted to date, this longitudinal study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What motivation-related attitudes do students have regarding NCEA English?
In particular, do they:
 - a) expect to succeed in NCEA level 2 English?
 - b) value passing NCEA level 2 English?
 - c) value English as a subject?
 - d) find aspects of English interesting?

This first question provides important contextual information for understanding students' responses to the next two questions.

2. What factors do Year 12 students perceive as having a significant influence on their motivation to achieve:
 - a) specific level 2 English achievement standards?
 - b) NCEA level 2 English overall?

3. In what ways do Year 12 students perceive that the factors they identified as significant influence their motivation to achieve:
 - a) specific level 2 English achievement standards?
 - b) NCEA level 2 English overall?

Gender differences are also examined in the course of the study.

In answering these research questions this study sought to: confirm, challenge, and extend the findings of the two NCEA studies discussed; add to the limited number of national and international studies examining students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment, and in the area of English; and provide information for educators to enable them to better support students to be more motivated to achieve. In employing SDT as an overarching theoretical framework, its usefulness as an analytical tool for examining students' open-ended responses, and for explaining students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment is also highlighted.

In the next chapter the focus is on the research methodology employed in this study.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

A mixed methods research methodology was considered the most appropriate approach for addressing the research questions outlined in the previous chapter. These questions arose from a desire to research in greater depth and breadth the complex phenomenon of students' motivation as it relates to high-stakes certification assessment.

The next section begins with the rationale for choosing to employ a mixed methods methodology in this study, and is followed by an examination of the pragmatist beliefs that underpin this study. Further details of how this study meets the criteria for a mixed methods study and details about the research design, sampling, data analysis, and criteria to evaluate quality are also discussed in Section 3.2. Following the discussion on mixed methods methodology, the methods selected to collect data in this study, and potential issues associated with these methods, are examined in Section 3.3. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical issues associated with undertaking research involving human participants, and a summary. Chapter Four provides details of how the research methodology was implemented and specific ethical issues were addressed.

At the outset of the discussion on methodology and methods it is important to note that the terms 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' are used in a global manner to represent the research approaches that arise from the two major research traditions of positivism/postpositivism and constructivism/interpretivism (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

3.2. Research Methodology

A mixed methods research methodology was employed in this longitudinal study. The decision to use this type of methodology was driven by the research questions, which sought to understand the complexities of students' motivation to achieve in NCEA

level 2 English. It was decided that these research questions were best addressed by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, because neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone would be sufficient to fully address the research questions (J. C. Greene, 2008; Plano Clark & Badiee, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). As J. C. Greene and Caracelli (1997) have stated, “social phenomena are extremely complex, so different kinds of methods are needed to understand the important complexities of our social world more completely” (p. 7). The belief that the research questions should take primacy over research methods also reflects the pragmatist stance taken in this study.

While no consensus has been reached over a commonly agreed upon definition for mixed methods research (Creswell, 2011), for the purposes of this study a definition developed by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) was considered the most appropriate:

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (p. 123)

This definition captures the central intent of this study; that was “to gain breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration”. *Completeness* and *significance enhancement* were especially sought. These are two of a number of specific rationales identified by researchers for employing mixed methods research (e.g., Bryman, 2006a; Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Sutton, 2006; J. C. Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Completeness is “the notion that the researcher can bring together a more comprehensive account of the area of inquiry in which he or she is interested if both quantitative research and qualitative are employed” (Bryman, 2006a, p. 106). Significance enhancement involves mixing quantitative and qualitative techniques for the purposes “of enhancing researchers’ interpretation of the data” (Collins et al., 2006, p. 83). As Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) have noted, both completeness and significance enhancement are common reasons for employing mixed methods methodology.

Johnson et al.’s (2007) definition also captures another essential characteristic of mixed methods research important to this study; that of methodological eclecticism

(Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010), methodological eclecticism involves selecting the best techniques available from qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods to answer the research questions, and then integrating these “to more thoroughly investigate a phenomenon of interest” (p. 8). This study employs methodological eclecticism, as it draws on quantitative and qualitative methods to more thoroughly investigate students’ motivation in a high-stakes certification assessment context.

3.2.1. Pragmatism

Within the mixed methods research community there is considerable divergence around the philosophical beliefs underpinning mixed methods research (Creswell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). The stance of this study is that of pragmatism. There are different types of pragmatism (Goodman, 1995; Pihlström, 2011). The pragmatic approach taken in this study is primarily informed by the classical pragmatists (e.g., Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead) (Crotty, 1998; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Although there is no precise or accepted definition for pragmatism, there are a number of commonly agreed upon key concepts and characteristics that are pertinent to the pragmatist approach taken with this study (Pihlström, 2011).

A major tenet of pragmatism is the belief that quantitative and qualitative methods can be mixed, reflecting an anti-dualist stance that rejects the forced-choice between positivist/postpositivist and constructivist/interpretivist paradigms (e.g., objectivism vs subjectivism) (Howe, 1988; Johnson & Gray, 2010). However, there are those who have argued that qualitative and quantitative techniques cannot and should not be combined because they are grounded in incompatible epistemological and ontological assumptions (e.g., Sale, Lohfeld, & Brazil, 2002; J. K. Smith, 1983; J. K. Smith & Heshusius, 1986). This issue has been termed the *incompatibility thesis* by Howe (1988) and has been discredited on several grounds (Bergman, 2008; Bryman, 2012; Datta, 1994; Gorard, 2010; Hanson, 2008; House, 1994; Howe, 2003; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994; Schwandt, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

One argument that has been put forward by those arguing that quantitative and qualitative methods cannot be mixed is that the research methods employed by researchers are determined by their epistemological and ontological beliefs. The counter argument is that epistemological and ontological beliefs should not dictate the

methods employed in a study (Biesta, 2010; Howe, 1988; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Empirical support for this counter argument comes from large scale analyses of published articles that have not found a strong link between methods and epistemological and ontological assumptions (Bryman, 2012).

Another argument put forward for the incompatibility between quantitative and qualitative research is that quantitative research is assumed to be a theory-driven, hypothesis testing approach, while qualitative research is assumed to focus on theory generation. Again Bryman (2012) challenges this assumption. He notes that quantitative data from social surveys are often exploratory and therefore can be used to generate theories, while qualitative research can be used to test theories.

The difference between the focus on numbers verses words is also often cited as a distinct difference (Bryman, 2012; Vogt, 2007). However, there are numerous examples where researchers have quantitized qualitative findings (e.g., the numerical reporting of frequency with which particular themes are identified), and made qualitative judgments about numerical data (Vogt, 2007). Hanson (2008) also points out that numbers are socially constructed symbols that have no meaning beyond the context in which they are used. Howe (1988) also argues that the credibility of the results arising from statistical analyses is determined by their underlying assumptions and arguments, rather than by the preciseness of the numbers.

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) many of the arguments put forward by those who believe that qualitative and quantitative approaches are incompatible are based on false dichotomies. They argue that there are more similarities than there are differences.

Schwandt (2000) has gone as far as to argue that, "it is highly questionable whether such a distinction [between qualitative and quantitative inquiry] is any longer meaningful in helping us understand the purpose and means of human inquiry" (p. 210). Morse (1991) soundly sums up the views of many mixed methods researchers on the incompatibility thesis when she stated, "researchers who purport to subscribe to the philosophical underpinnings of only one research approach have lost sight of the fact that research methodologies are merely tools, instruments to be used to facilitate understanding" (p. 123).

In rejecting the forced-choice stance advocated by those supporting the incompatibility thesis, pragmatists take a synechistic position, viewing the world in terms of continua rather than binaries (Johnson & Gray, 2010). Pragmatists also believe paradigms are descriptive, rather than prescriptive and restrictive (J. C. Greene & Caracelli, 1997). They believe that no methodological approach is inherently better than any other in terms of generating knowledge (Biesta, 2010). Rather, research methodologies are evaluated, “not by *a priori* epistemological standards, but by the epistemological standard of their fruitfulness in *use*” (Howe, 2003, p. 11). As Patton (2002) pointed out, pragmatism “allows one to eschew methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality” (p. 72).

From an ontological perspective, pragmatists recognise there are singular and multiple realities (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). They acknowledge the existence of an “external world independent of the mind as well as that lodged in the mind” (Creswell, 2009, p. 11). From an epistemological perspective, pragmatists view knowledge “as being both constructed *and* based on the reality of the world we experience and live in” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). Given experience is one of the key concepts of pragmatism, pragmatists argue that knowledge must be anchored in experience (Eldridge & Pihlström, 2011). For pragmatists the focus is on intersubjectivity, rather than on objectivity or subjectivity (Morgan, 2007).

While this study is underpinned by the pragmatist beliefs outlined above, it also endorses the pragmatist belief that it is important to find workable solutions to practical real-world problems (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The study arose out of a concern for secondary students’ life chances being potentially limited by their performance in high-stakes certification assessment, and a desire to identify ways to improve students’ outcomes. It is from this practical concern that the research questions evolved. To successfully address these research questions, a mixed methods research methodology was considered most appropriate. As Creswell (2009) has noted, pragmatism is problem-centred, practically oriented, and pluralistic. Its focus is on what approaches work best to understand the research problem and answer the research questions, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative methods and assumptions where necessary (Creswell, 2009).

3.2.2. Research Questions in Mixed Methods Research

As indicated above the research questions determined the decision to employ a mixed methods methodology in this study. Plano Clark and Badiee (2010) have noted that research questions play a central role in the decision about which methodology will be employed. They also noted that “the mixed methods literature is uniform in its position that mixed methods research is appropriate when a study’s purpose and research questions warrant a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches” (Plano Clark & Badiee, 2010, p. 276).

3.2.3. Research Design

In relation to research design, a key criterion for a mixed methods study is that both quantitative and qualitative data need to be collected (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Normally the two types of data are collected concurrently or sequentially (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). While quantitative and qualitative data are both collected in this study, the research design of this two-phased study differs from many mixed methods studies as it contains both concurrent and sequential components.

In Phase One, quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently over a 12 month period, using 11 semi-structured written questionnaires which contained a mix of closed and open-ended questions. Questionnaires containing both of these types of questions are a common source of qualitative and quantitative data (Bryman, 2006a).

The 11 questionnaires consisted of four types of questionnaires: general questionnaires, pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires and an out of class activities questionnaire. One general questionnaire was administered at the beginning of Phase One and the other general questionnaire was administered at the end of Phase One. There were four pre-achievement questionnaires that were administered before student undertook the summative assessments for the four specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards examined in this study. There were also four post-achievement standard questionnaires, which were administered after students received their results from their achievement standard assessment tasks/exams for these four achievement standards. The last type of questionnaire focused on students out of class activities or commitments.

Phase Two involved individually interviewing a purposive subsample of participants from the group of Phase One participants to collect qualitative data. Participants' NCEA achievement data were used when selecting students for Phase Two and for informing some of the findings. This sequential component of the study depended on questionnaire data gathered in Phase One, with participants' Phase One quantitative and qualitative questionnaire responses being used to develop individualised interview schedules. The open-ended interview questions were aimed at getting each participant to elaborate or clarify points arising from their responses to the 11 questionnaires completed in Phase One.

Another key component of mixed methods methodology is that the research design "gives priority to one or to both forms of data" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 5). In Phase One of this study both quantitative and qualitative data were given equal priority. However, in Phase Two qualitative data was given priority in order to more fully understand students responses in Phase One. While both forms of data were essential to address the research questions, overall greater weight was given to qualitative data, because of the focus on understanding students' perceptions of their motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment. In giving somewhat greater emphasis to qualitative data, this study avoids the criticism often levelled against mixed methods research; that is the privileging of quantitative data over qualitative data, with qualitative data often playing a minor role (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Giddings, 2006; Howe, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011).

3.2.4. Data Analysis

In this study, as in most mixed methods studies, each type of data was initially analysed separately using appropriate quantitative and qualitative analytical principles and procedures (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010). However, a common aim in each analysis process was to reduce the data by "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data" to enable meaningful inferences to be drawn, while avoiding any significant loss of information (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). Both deduction and induction were employed when examining each type of data for patterns and insights (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

Results from these separate data analysis processes were interpreted to form inferences. These inferences were then integrated (e.g., comparing and contrasting, infusing, linking, or modifying) to form meta-inferences (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The process also involved eliminating rival explanations or hypotheses (Punch, 2005). The meta-inferences were used to answer the research questions, with the aim of ultimately contributing to theory, research, and practice (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

To ensure the inferences were sound, the analysis process and its products were closely audited (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010). This auditing process is somewhat easier with quantitative data analysis, as it is underpinned by statistical theory that guides the researcher (Maxwell & Miller, 2008). It is more demanding in the case of qualitative data analysis, as “there is little generally accepted theory that provides an underlying rationale for what qualitative researchers do when they analyse data” (Maxwell & Miller, 2008, p. 461). Nor is there a single methodological framework for undertaking qualitative analysis (Bazeley, 2010). Rather, Bazeley (2010) has argued that the methods employed to analyse the qualitative data need to be systematic, rigorous, and transparent to produce valid inferences.

Although there is considerable variety in the methods employed in qualitative data analysis, all involve coding data into categories. The coding process puts an interpretive structure on the data by “*fracturing* data, breaking data up, and disaggregating records” so the de-contextualized data are then “seen and heard through the category rather than the research event” (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 137, original emphasis). De-contextualized data are then re-contextualised through the process of identifying themes, patterns and connections (Tesch, 1990). The next stage involves the de-contextualized and re-contextualised data being re-examined in light of their original contexts to test the tentative inferences that have been drawn (Tesch, 1990).

While there are many potential issues inherent in mixed methods data analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010), two qualitative processes were singled out as important in this study. One was the coding process. Categories were continually scrutinised, refined, and reviewed to ensure they reliably captured the phenomenon being examined, and that they remained distinctly different (S. Irwin, 2008; Patton, 2002). An inter-coder reliability check was also undertaken to ensure consistent and sound coding practices had been employed with the open-ended data (Cohen et al., 2011).

The other issue was that of *conversion validity*. This concept “refers to the extent to which a mixed methods researcher makes high-quality data transformations

(*quantitizing* or *qualitizing*) and appropriate interpretations and meta-inferences based on the transformed data” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 275, original emphasis). Conversion validity was particularly pertinent to this study, as the intention was to transform some qualitative data into numerical data to assist in identifying those themes which have greater saliency than others, to allow others to judge the importance of those themes, and to enable findings to be communicated in more concise terms.

However, this transformation process is not without issues (Bazeley, 2010; Sandelowski, Voils, & Knafel, 2009). Counting responses or themes is a highly subjective process, as results can easily be distorted by the way in which responses are interpreted (Sandelowski et al., 2009). To avoid data being misinterpreted, explanations accompanied the presentation of numerical data to detail the enumeration process and what it was based upon (e.g., number of students, number of responses, or number of references to a concept). When reporting the findings in numerical terms, efforts were also made not to lose the complexity and richness of the qualitative data (Sandelowski et al., 2009).

3.2.5. Quality in Mixed Methods Research

Of utmost importance in any research is the quality or validity of the research, as “research needs to be defensible to the research and practice communities for whom the research is produced and used” (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006, p. 48). Within the mixed methods research community there is widespread recognition that validity issues are in their infancy (Bryman, 2006b; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). There is little common agreement as to how quality or validity should be determined in mixed methods studies, given that the quality of quantitative and qualitative studies is judged against very different criteria using different terminology (Bryman, 2006b; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Sale & Brazil, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). However, while there is no agreement on how to determine quality, there is agreement that mixed methods are inherently no more or no less valid than other methodological approaches (Bazeley, 2004).

In this study, Teddlie and Tashakkori’s (2009) integrative framework was adopted, as it uses a set of sound criteria to address and reconcile the qualitative and quantitative standards for assessing the credibility or validity of the inferences made in mixed

methods studies. This framework focuses on both *inference quality* and *inference transferability*. Inference quality encompasses the criteria for evaluating the quality of the conclusions that are made on the basis of the findings, with a focus on such aspects as internal validity and credibility of the conclusions and interpretations. Inference quality judgments focus on both the process that the researcher employs to make meaning out of data, and the product; that is the conclusions reached. Inference transferability becomes relevant once the inferences that are made within a study are judged to be well conceived and credible. These criteria have guided the design and analysis of the research findings of this study.

3.2.6. Sampling

As mixed methods employ both qualitative and quantitative approaches, a combination of probability and purposive samples are usually employed by researchers using this type of research methodology (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). However, only purposive sampling was employed in this study. This occurred for two reasons. First, it was important to recruit participants who had “experienced the central phenomena or the key concept being explored in the study” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 173). Second, it was not logistically possible to employ probability sampling in this study. As Kemper, Stringfield, and Teddlie (2003) have noted, sampling is an inherently practical matter. The important question is whether the sampling strategy employed enables the researcher to gain the data needed to answer the research questions (Kemper et al., 2003; Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

For Phase One of this study, 116 Year 12 students from volunteered to participate from two large co-educational high schools from a potential pool of 232 A Stream English students. This was purposive sampling for maximum variation (Collins, 2010); that is recruiting a large number of students across different classes and two different schools to maximise the range of perspectives on factors influencing students’ motivation in NCEA level 2 English. For the second phase, stratified purposive sampling was used for the purposes of comparability (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). A subgroup of 16 students was selected to be individually interviewed on the basis of their results in NCEA level 2 English and their gender. More details are provided in Chapter Four on participant recruitment for Phase One and participant selection for Phase Two.

In addition to ensuring that the sampling strategy is appropriate for answering the research questions, Kemper et al. (2003) have also argued that the sample should

provide the opportunity for transferability of findings to other settings or populations. In this study a pragmatist's notion of transferability is being advocated; that is a focus on "what people can do with the knowledge they produce and not on abstract arguments of the possibility or impossibility of generalizability" (Morgan, 2007, p. 72).

3.3. Research Methods

The focus of this section is on the qualitative and quantitative methods employed in this study. Specifically, it examines the rationale for developing and employing semi-structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data gathering instruments in this study. These two different methods were chosen because, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994) have noted, it is difficult for a single method to fully capture the richness and diversity of people's experiences. Also discussed are the limitations and potential issues associated with the use of these two instruments that were considered when undertaking this study. Chapter Four describes the development and the use of these two instruments in this study.

3.3.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were selected as a key data gathering instrument in this longitudinal, mixed methods study because they are highly efficient and versatile instruments for gathering data over a period of time from a large group of participants (Check & Schutt, 2012). The decision was made to develop semi-structured questionnaires comprising a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, thus enabling both quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered through one instrument (Cohen et al., 2011).

There were several reasons for developing semi-structured questionnaires, rather than relying on existing questionnaires. Most importantly, a wide range of closed and open-ended questions were required to collect the quantitative and qualitative data needed to answer the research questions in this mixed methods study. No existing questionnaire provided the range of questions that were needed to capture the complexity of students' motivation within the NCEA environment. Furthermore, most pre-existing questionnaires are structured questionnaires, providing only quantitative data. While structured questionnaires can enhance the manageability of data and the generalisability of the results, this can be at the cost of appreciating the variety of meanings that students attribute to their educational experiences (Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Urdan & Mestas, 2006); an important consideration in this study. The

questions and the questionnaires also needed to be appropriate for the context in which data were being sought and for the longitudinal nature of this study. As a result, four types of purpose-designed questionnaires were developed to be administered at different points across the 12 month data gathering period.

When developing questionnaires for this study, a consistent focus was maintained on both the research objectives and population from which participants would be drawn, to ensure valid data were gathered (Check & Schutt, 2012). To enhance the response rate and quality of the data gathered, attention was given to the quality, clarity, and sequencing of the questions, the clarity of the instructions, and the layout of the questionnaires (Cohen et al., 2011; Fowler, 2009). Questions were pretested with a pilot group to ensure they functioned effectively to achieve the research objectives. The details of the piloting process are outlined in Chapter Four.

The length of the questionnaires and the cognitive demands of the questions were also taken into consideration in an effort to limit respondent fatigue and satisficing (Ben-Nun, 2008; Krosnick, 1999). Satisficing occurs when respondents answer questions superficially, rather than thoughtfully (Krosnick, 1999). Superficial responses can greatly affect the validity and reliability of the data being collected. To further minimise satisficing, Krosnick (1999) has suggested that participants are reminded that their responses are valued. While social desirability can also be an issue (Check & Schutt, 2012), it was not considered to be an issue in this study, given the focus of the research questions.

Also of concern is the impact of questioning participants using the same or similar questions administered at different times through repeated questionnaires in longitudinal studies. Participants' responses to questions that they have previously encountered may be affected because they are encountering the same question again (Ruspini, 2008). However, the importance of using some of the same or similar questions to aggregate responses and allow comparisons to be made outweighed this concern.

3.3.2. Interviews

Interviews feature strongly in qualitative research, because they are one of the most effective and direct ways to access "people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality" (Punch, 2005, p. 168). Furthermore, they are

versatile and flexible (Sarantakos, 2005). However, as Richards and Morse (2007) have noted, conducting an effective interview “requires extraordinary concentration”, as it is “the nature of the questions asked and the attention the researcher gives the participants and to detail that determine the quality of the data collected” (p. 109).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were considered to be the most appropriate means of eliciting the type of information sought from participants; that was asking participants to elaborate on or clarify their questionnaire responses from Phase One. Semi-structured interviews are inherently flexible. The opportunity to vary the questions asked in an interview was an important consideration when seeking to understand students’ motivation in greater depth (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face, as this approach followed naturally from the personal contact established during Phase One. Face-to-face interviews have the added advantage of drawing on multi-sensory channels of communication: verbal and non-verbal, spoken, and heard (Cohen et al., 2011). Other aspects were also given due consideration, such as where the interview would be conducted, the importance of establishing a positive rapport, and ensuring the interviews were conducted professionally and sensitively (Kolar & Kolar, 2008; Mertens, 2010; Sarantakos, 2005).

During the interview care was taken to maintain the dynamics of the interview; in particular to keep the interview flowing and focused on the research objectives (Cohen et al., 2011). Throughout the interview efforts were made to listen attentively, observe the interviewee’s body language, show an interest in what was being said, and to not lead the interviewee to give a particular response (Cohen et al., 2011; Richards & Morse, 2007). Given the cognitive demands associated with comprehending a question, recalling information, and constructing a response, time was allowed for interviewees to think about their responses (Sarantakos, 2005). Providing *wait time* has been found to increase the quantity and quality of responses given (Rowe, 1974, 1986). For the same reasons time was taken to consider an interviewee’s response before proceeding with the next question (Rowe, 1986).

Digitally recording the interviews enabled full attention to be given to the interviewee, the interview questions, and the dynamics of the interview (Cohen et al., 2011). Having an interview schedule also helped to ensure key areas were covered, and that greater attention was given to the interviewees and their responses (McCracken, 1988).

While interviews are very versatile and useful for gathering data, they also have their limitations and potential issues. Some of these issues are the same as those identified in relation to questionnaires, such as respondent fatigue, satisficing, and social desirability. Efforts were made to minimise these issues by keeping the interviews relatively short and focused, by closely monitoring interviewees, showing an interest in their responses, ensuring they knew that their contributions were valued, and not becoming overly friendly (Check & Schutt, 2012; Fowler, 2009; Krosnick, 1999).

Inherent within the interview process are other potential issues. With semi-structured interviews there is a greater risk that questions may be poorly phrased, but equally there are opportunities to rephrase, clarify, or elaborate. Verbal and non-verbal responses, manner, voice, attentiveness, and ability to probe appropriately can all influence an interviewee's responses (Cohen et al., 2011; Fowler, 2009; Gomm, 2008; Richards & Morse, 2007). While it is impossible to eliminate these issues, considerable care was taken to minimise their impact.

Transcriptions of digitally recorded interviews can also be problematic. Any errors made in the transcribing process can affect the analysis and interpretation of what has been said (Bryman, 2007). Also, transcriptions do not capture everything that occurred during the interview. In particular, they fail to capture the nuances of the social interactions that occur, such as the tone and inflection of the voices, pauses, and body language, which all impact on the way in which meaning is interpreted (Cohen et al., 2011). However, in this study these concerns were somewhat negated by the fact that I undertook all the interviews, and thus was able to analyse the data with a recollection of what occurred during the interviews.

3.4. Research Ethics

When undertaking research involving human beings there is a moral imperative to adhere to sound ethical principles, and to fully identify and appropriately address any ethical issues associated with the research project. Ethical issues can be wide-ranging and include such issues as gaining voluntary and informed consent from participants; risks for participants and associated institutions; privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; differential power relationships; social and cultural issues; integrity and accuracy in the analysis of data; and the reporting of findings (Dingwall, 2012; Doucett & Mauthner, 2002; Israel & Hay, 2006; T. Miller & Bell, 2002; Oliver, 2010).

Careful consideration was given to ethical principles and ethical issues that were relevant to this study, in particular those issues linked to the involvement and treatment of participants (Israel & Hay, 2006). The following two subsections explore these ethical principles and issues in more detail, while their specific application in this study is examined in more detail in Chapter Four.

3.4.1. Informed and Voluntary Consent

Informed and voluntary consent consists of four key elements: “information on which to make the decision, comprehension of the information, competence to make a decision and give formal consent”, and “absence of pressure or coercion” (Massey University, 2010, p. 9).

General guidelines recommend that potential participants are informed of the purpose, scope and duration of the research; what is expected of them; their right to withdraw at any time without being questioned; possible risks to them; how privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity issues will be addressed; how the findings will be disseminated; and contact details if questions arise (Christians, 2011; Israel & Hay, 2006; Oliver, 2010; Sarantakos, 2005). This information must be comprehensible to the participants. It is only when the participants have a substantial understanding of all that is involved, that they can truly give informed consent (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). These recommendations were adhered to in this study.

To ensure informed consent was voluntarily given, no coercion or pressure was applied (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). Potential participants were also given sufficient time to consider whether they wished to be involved (Oliver, 2010). Very importantly, potential participants were assured that refusal to participate would not disadvantage them in any way.

The informed and voluntary consent process did not stop there, however. As this was a longitudinal study, the issue of ongoing consent also needed to be considered. T. Miller and Bell (2002) have argued that researchers are ethically obliged to continue to renegotiate informed consent in ways that do not involve current participants feeling compelled to continue to be involved in the research project. It was assumed that this issue was satisfactorily addressed when students elected to continue completing questionnaires in their own time.

As part of the informed consent process, participants were assured, both verbally and in writing that they had the right to withdraw at any point, without notice, and without any need for an explanation. Upholding participants' right to withdraw without explanation helped to ensure participants were treated with dignity, and that their rights to freedom and autonomy were respected (Oliver, 2010). Participants were also made aware that they had the right to request that the data they had provided be returned to them, and that there were no penalties for not continuing to be part of the study (Oliver, 2010).

Appropriate principles and practices were also applied when voluntary and informed consent was sought from the two schools involved in this study (Oliver, 2010). In this instance consent was sought from the appropriate gatekeepers (e.g., principal and board of trustees of a school), as they were responsible for ensuring no harm came to the participants or to the school (Oliver, 2010).

3.4.2. Privacy and Confidentiality

Throughout this study, every effort was made to respect participants' and the schools' rights to privacy and confidentiality. In adhering to these rights, the principles of autonomy, freedom, justice, and non-maleficence were being addressed (Israel & Hay, 2006; Oliver, 2010).

In relation to privacy issues, participants in this study were made aware of their right to decline to answer any questions that they were not comfortable answering (Oliver, 2010). They were also assured that their personal details would not be divulged to a third party. When addressing confidentiality issues, participants and schools were advised in writing who would have access to the data they provided, how that data would be used, and assured that their identities would not be revealed (Oliver, 2010). They were also advised how the data would be securely stored, the length of time it would be stored, and what would happen to the data at the end of that period of time (Oliver, 2010). Consideration was also given to confidentiality issues associated with the use of a transcriber to transcribe the interviews and an inter-coder reliability check that was undertaken.

Anonymity was not possible in this study. Identifying information was needed to track participants, to enable face-to-face interviews to be conducted, and to administer questionnaires to groups of participants in a face-to-face context (Cohen et al., 2011).

However, confidentiality was maintained when reporting the findings. When reporting qualitative findings individuals' identities were hidden through the use of a coding system for questionnaire data and the use of pseudonyms for interviewees. When reporting quantitative findings, the aggregation of data provided anonymity (Oliver, 2010). Such procedures ensured individuals' data was non-traceable (Cohen et al., 2011).

When reporting the findings, confidentiality was also provided for the two schools involved in the study. Care was taken to ensure that descriptions of the schools would not lead to their identification (Oliver, 2010). While confidentiality can never be absolutely guaranteed, the utmost was done to try to achieve this when reporting the findings of this study.

3.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the mixed methods research methodology underpinning this study. In particular, the research design, the data analysis and sampling approaches, the assessment of quality, and the paradigmatic stance were examined in light of mixed methods theory and research. Following this examination was a discussion of the theoretical and practical concerns associated with the development and use of semi-structured survey and interview data collection methods. Finally, the ethical principles and issues that were relevant to this study were discussed.

The next chapter details how the ethical issues were addressed, the development and piloting of the data collection instruments, the processes and procedures employed in Phases One and Two, and how the data were analysed in this study.

Chapter 4.

Methods

4.1. Introduction

This longitudinal, mixed methods study was conducted within the New Zealand secondary school system over a 16 month period, beginning in March 2010 and concluding in July 2011. The study focused on Year 12 students' motivation to achieve the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 2 English overall and four specific English achievement standards.

This chapter describes the methods and procedures employed throughout this study, along with other relevant information. The chapter is divided into eight sections. Following this introductory section, Section 4.2 details how the key ethical issues were addressed, while Section 4.3 provides information on the participants. Section 4.4 describes the pilot study, the development of the questionnaires for Phase One, and the development of the interview schedules for Phase Two of the study. Section 4.5 outlines the process of gaining school access and participants' consent. Section 4.6 explains how data were collected during the two phases of the study, while Section 4.7 details the data analysis processes employed. The chapter concludes with a chronological summary of the research process.

4.2. Ethical Considerations

To conduct this research in an ethical manner that respected the rights, well-being, and dignity of participants, care was taken to identify and address ethical issues inherent within this study. A detailed ethics application was submitted to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B and approval was granted (application 09/57). After feedback from the pilot study group, further amendments were sought and subsequently approved. The following two subsections discuss in greater detail how specific ethical issues were addressed in this study.

4.2.1. Voluntary and Informed Consent

The first stage of the informed consent process involved gaining written permission from the principals and the boards of trustees¹² of the two secondary schools selected for the study (see Appendices A1, A2, and A3 for the letter, information sheet and consent form). The second stage of the consent process involved gaining the verbal approval of the heads of the English department of each school to meet with Year 12 English teachers of A Stream English classes. The third stage involved gaining Year 12 English teachers' approval to access their English classes in order to speak to potential participants (see Appendices A4 and A5 for the information sheet and consent form).

Each of the information sheets supplied to the principals, boards of trustees, and the teachers explained the purpose, duration, scope and potential benefits of the study; how voluntary participation and informed consent would be sought; what was required of participants, teachers, and the school; the rights of the participants and the school; and contact details if additional clarification was needed.

The fourth stage of the informed consent process involved speaking to Year 12 students about the study, giving them an opportunity to ask questions, and providing them with information sheets (see Appendix A6). These sheets explained the purpose of the research, what was expected of them as participants, their rights, and contact details if additional clarification was needed. Potential participants were encouraged to show the information sheet to their parents and to discuss their decision to participate with their parents. They were also given five days in which to return their written consent forms. One consent form (Appendix A7) also included a request for participants' contact details (postal and email addresses, and phone numbers) in order to send out an initial letter, contact students about meeting arrangements if needed, follow up questionnaire completion if students were absent, and to inform participants of the research findings. In 15 cases where students were less than 16 years of age, parental consent was also sought (see Appendix A8).

Participants' voluntary and informed consent was also required by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) before NZQA would release participants' levels 1 and 2

¹² "All of New Zealand's state and state-integrated schools have a board of trustees. The board of trustees is the Crown entity responsible for the governance and the control of the management of the school. The board is the employer of all staff in the school, is responsible for setting the school's strategic direction in consultation with parents, staff and students, and ensuring that its school provides a safe environment and quality education for all its students" (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 1).

English results to me (see Appendix A9). Students were made aware of what they were consenting to and why these results were needed in the information sheet provided. I was also required to sign an NZQA ethical release of data consent form (see Appendix A10).

Potential participants were informed that participation was voluntary. In a letter thanking students for volunteering and detailing organisational matters associated with the study, volunteers were reminded that they could withdraw at any point without needing to explain, and given an assurance they would not be pressured to continue (see Appendix A11). With regards to the issue of ongoing consent in longitudinal research (T. Miller & Bell, 2002), it was assumed that participants' ongoing consent was freely given when students chose to complete questionnaires during their lunch break, or to complete these at home in their own time over the duration of the study.

Voluntary and informed consent was also sought for Phase Two of this study. Of the 107 participants who completed all 11 questionnaires, 16 students were selected for interview. Each was sent a detailed information sheet and consent form (see Appendices A12 and A13). Potential interviewees had the opportunity to ask questions, time to consider whether they wished to be involved, and were informed that participation was voluntary.

4.2.2. Privacy and Confidentiality

Throughout this research, efforts were made to respect participants' rights to privacy, and confidentiality. In relation to privacy, participants were informed through the information sheets that they had the right to decline to answer any questions they did not wish to answer when completing questionnaires or being interviewed. Interviewees were reminded of this right just prior to their interview. They were also given the opportunity to delete information they did not want included when reviewing their transcripts. Each interviewee signed a consent form releasing this data once they had checked their transcript (see Appendix A14).

Confidentiality issues were addressed as described in the information sheets for Phase One and Phase Two of this study (see Appendices A6 and A12). Specifically, potential participants were assured that I would be the only person to have access to data that contained information from which they could be identified, and that their identity would not be revealed when reporting the findings of this study. A statement to this effect was

also placed at the beginning of each questionnaire, except for one, which was an oversight on my part.

The participants' identity and contact details were not shared with others, although participants were aware of the identity of other participants from their school, as they were often in the same room filling out questionnaires. English teachers and senior management were not informed as to who had elected to participate. Nor were they informed about the identity of the other school from which participants had been drawn. Participants' contact details, their questionnaires, and their transcribed interviews were securely stored and could only be accessed by me. The transcriber signed a confidentiality form prior to transcribing any interview data and was required to delete the electronic files once the transcription work was completed (see Appendix A15).

When reporting the findings from this study, the participants' and the schools' identities were hidden. A coding system was used when quoting participants' open-ended questionnaire responses, while pseudonyms were used when referring to interviewees and their interview data. Quantitative data were aggregated so no individuals could be identified. Having a large number of participants drawn from two different schools out of ten different English classes also significantly lessened the risk of individual participants being identified. Participants were also specifically asked not to identify teachers by name in their questionnaires or interview comments. Lastly, in an effort to hide the identities of the two schools, the schools were described in very general terms.

4.3. Participants

Participants were drawn from ten Year 12 A Stream English classes across two large New Zealand state, co-educational secondary schools. From the pool of 232 Year 12 students in A Stream English classes across both schools, 116 participants volunteered to participate. These students had achieved on average 6.7 of the nine available NCEA level 1 English achievement standards.¹³

Of the 116 participants who agreed to participate, nine participants did not complete all 11 questionnaires. Two students moved overseas, two left school, two were not contactable, two students' questionnaires were lost in the post, and one student had

¹³ Approximately half the students also completed at least one English unit standard at NCEA level 1 that a school chose as a replacement for one achievement standard. This has not been calculated as part of the average, as no official verification from NZQA was sought for unit standards. Unit standards were not used in NCEA level 2 A Stream English in either school.

too many other commitments to continue. Consequently, the results of this study are based on the data gathered from the 107 participants who completed all 11 questionnaires, and the sub-group of 16 participants who were interviewed.

In terms of gender, the purposive sample of 107 students closely mirrored the proportion of males and females from the pool of 232 potential participants. The sample consisted of 33.6% (n = 36) males and 66.4% (n = 71) females, while in the pool of 232 potential participants there were 37.5% (n = 87) males and 62.5% (n = 145) females. In terms of age, 92 participants were between 16 and 17 years of age at the beginning of the study, while the remaining 15 students were between 15 years 8 months and 15 years 11 months.

In relation to ethnicity, participants were asked to select up to two ethnic groups that they identified with, in recognition that, “ethnicity is self perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group” (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.). Table 4.1 provides information on participants’ ethnicities.¹⁴

Table 4.1: Participants’ ethnicities (n = 107)

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
Pākehā/New Zealand European	74.8	80
Pākehā and Māori	15.9	17
Māori	2.8	3
Other	6.2	7

4.4. Development of Data Gathering Instruments

This section explains the development of the questionnaires and interview schedules. Also included is an explanation of how the instruments were piloted.

4.4.1. Development of the Questionnaires

Four different types of semi-structured, written questionnaires were developed for this longitudinal study: the two general questionnaires, the four pre- and the four post-achievement standard questionnaires, and another questionnaire which focused on

¹⁴ It was not possible to gain information about the ethnicities of the potential pool of 232 students to establish the degree to which the sample reflected the ethnic makeup of the cohort from which they were drawn.

extra-curricular activities. The rationale for developing and employing semi-structured questionnaires has been discussed in the previous chapter. Each of the four types of questionnaires served a specific purpose. However, a number of common questions were repeated across three of the four types of questionnaires. The fourth type of questionnaire, the Outside Class Activities Questionnaire, was markedly different and very short. In total there were 11 questionnaires. These questionnaires are listed in Table 4.2. A brief description of the focus of each questionnaire is also provided. (Also see Appendices B1-B5 for examples of the questionnaires.)

Table 4.2: Name and focus of each of the 11 questionnaires

Name of Questionnaire	Focus
Initial Questionnaire	Motivation in NCEA level 1 English and predictions about performance in NCEA level 2 English.
Pre-Achievement Standard 2.1 Questionnaire Post-Achievement Standard 2.1 Questionnaire	Motivation for the creative writing achievement standard 2.1 (internally assessed).
Pre-Achievement Standard 2.2 Questionnaire Post-Achievement Standard 2.2 Questionnaire	Motivation for the formal writing achievement standard 2.2 (internally assessed).
Pre-Achievement Standard 2.3/2.4 Questionnaire Post-Achievement Standard 2.3/2.4 Questionnaire	Motivation for the extended text achievement standard 2.3, or short texts achievement standard 2.4 (externally assessed). Students could choose one or the other, depending on which they believed they were most likely to complete in the external exams, as not all students completed both in the exams.
Pre-Achievement Standard 2.6 Questionnaire Post-Achievement Standard 2.6 Questionnaire	Motivation for the unfamiliar text achievement standard 2.6 (externally assessed).
Outside Class activities Questionnaire	Regular activities students are engaged in outside class (e.g., sporting commitments, part-time work)
Final Questionnaire	Motivation over the year in NCEA level 2 English.

The development of questions for each of the questionnaires occurred after a wide ranging literature review was undertaken to identify various theories that were likely to be applicable to the research objectives of this study. While self-determination theory was the overarching theoretical framework guiding this study, a number of closed and open-ended questions were also developed around other specific motivation theories and constructs, such as self-efficacy, interest, and attribution theory. In addition, closed and open-ended questions were incorporated, which focused on social and contextual

factors that might potentially influence students' motivation. Moreover, general open-ended questions were included to allow students to list factors that they identified as being most influential in their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English overall and the four specific English achievement standards. In the Final Questionnaire students were asked to rank their responses from the most to the fourth most influential factor influencing their motivation. This ranking process enabled the most salient factors to be identified.

The majority of closed questions used Likert-type response scales (e.g., a five-point scale from *very unhappy* to *very happy*). Each of these closed questions was usually followed by an open-ended question, to allow participants to explain, qualify, or justify why they selected a particular choice in the preceding closed question (Hall, 2008). The pairing of open-ended questions with closed questions was aimed at enhancing the meaningfulness of the data gathered and the accuracy of interpretation. For example, if students indicated that their parents influenced their motivation *a lot*, then the open-ended question helped to obtain an understanding of how the students believed their parents influenced their motivation, and if that influence was positive or negative. In turn these qualitative data were then quantized to determine which parental influences on students' motivation were most salient.

In some instances, filter questions were used to gather the most useful data. For example, if students indicated that their friends had influenced their motivation *a lot*, they were directed to the contingent question to explain why, whereas if they answered *a bit* or *not at all*, they were directed to skip the contingent question. In such instances only factors that were perceived to be influential were required in keeping with the focus of this study.

One key open-ended question involved students identifying up to four factors they believed had the most influence on their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English. The question that immediately followed this question asked students to then rank their responses from the most influential to the least influential (see Question 11 (b) in the Final Questionnaire in Appendix B5). The ranking was important for determining the most influential factors overall.

Care was taken with the wording and sequencing of questions, instructions, and layout, to enhance the response rate and consistency of the responses (Fowler, 2009). The length of the questionnaires and the cognitive demands of the questions were also

taken into consideration to limit respondent fatigue and satisficing (Ben-Nun, 2008; Krosnick, 1999). Advice on all these aspects was sought from the pilot group (see subsection 4.4.3). For instance, the pilot group recommended that examples of possible answers be provided for a number of open-ended questions, thus helping participants understand the type of response they might give, and thereby lessening the cognitive effort required. (There was a concern that participants might simply copy these, but this rarely occurred.)

The issue of social desirability was also considered. At the top of each questionnaire was a statement that stressed there were no right or wrong answers and emphasised the importance of giving answers that really reflected each participant's views, thoughts and feelings.

The questionnaires were designed to be self-administered in groups, in a face-to-face context, under my supervision. The inclusion of all the instructions within the questionnaires ensured a degree of consistency across different situations and time. Furthermore, designing the questionnaires to be self-administered enabled students to complete the questionnaires at different rates, and catered for those students who arrived late, or needed to complete a questionnaire at home.

4.4.2. Development of Interview Schedules

Semi-structured interviews were selected as a suitable tool for extending the knowledge and understanding gained from the questionnaires. The purpose of the interviews was to ask 16 of the 107 participants to elaborate on particular responses that they had made in the 11 questionnaires to more fully understand the factors influencing their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English and specific English achievement standards. Given that the purpose of the interviews was to gather qualitative data, the interview questions were all open-ended.

Each set of interview questions began with the same opening question, "*Can you tell me what it was like for you doing NCEA English last year?*" Each interview ended with the same two closing questions, "*What advice would you give teachers on how to help students feel motivated to do well in Year 12 NCEA English?*" and "*Thinking about your motivation in NCEA English are there any other points you think it would be good for me to know about?*" The questions in between the opening and closing questions were specific to each of the 16 participants. As the questions arose from a review of each

student's responses from their 11 completed questionnaires, 16 individualised interview schedules were created. However, it was expected that other questions would be asked during the interview when the need arose to seek greater depth and breadth of understanding.

4.4.3. Pilot Study

In October 2009, a request was made to a secondary school principal to pilot the questionnaires and trial the interview process for this study with six students (three males and three females) from Year 12 A Stream English classes. This school was one of the two schools from which students were drawn for the main study in 2010. NCEA level 1 English results were used to ensure that the students selected varied in ability from "average" to "very able". Each student was sent a letter inviting them to be part of the pilot group, and outlined the purpose of the research, why their input was important, and gave assurances that the data they provided would only be used for the purposes specified. Face-to-face meetings were subsequently arranged with the group during their lunch breaks.

Initially the students were asked to answer the questions in a prototype of the Initial Questionnaire, and to make notes of any specific words, questions, or instructions they did not understand, and questions they found frustrating to answer. They were also asked for advice on the layout of the questions. At the conclusion of this process the students shared the points they had noted and discussed possible solutions to issues that were raised. This feedback was then used to make changes to the prototypes of the Initial Questionnaire, the pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires and the Final Questionnaire. The review process was repeated three times with successive improvements being made to each type of questionnaire. The only exception was the Outside Class Activities Questionnaire, which was developed later when it became apparent participants were often involved in other activities that might potentially affect their motivation. This iterative review process was concluded when students considered the questionnaires were ready to be administered to participants.

Members of the pilot group were also asked to identify all the factors they believed had an important influence on their motivation in NCEA level 2 English. These factors were discussed and compared. Based on their feedback, a list was produced, reviewed by the pilot group, and then finalised. The list became the basis for Question 7a in the pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires and Question 6a in the Final

Questionnaire. The interview process was also trialled with two members of the pilot group with individualised interview schedules developed from their responses to the prototype questionnaires.

Advice was sought from the pilot group as to whether participants should complete these questionnaires electronically outside school hours. They were unanimously against this idea on the grounds that students were unlikely to complete the questionnaires outside school hours because of other activities or commitments. Instead, they recommended that participants complete paper-based questionnaires during their lunch breaks. This advice led to a request to the ethics committee for approval to amend the original proposal to allow participants to complete questionnaires at school during their lunch breaks.

The piloting process was valuable and informative. The significance of the pilot group's contribution was evident in the fact that nearly all the participants in the main study completed all the questionnaires, the questions elicited the types of responses that would have been expected, and participants rarely asked for clarification when completing the questionnaires. As a result of trialling, the interview process with the participants also went smoothly. "Thank you" letters were sent to each member of the pilot group and the principal.

4.5. Gaining School and Participant Involvement and Consent

After receiving ethics approval, appointments were made with the principals of two state secondary schools. These two schools were selected for three reasons. First, they were large, thus increasing the likelihood of obtaining a reasonable sized sample. Second, they were co-educational, thus ensuring that the sample would contain both male and female participants. Third, they were "average" schools in terms of their decile rating.¹⁵ One school was ranked as decile 5 and the other was ranked as decile 6. It was assumed that selecting schools in the mid decile range increased the likelihood of having students from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds participating in the study.

¹⁵ Decile rankings are used by the New Zealand Ministry of Education to allocate funding to schools. "There are ten deciles and around 10% of schools are in each decile. A school's decile rating indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students" (Ministry of Education, 2012b, p. 1).

At the meeting with each principal, the proposed study was outlined and the implications for the school and the participants were discussed. Both principals were positive about the proposed study. Following these meetings a joint letter was sent to each school's principal and the chairperson of the board of trustees. Included was an information sheet outlining the research and detailing the implications. Also included was a consent form for both the principal and the chair of the board to sign (see Appendices A1, A2, and A3).

Once both school consents were received, the proposed study was discussed with the head of the English Department in each school and a request was made to speak with those staff teaching Year 12 A Stream English classes. A meeting was held at each school to explain the study to interested English teaching staff. The teachers were asked whether they would be willing to give me access to their Year 12 A Stream English classes, and to keep me informed of when their classes would be internally assessed against achievement standards 2.1 (creative writing) and 2.2 (formal writing), and when students would receive their results for these achievement standards. Information sheets and consent forms were provided (see Appendices A4 and A5). Ten teachers who attended these meetings agreed to give me access to their classes.

Each teacher was subsequently contacted to arrange a suitable time for me to introduce the project to their Year 12 A Stream English class. An English lesson scheduled just before a morning or lunch break was selected. The last ten minutes of that lesson were used to outline the study to students and ask if they would be willing to consider participating. The morning break or lunch break allowed time for additional questions to be asked. Those students expressing an interest were given an information sheet and two consent forms (see Appendices A6, A7 and A8). One consent form was for agreeing to complete questionnaires, while the other was to give the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) permission to release their level 1 and level 2 NCEA English achievement standards results. This latter form was developed in consultation with NZQA. A sealed box was placed at each school's reception counter, in which students were able to insert their signed consent forms in a sealed envelope.

For organisational purposes participants were assigned to one of ten research groups based on the English class from which they were drawn. Each group was assigned a letter of the alphabet (e.g., Research Group F). Participants were then sent a letter (see Appendix A11) thanking them for agreeing to participate, outlining when and

where to meet to complete the first questionnaire, which research group they were in, and reminding them they were free to withdraw at any time without needing to provide any explanation.

Consent was also sought from the parents of the 15 students under 16 years of age and from the 16 students who were selected to be interviewed in Phase Two.

4.6. Data Collection Procedures

The first subsection explains the data collection procedures for Phase One of the study, while the second subsection explains the process employed in Phase Two of the study. Figure 4.1 at the end of this section (p. 90) provides a chronological overview of the different data collection points for both Phases.

4.6.1. Phase One – The Questionnaire Phase

Over a 12 month period beginning in March 2010, groups of students came to an assigned room during their lunch break to complete questionnaires. They were advised when and where to meet through the daily school notice system¹⁶. In one school students did not always receive the notices, so I sent them a reminder text the day before they were scheduled to meet to complete a questionnaire.

After students completed the Initial Questionnaire, each of the ten English teachers was consulted to determine when questionnaires for achievement standards 2.1 (creative writing) and 2.2 (formal writing) should be administered. Pre-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.1 and 2.2 needed to be administered just before students were to be internally assessed against each of these achievement standards, while Post-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.1 and 2.2 needed to be administered just after students received their results for each of these achievement standards. The internal assessments for 2.1 and 2.2 achievement standards occurred at different times across the year (e.g., one teacher assessed 2.1 in March, while another assessed it in September).

Achievement standards 2.3 (extended written texts) or 2.4 (short written texts) and 2.6 (unfamiliar texts) were assessed externally in November 2010. The administration of

¹⁶ In New Zealand secondary schools, typically messages for students about sport, cultural activities, and other events are listed each day on a sheet and these daily notices are read to students in the first class of the day.

these pre-achievement standard questionnaires was scheduled just before students were externally assessed. Students were also asked to complete the Outside Class Activities Questionnaire.

In March 2011, students were asked to complete the post-achievement standard questionnaires for 2.3 or 2.4 and for 2.6. There was a slight time delay in administering the post-achievement standard questionnaires because, although students received their official results in late January 2011, they had the right to have their exam scripts reviewed if they believe there were inaccuracies in the marking. Time was allowed for this process to occur. Students then completed the Final Questionnaire shortly after on a separate occasion. Once students had completed this last questionnaire they were thanked for their willingness to participate and for their contribution to this study.

Fifty-one different meeting times were scheduled across the 12 month period in order to ensure that the students within each research group could complete the 11 questionnaires. Each student spent approximately five hours completing the questionnaires and most were completed at the scheduled times. However, when students were unable to complete a questionnaire at the scheduled time, they were rescheduled where possible or mailed the questionnaire, along with a prepaid return addressed envelope. At times students had other lunch time commitments. They would come to the scheduled room to collect a questionnaire and a prepaid return addressed envelope. Occasionally a reminder text or a phone call was made to encourage the student to complete the questionnaire they had taken away. Students' handwritten responses from each of the 1177 questionnaires (107 students x 11 questionnaires) were subsequently transcribed into electronic *Word* documents.

4.6.2. Phase Two – The Interview Phase

During the time students were completing the last of the questionnaires the students' New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) consent forms were sent to a designated staff member at NZQA. The staff member subsequently emailed me each participant's level 1 and level 2 NCEA English achievement standards results. These results were one of three criteria used to determine which 16 of the 107 students would be selected for an interview. The other two criteria used to decide who would be interviewed were gender, and those who had indicated they would be willing to receive information about the possibility of being interviewed. Students results and gender were the key criteria in determining who was selected to be part of a stratified purposive sample.

First, students' NCEA level 2 English results for all the English achieved standards against which they were assessed were checked. Students received one of four results for each achievement standard: Not Achieved, Achieved, Merit, or Excellence. Students were grouped into five groups. Those who gained *mainly Excellences* were placed in one group. This pattern was repeated to form a *mainly Merits* group, a *mainly Achieved* group, and a *mainly Not Achieved* group. The fifth group comprised of students who had a mixture of results (e.g., one Excellence, one Merit, two Achieved, and one Not Achieved). This last group was discarded from the pool of potential interviewees, because of the variation in their results.

Second, two females and two males were selected from each of the four categories (e.g., two females and two males who got mainly Excellences), with preference being given to those who had the greatest number of results all in the same category. Third, these students' names were checked against a master list, which indicated whether individual students had initially agreed to receive information about possibly being interviewed on the consent form they signed when initially agreeing to complete questionnaires (see Appendix A7).

Once the 16 students had been selected, each was sent an information sheet and a consent form (see Appendices A12 and A13). All agreed to be individually interviewed and a suitable time was negotiated with each participant in May 2011. The interviews were all scheduled during school hours, but outside timetabled classes (e.g., during a lunch break or a study period). A small office was used in each school to conduct the interviews. As these offices were not normally occupied by anyone associated with senior management, it was assumed the offices had no negative connotations for the interviewees.

Prior to beginning the formal interview, efforts were made to put the students at ease. Establishing a positive, professional rapport was assisted by the fact that students had met with me over several lunch breaks. Furthermore, the students had completed 11 questionnaires, so were aware that the focus was their motivation in NCEA English and they were familiar with the type of questions I might be asking. In addition to explaining the interview process, students were reminded that they did not need to answer any questions they were not comfortable answering and that there were no right or wrong answers.

Each student was asked questions from the interview schedule that were specifically written for them. Additional questions were asked during the interview when further information was required to gain a fuller understanding. Non-directive questions were used in such instances, such as, “Could you tell me more about ...?” Students were encouraged to take time to think about each question, rather than rush to give a response. Care was taken with my body language, and my comments, so as not to unduly influence the interviewee’s responses. However, efforts were made to show genuine interest in what the interviewee had to say. Each interview was digitally recorded with the permission of the students. At the end of the interviews students were thanked for their willingness to be interviewed and for sharing their thoughts about their motivation.

The transcriber transcribed the interviews verbatim into *Word* documents. Transcripts were checked for accuracy and then sent to the 16 participants. They were asked to read the transcription of their interview, and add or delete anything that they believed more accurately reflected what they wanted to say. Two students added additional points, but no deletions were made. All participants returned the document, along with their signed copy of the Authority for the Release of Transcripts form (see Appendix A14).

The flow diagram in Figure 4.1 is designed to explicate the data collection procedures for Phase One and Phase Two of this study. In particular, the diagram highlights when specific questionnaires were administered in Phase One and when interviews occurred in Phase Two.

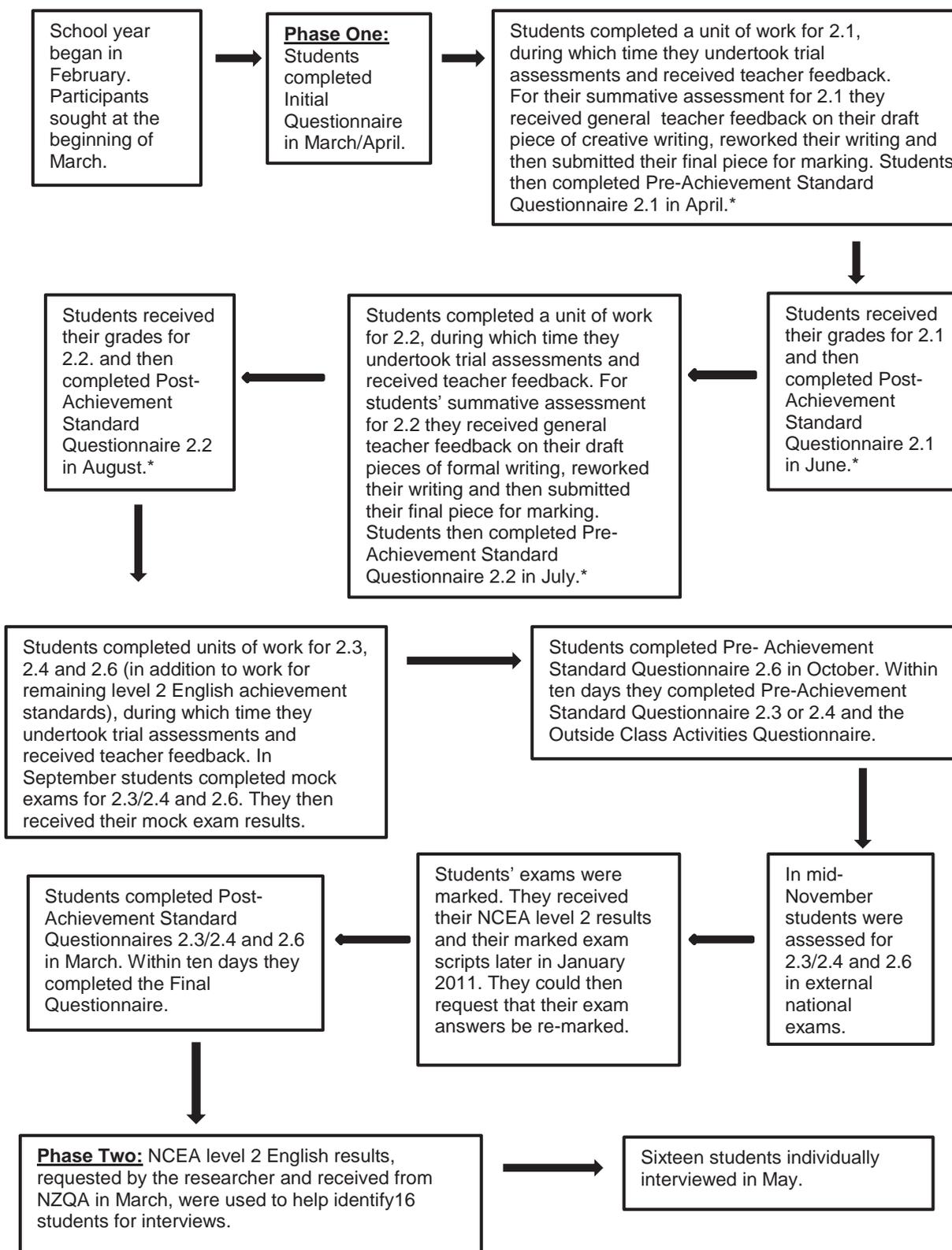


Figure 4.1: Data collection procedures

*While this is the typical sequence and timing for the administration of Pre- and Post-Achievement Standards Questionnaires for 2.1 and 2.2, in a couple of cases teachers choose to complete work on 2.2 before focusing on 2.1. In these instances the questionnaires for 2.2 were administered first.

4.7. Data Analysis

To analyse the quantitative data from the 11 questionnaires, students' responses were initially coded and entered into the computer software program *IBM SPSS Statistics*. *SPSS* was used primarily to produce frequency tables. Inferential statistical analyses were also undertaken to examine gender differences using the Mann-Whitney U test and the chi-square test for independence. Spearman's rho test was also employed to examine the strength of relationships where appropriate.

The qualitative data in this study were analysed by me with the aid of the qualitative computer software program *NVivo* (www.qsrinternational.com). *NVivo* enabled the large amount of qualitative data generated in this study to be effectively and efficiently coded. The coding process would have been more difficult, problematic and time-consuming if done without the assistance of such software. For example, *NVivo* enabled all the relevant data to be easily collated for closer inspection and analysis (e.g., all the answers to a particular question coded to one node). Categories and subcategories could be readily set up at any point in the coding process and data could be easily copied into these different categories or subcategories as themes became evident. *NVivo* also enabled data within categories to be readily checked for consistency, while at the same time enabling data to be revisited in its original context. Furthermore, word or phrase searches could be undertaken and memos added as ideas emerged during the analysis and coding and process.

For Phase One, folders were set up in *Nvivo* for each of the 11 questionnaires, and the 1177 *Word* files containing each student's open-ended responses for each questionnaire were imported into *NVivo*. All the students' responses to each open-ended question within each questionnaire were then collated together at a *node*, which is where *NVivo* stores a category (Richards, 2009).

Once data were collated for each question, specific questions were selected for analysis. The students' responses for that particular question were read in conjunction with relevant quantitative results. For example, Question 20a in the Initial Questionnaire asked students to indicate whether they would have enrolled in Year 12 English if it had not been a compulsory subject. In Question 20b students were asked to explain the reason for their response in part 'a'. The quantitative results for part 'a' assisted with the interpretation and coding of responses for part 'b' of the same question, thus enhancing coding consistency and the validity of the interpretations.

The collated qualitative data for each question were examined to identify what was significant, and to gain a sense of what patterns, themes, ideas and concepts were prevalent in the data. Sub-nodes were created to capture theoretical constructs from Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation (e.g., *introjected regulation*). Following the examination of the data, additional sub-nodes were also created for other relevant social and contextual themes (e.g., *peers* or *teachers*).

The data within each sub-node were checked for intra-coder reliability. When inconsistencies were detected data were re-assigned to the correct sub-nodes or new sub-nodes were created to deal with themes not initially captured. Existing sub-nodes were collapsed where they were found to be addressing the same theme, or relabelled and redefined to better capture the meaning of the data. For example, there were initially two separate categories for the theme *difficulties with or dislike of aspects of English*; one focused on the *difficulties* while another focused on the *dislike*. However, it became apparent that a comment about disliking was often accompanied by a comment about difficulties, or vice versa. Given that students often disliked something because they found it difficult, or found something difficult because they disliked it, a decision was made to combine these two categories into one. Internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity were continually sought through this refinement process (Patton, 2002). The small quantity of data that was unable to be coded into any meaningful categories has been reported in the next chapter.

Coding sets of data that answered the same question asked in four different questionnaires, and further analysing data coded to the same theme across the different questionnaires, provided repeated opportunities to confirm, further refine, or challenge initial coding decisions. This iterative process not only enhanced coding consistency, but also assisted in gaining greater clarity and understanding of the data. Memos were also made during the coding process to capture important ideas, question unexpected responses, and draw tentative inferences (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

An inter-coder reliability check was undertaken for 20% of students' responses (42 of 212 responses) to Question 11b in the Final Questionnaire. This question was pivotal in the study, because students were asked to identify the factors that most influenced their motivation overall. The 42 responses selected were initially coded as examples of different types of motivation from Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation. The other coder was very familiar with this taxonomy. A master list of the 42 responses was created. Each response was coded as it had been in *NVivo*. The other

coder was sent a copy of the list, minus the original coding and any identifying information about the participants. The other coder asked to code the responses using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation (e.g., as examples of amotivation or introjection). This coding was checked against the original coding on the master list. There was 100% agreement.

For the data analysis in Phase Two, each of the 16 students' 11 questionnaire responses and their interview transcripts were subsequently imported into a folder in *NVivo*; 192 files in total. The same qualitative data analysis processes and intra-rater reliability checks were employed for these data as were employed for the qualitative questionnaire data analysis outlined above.

Once data were coded they were re-examined and evaluated for their degree of significance, alongside the relevant quantitative results. When determining the degree of significance, links to theory, and the weight, coherence, and consistency of the data were all taken into consideration. In doing so, patterns, nuances within those patterns, and anomalies were considered. For example, peers were found to play a role in some students' motivation to achieve. In deciding the significance of peers on students' motivation to achieve across the 107 participants, it was important to consider in what ways peers influenced students' motivation; what weight students placed on the influence of peers (e.g., did they list peers as very important influences and rate them as *very influential* in different questionnaires); whether it was classmates and/or friends who were influential; whether the influence was positive or negative; literature on the influence of peers; and the degree to which the data supported or challenged theoretical understandings about motivation.

To ensure that more salient themes were clearly evident when making inferences from the qualitative data, some qualitative data were transformed into quantitative data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). To provide transparency around this process and thus enable judgments to be made about conversion validity, additional details were provided about what was being counted (e.g., number of responses, or number of students). Additional qualitative and/or quantitative evidence was also sought across and within questionnaires to confirm or disconfirm tentative conclusions. This process was aided by text searches in *NVivo*. Once both types of data were analysed, the inferences from the quantitative and qualitative strands of this study were brought together to address the research questions.

4.8. Summary of the Research Procedure

Table 4.3 presents a chronological summary of the research procedure employed in this study.

Table 4.3: Summary of the research procedure

Timeframe	Stage	Procedure
Mid 2009	Ethics application	1. Ethics application submitted and approval granted by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) (09/57).
October, 2009 – February 2010	Pilot study	2. Pilot study undertaken. Letter sent to potential participants. Thank you letters sent to the pilot students and the principal. 3. Amendments to the ethics approval were sought and granted by MUHEC.
	Permission to conduct the research sought from schools and teachers	4. Met with principals of two secondary schools to discuss the research project and request their schools' involvement. 5. Written consent was sought and received from the principals and the schools' boards of trustees (see Appendices A1, A2 and A3). 6. Met with two HODs of English. 7. Met with teachers of Year 12 A Stream English classes. Provided them with information sheets and consent forms (see Appendices A4 and A5)
	NZQA advice sought	8. Teachers' signed consent forms received. 9. NZQA was contacted for advice on gaining student consent for the release of their results.
March 2010	Participants sought and confirmed	10. Spoke to students in 10 Year 12 A Stream English classes. Handed out information sheets and two consent forms (see Appendices A6, A7, and A9). 11. Consent forms collected from the 2 schools. Where students were under 16 years of age consent was requested from their parents (see Appendix A8).
	Phase One begun	12. Students assigned to research groups. 13. Students sent letters outlining organisational details and reminding them of the right to withdraw (see Appendix A11).
April – November 2010	Questionnaires administered during Phase One	14. Initial Questionnaire was completed. 15. Pre-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.1, 2.1, 2.3/2.4 and 2.6 were completed. 16. Post-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.1 and 2.2 were completed. 17. The Outside Class Activities Questionnaire was completed.

March 2011	Phase One completed	<p>18. Post-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.3/2.4 and 2.6 were completed.</p> <p>19. Final Questionnaire was completed.</p> <p>20. NZQA was contacted to release students' levels 1 and 2 NCEA English results.</p>
April 2011	Phase Two begun.	<p>21. Students' signed consent forms allowing NZQA to release their levels 1 and 2 English NCEA results (see Appendix A9) and a signed ethical procedures release of data form (see Appendix A11) were sent to NZQA.</p> <p>22. NCEA English results received from NZQA.</p> <p>23. Sixteen students identified to be interviewed and sent information sheets and consent forms (see Appendices A12 and A13).</p> <p>24. The transcriber signed and returned the transcriber confidentiality form (see Appendix A15).</p> <p>25. Consents returned and interviews arranged.</p>
May 2011	Interviews undertaken	<p>26. Interviews undertaken.</p> <p>27. Interviews transcribed.</p>
July 2011	Interviews checked by participants	<p>28. Transcribed interviews sent to participants along with Authority for the Release of Transcripts Form (see Appendix A14).</p> <p>29. Reviewed interviews transcripts and consent forms received.</p>

Chapter 5.

Phase One Results

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the 11 questionnaires completed in Phase One by the 107 Year 12 students who took part in this longitudinal study. These were the Initial and Final Questionnaires; Pre-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, 2.6; Post-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, 2.6; and the Outside Class Activities Questionnaire. The next chapter focuses on the subgroup of 16 students who were interviewed during Phase Two of the study. Chapter Seven provides a detailed discussion of the findings presented in these two results chapters.

In this chapter and the following two chapters, references are repeatedly made to the eight level 2 English achievement standards that were offered in 2010. While these standards are listed in Table 1.1 in Chapter One, Section 1.4, they are briefly summarised here using their common shorthand labels: 2.1 (creative writing), 2.2 (formal writing), 2.3 (extended text), 2.4 (short texts), 2.5 (visual or oral texts), 2.6 (unfamiliar texts), 2.7 (oral presentation), and 2.8 (research). Furthermore, rather than repeatedly using the lengthy phrase “students’ motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English” or the phrase “students’ motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards” the phrase “students’ motivation to achieve”, “students’ motivation to achieve the specific achievement standards”, or “students’ motivation to achieve NCEA English” will often be used.

Throughout this chapter and the next chapter, two types of identifiers are used. When referring to a specific question within a particular questionnaire, the abbreviated name of the questionnaire, the question number, and part of the question (e.g., a, b, or c), are listed in brackets (e.g., Initial/16b, or Pre 2.1/5a). When referring to a specific student’s response to a question within a particular questionnaire, this information is followed by the student’s identifying code number (1-116), and their sex (M = male and F = female) (e.g., Final/11a/112M, or Post 2.6/3a/67F). Students’ quotations may contain errors made by students, such as spelling mistakes, omission of words, and run-on sentences. Any words underlined or words in capitals are part of the original quotation.

Section 5.2 addresses the first research question about students' motivation-related beliefs and in doing so also provides important contextual information to better understand the results presented in the two sections that follow this one. Also included in Section 5.2 are students' NCEA level 2 English results and their responses to those results. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 address the two research questions relating to students' perceptions of factors that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve in English. Section 5.5 briefly examines a range of other factors that were originally assumed to be potentially significant, but were perceived to have little influence on most students' motivation, while the last section summarises key findings across all the sections.

5.2. Students' Motivation and Achievement

This section of the chapter contains five subsections. In the first four subsections, findings from six questionnaires (Initial, Pre-Achievement Standard Questionnaires 2.1, 2.1, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6, and Final) are presented. These four subsections use an informal expectancy-value model of motivation¹⁷ as a broad framework through which to examine students' motivation (Brophy, 2010). In particular, these subsections examine students' expectations of passing NCEA level 2 English and specific English achievement standards, the value students placed on passing NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and English as a subject, and their interest in English. The fifth subsection examines students' NCEA English results and their responses.

Gender differences were also to be examined in the course of this study. The Mann-Whitney U test and the chi-square test for independence were used on a range of quantitative data to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between male and female students' quantitative responses. The results of these tests are reported where these tests were employed.

5.2.1. Students' Expectations for Success

Of critical importance to students' expectancy for success is their sense of self-efficacy; that is their judgment about their "capability to accomplish a certain level of performance" on a particular task (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Self-efficacy has been found to strongly influence students' cognitive engagement, the effort they are willing to expend on an academic task, the degree to which they persist in the face of difficulties,

¹⁷ The expectancy-value model referred to here is an informal general model (Brophy, 2010), rather than a reference to Wigfield and Eccles's (2000) formal expectancy-value theory.

their use of strategies, and their levels of achievement (e.g., Pajares, 1996; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

To ascertain students' expectancy for success in NCEA level 2 English, students were asked early in the year to predict their performance on each of the eight NCEA level 2 English achievement standards (2.1-2.8) (Initial/15a). It was assumed students had sufficient experience at NCEA level 1 English achievement standards to be able to make such predictions. These predictions are listed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Students' grade predictions for English achievement standards 2.1-2.8 (n = 107)

Achievement Standards	Not attempting or prediction not made (n)*	Not Achieved (%)	Achieved (%)	Merit (%)	Excellence (%)
2.1 Creative writing	2	0.0	42.9	41.9	15.2
2.2 Formal writing	9	1.0	40.8	46.9	11.2
2.3 Extended written texts	3	1.0	36.5	51.9	10.5
2.4 Short written texts	9	1.0	38.8	52.0	8.2
2.5 Visual or oral texts	5	1.0	37.3	51.0	10.8
2.6 Unfamiliar texts	1	0.9	41.5	51.9	5.7
2.7 Oral or visual presentation	12	5.3	40.0	35.8	18.9
2.8 Research	12	3.2	30.5	48.4	17.9

*Students are not expected to attempt all achievement standards. Percentages predicting different grades excludes those in the "Not attempting or prediction not made" column.

Excluding those who predicted they would not attempt particular achievement standards and those who did not make a prediction, 94% to 100% of the remaining students predicted they would pass each achievement standard with Achieved, Merit, or Excellence. These results indicate that early in the school year most students expected to pass these NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in achievement standard predictions. The results for each achievement standard were as follows. For 2.1 girls' (n = 70) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1164, *z* = -.69, *ns*, *r* = -.06: for 2.2 girls' (n = 66) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1145, *z* = -.33, *ns*, *r* = -.03: for 2.3 girls'

(n = 69) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1142, *z* = -.87, *ns*, *r* = -.08: for 2.4 girls' (n = 66) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1157, *z* = -.23, *ns*, *r* = -.02: for 2.5 girls' (n = 68) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1219, *z* = -.03, *ns*, *r* = -.00: for 2.6 girls' (n = 71) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1041, *z* = -1.75, *ns*, *r* = -.17: for 2.7 girls' (n = 68) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1142, *z* = -.59, *ns*, *r* = -.06: and for 2.8 girls' (n = 69) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1139, *z* = -.74, *ns*, *r* = -.07.

In addition to predicting their results, students were also asked to explain why they thought they would get these results (Initial/15b). Of the 105 students who responded, two key themes accounted for 85% of the responses: effort/strategy use and ability. The prevalence of these two themes suggests that students may have made attributions about their successes or failures in NCEA level 1 English achievement standards, and that these attributions had influenced their expectations for success in relation to each of the eight NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, and the amount of effort they believed they needed to apply to gain the grades they believed they would achieve in NCEA English.

In relation to effort and/or strategy use, 42% of the students believed they would get the results they predicted because they would apply more effort and/or better strategies in Year 12. While no specific reference was made to insufficient effort in NCEA level 1 English, it is likely that students had evaluated their NCEA level 1 English results and the amount of effort they employed to achieve those results. Research has found that attributions to effort and strategy use are likely to result in higher levels or sustained levels of motivation on similar tasks in the future (Weiner, 2000, 2010). Students' responses focused on such things as devoting more time to studying for English, trying harder, concentrating more, and seeking help when needed. For example:

Because I plan to study really hard. I will pay attention in class and understand what I'm supposed to do. (Initial/15b/105M)

Because this year I am going to try harder and achieve everything. (Initial/15b/76F)

When I need help I'm going to ask or when I don't understand. (Initial/15b/63M)

These students clearly recognised that effort and/or strategies were vital to improving their performance or maintaining their previous level of achievement in English. A few also realised they needed to apply more effort, as the work would be more challenging than that which they had encountered in Year 11.

In relation to ability, 37% of the students believed they would get the results they predicted, because these results were what they believed they were capable of achieving. These judgments appear to be primarily based on their NCEA level 1 English results. They illustrate that past performance had an important influence on these students' beliefs about their future performance in NCEA level 2 English. For example:

Most of my English results have been around merit level and I therefore feel as though this is the level I work at. (Initial/15b/22F)

In a few instances specific reference was made to their ability in relation to particular achievement standards, rather than to their overall ability. For example:

*I struggle speaking in front of crowds so I wont do very well.
(Initial/15b/102F – in reference to achievement standard 2.7 [oral presentations]).*

A further 6% of students indicated that they believed that they would achieve the results they predicted because of both ability and effort, as illustrated in the following example:

I have a reasonable amount of natural talent so I think I have a good chance of achieving. I will study hard coming up to the exams/test so will prepare myself for them. (Initial/15b/109M)

Attributions to success or failure on the basis of ability were likely to affect students' sense of self-efficacy and the amount of effort they were willing to apply, when faced with various NCEA level 2 English assessment tasks.

To gain further insights into students' sense of self-efficacy and expectancy for success, students were asked at different points in time across the year to predict what results they would get for the four achievement standards being specifically examined

in this study (Pre 2.1/5a, Pre 2.2/5a, Pre 2.3 or 2.4/5a, and Pre 2.6/5a). In relation to the following results and other results which include pre-achievement standard questionnaire data, it is important to note that each pre-achievement standard questionnaire was administered just prior to students being summatively assessed against that particular achievement standard, but after students had been taught relevant concepts and content, undertaken practice assessments, and received feedback on the practice assessments.

Given students' very recent experience with what was likely to be assessed for each achievement standard, it was assumed that their predictions for the four achievement standards would be more accurate compared with the predictions they made in the Initial Questionnaire. Their predictions are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Students' grade predictions (%) for English achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6 (n = 107)

Achievement standards	Not Achieved	Achieved	Merit	Excellence
2.1 Creative writing	0.0	46.7	43.9	9.3
2.2 Formal writing	0.9	44.9	49.5	4.7
2.3 Extended or 2.4 Short written texts	0.9	54.2	31.8	13.1
2.6 Unfamiliar texts*	3.8	59.0	30.4	6.7

*For 2.6 one response was missing and one indicated he/she would not be attempting 2.6

Unlike in the Initial Questionnaire in which a few students indicated that they would not be attempting some of these achievement standards (see Table 5.1), all 107 students predicted they would attempt 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3/2.4 achievement standards, and 105 indicated they would attempt 2.6. Between 96% and 100% of students predicted they would pass these four standards with Achieved, Merit, or Excellence. When compared with the results of Table 5.1, there is a slight tendency for more students to anticipate that they would gain Achieved and Merit, while fewer students anticipated that they would gain Excellence for 2.1, 2.2 and 2.6. Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in achievement standard predictions. The results for each of the four achievement standards were as follows for the 71 girls and the 36 boys. For 2.1 girls' *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1228, *z* = -.36, *ns*, *r* = -.03: for 2.2 girls' *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' *Mdn* = 2.0, *U* = 1113, *z* = -1.22, *ns*, *r* = -.12: for 2.3/2.4 girls' *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 1124, *z* = -1.13, *ns*, *r* = -.11: and for 2.6 girls' *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 1157, *z* = -1.11, *ns*, *r* = -.11.

To gain insights into students' sense of self-efficacy, students were also asked to evaluate whether they had sufficient skills to pass each particular achievement standard (Pre 2.1/1a, Pre 2.2/1a, Pre 2.3 or 2.4/1a, and Pre 2.6/1a). It was assumed students would be able to realistically judge the adequacy of their skills, given the point in time when each of these pre-achievement standard questionnaires was administered. As shown in Table 5.3, between 91% and 100% of students believed that they had *sufficient skills* or a *good range of skills to pass* the four achievement standards.

Table 5.3: Students' estimates of their skill levels (%) for achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6 (n = 107)

Question 1a	Not enough skills to pass	Just enough skills to pass	Good range of skills to pass
2.1 Creative writing	0.0	47.7	52.3
2.2 Formal writing	1.9	44.8	53.3
2.3 Extended or 2.4 Short written texts	3.7	38.4	57.9
2.6 Unfamiliar texts	8.4	41.1	50.5

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in skill level estimates. The results for each of the four achievement standards were as follows for the 71 girls and the 36 boys. For 2.1 girls' $Mdn = 2.0$, boys' $Mdn = 3.0$, $U = 1162$, $z = -.88$, ns , $r = -.08$: for 2.2 girls' $Mdn = 3.0$, boys' $Mdn = 2.0$, $U = 1180$, $z = -.74$, ns , $r = -.07$: for 2.3/2.4 girls' $Mdn = 3.0$, boys' $Mdn = 3.0$, $U = 1264$, $z = -.11$, ns , $r = -.01$: and for 2.6 girls' $Mdn = 3.0$, boys' $Mdn = 2.5$, $U = 1217$, $z = -.45$, ns , $r = -.04$.

Furthermore, students were also asked to assess how easy or difficult they believed it would be to pass each particular achievement standard (Pre 2.1/1b, Pre 2.2/1b, Pre 2.3 or 2.4/1b, and Pre 2.6/1b). The results in Table 5.4 indicate that between 92% and 94% of students believed 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4 achievement standards were *just manageable* or *easy* for them. However, 2.6 was considered to be more difficult.

Table 5.4: Students' estimates (%) of the level of difficulty associated with passing achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6 (n = 107)

Question 1b	Far too difficult	Quite difficult	Just manageable	Quite easy	Very easy
2.1 Creative writing	0.0	6.5	41.2	43.9	8.4
2.2 Formal writing	0.0	5.6	49.5	39.3	5.6
2.3 Extended or 2.4 Short written texts	0.0	7.5	36.4	42.1	14.0
2.6 Unfamiliar texts	1.9	12.1	38.3	40.2	7.5

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in achievement standard predictions. The results for each of the four achievement standards were as follows for the 71 girls and the 36 boys. For 2.1 girls' $Mdn = 3.0$, boys' $Mdn = 4.0$, $U = 1179$, $z = -.70$, ns , $r = -.06$: for 2.2 girls' $Mdn = 3.0$, boys' $Mdn = 4.0$, $U = 1171$, $z = -.75$, ns , $r = -.07$: for 2.3/2.4 girls' $Mdn = 4.0$, boys' $Mdn = 3.5$, $U = 1053$, $z = -1.64$, ns , $r = -.16$: and for 2.6 girls' $Mdn = 3.0$, boys' $Mdn = 3.5$, $U = 1114$, $z = -1.18$, ns , $r = -.11$.

Overall it is clear that most students expected to succeed. They believed they were capable of passing most NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and predicted they would be successful in attaining these standards because of their skills, abilities and/or efforts. Most students' levels of self-efficacy appeared to range from moderate to high for each of the achievement standards. Furthermore, these beliefs were largely sustained throughout the year in relation to achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4 and 2.6.

5.2.2. Value Placed on Passing NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

While the previous subsection focused on the expectancy component of the informal expectancy-value model, this and the following two subsections concentrate on the value component. This subsection focuses on the value students placed on passing a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, as it was assumed that the amount of effort, persistence, and time students devoted to study would be influenced by the degree to which they valued passing these achievement standards.

To gauge the degree to which students valued passing English, they were asked to rate how important it was for them to pass a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards (students usually attempted five or six of the eight level 2 English achievement standards, hence the reference to "a number" of standards)

(Initial/16a). Students were given three choices: *not important*, *quite important*, and *very important*. All 107 students responded, with 79% indicating it was *very important*, and 21% indicating it was *quite important* to pass a number of achievement standards. Clearly, early in Year 12 all the students valued passing a number of the achievement standards, with the majority considering it very important for them to pass the standards.

Students were then asked to list up to two reasons for their response to Question 16a (Initial/16b). An initial analysis of the data indicated nearly all students were extrinsically motivated. For example:

Because I want to pass NCEA level 2 with merit. (Initial/16b/2M)

I want to pass NCEA English Level 2 because I think English is a very important skill to have. (Initial/16b/5F)

I need about 18 [English] credits to do some of the things I want to do as a career such as some air force jobs. (Initial/16b/9M)

I want prove I am good at English and can pass. (Initial/16b/17F)

Students responses were then further analysed using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation. This taxonomy provided the greatest explanatory power when analysing the data to determine which types of extrinsic motivation were most salient. Three of the four types of extrinsic motivation identified in Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy were used to classify students' responses. The three types were external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation.

However, the analysis excluded the fourth type, integrated regulation. One reason for its exclusion here and in the following chapters is because of the difficulty in differentiating between identified regulation and integrated regulation. As de Bilde et al. (2011) have noted, "integrated regulation requires a high degree of introspection and self-awareness and is not easily distinguished from identified regulation through self-reports" (p. 334). Another reason for not including integrated regulation is because "full integration is relatively rare among adolescents" (Niemic et al., 2006, p. 763). Furthermore, integrated regulation goes beyond the internalisation of a single belief or value. It involves the holistic assimilation and integration of identified beliefs and values

into an individual's self-system (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b). It is for these reasons that employing integrated regulation as a coding category is inappropriate in this study.

The rationale for coding students' responses according to the three different types of extrinsic motivation is that they reflect differing degrees of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and thus provide greater understanding of students' sense of autonomy, and internalisation of values. As noted previously, external regulation involves "behaviours being performed to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 61). It involves a sense of compliance or compulsion, and thus leaves learners feeling controlled and lacking autonomy. Introjected regulation involves people performing actions for the purposes of ego enhancement, or to avoid guilt or anxiety (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). The focus is on self-approval or approval from others (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). While it involves some internalising of values and behaviours, learners still feel externally controlled. Identified regulation involves adopting and internalising external goals, and consciously valuing these goals, because they have personal importance, or provide a means to an end (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In such instances learners feel more self-determined or autonomous compared with those experiencing either of the other two types of regulation.

From the 101 students who responded, 39 students provided one response, while another 18 provided two responses that were both coded in the same category. The results for these 57 students' single type of extrinsic motivation are presented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Number of students endorsing a single type of extrinsic motivation and examples (n = 57)

Type of Extrinsic Motivation	Number of students	Examples from Initial/16b
External regulation	17	<i>"I need enough credits to get university entrance, but nothing more" (19M).</i>
Introjected regulation	17	<i>"I want to prove to myself and my family I can do it" (29F).</i>
Identified regulation	23	<i>"I want to be a vet and will need good marks so I have a higher chance of getting into university" (51M).</i>

A number of students' external regulation responses stated that they wanted or needed to get enough credits to achieve NCEA level 2 English and/or the literacy credits for university entrance, suggesting that they felt compelled to succeed. Others indicated that they wanted to get Merits or Excellences, or have their NCEA certificates endorsed with Merit or Excellence, suggesting they wanted the rewards that result from doing well in NCEA. It is possible, however, that in some cases external regulation was also accompanied by identified regulation (e.g., wanting to gain university entrance in order to enter a tertiary course or pursue career options), or introjected regulation (e.g., wanting to gain others' approval or avoid the shame of failing). However, as these students did not elaborate on why it was important for them to get university entrance, NCEA credits or Excellences, it is difficult to know whether there were other types of extrinsic motivation influencing students' overall motivation. Where students provided identified regulation reasons, they appear to have considered their future career goals, and in doing so have adopted a future time perspective; that is "the present anticipation of future goals" (Husman & Lens, 1999, p. 115).

The remaining 44 students each provided two responses, with each response representing a different type of motivation (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6: Number of students endorsing two different types of motivation and examples (n = 44)

Types of Motivation	Number of students	Examples from Initial/16b
External + introjected regulation	19	<i>"Need the credits. Don't want to disappoint myself/family" (74F).</i>
Identified + introjected regulation	12	<i>"I want to make myself and people who care, and teachers proud. I want to get UE so I can become a nurse" (54F).</i>
Identified + external regulation	10	<i>"Because I am going for NCEA level 2 with excellence.... Because I want to be an actor so English is important" (50M).</i>
Identified regulation + intrinsic motivation	2	<i>"I want to have a career in English for example journalism. English is my favourite/best subject so I like to do well in it" (26F).</i>
Intrinsic motivation + introjected regulation	1	<i>"I would like to do well in one of my favourite subjects. It would be a good feeling to pass with greater than achieved" (16F).</i>

This analysis of the 101 students' responses indicated that early in Year 12 students were extrinsically motivated to pass a number of these achievement standards. Underlying their extrinsic motivation appears to be a need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which involved a desire to pass, to achieve well, to avoid failure, to please others, or to address a personally important goal.

Further assessments were also undertaken throughout the year of students' perceptions of how important they believed it was to pass each of the four specific achievement standards addressed in this study (Question 3a in each of the pre-achievement standard questionnaires 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6). The results are set out in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Students' perceptions (%) of the importance of passing the English achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6 (n = 107)

Achievement standards	Not at all important	Not particularly important	Quite important	Very important
2.1 Creative writing	0.0	4.7	49.5	45.8
2.2 Formal writing	0.0	6.5	50.5	43.0
2.3 Extended or 2.4 Short written texts	0.0	12.1	42.1	45.8
2.6 Unfamiliar texts	1.9	9.3	44.9	43.9

While the proportion of students who believed passing was *very important* dropped across these four achievement standards, compared with the responses given for Question 16a in the Initial Questionnaire, the results indicate most students (88 – 95%) valued passing each of these four achievement standards. Mann Whitney U tests only revealed a significant gender difference for achievement standard 2.3 (extended written text) or 2.4 (short written texts). With regard to 2.3/2.4 the 71 girls ($Mdn = 4.00$) tended to see passing this achievement standard as more important than the 36 boys ($Mdn = 3.00$, $U = 879$, $z = -2.89$, $p = .004$, $r = -.28$).

The degree to which students valued passing these four achievement standards was also assessed by asking whether they wanted to do *their best*, do *just enough* to pass, or simply did not care what result they achieved (Question 4a in pre-achievement standard questionnaires). This question was included as Meyer, McClure, et al. (2009) had found through a brief screening measure that students' self-reported motivation orientations of *doing my best* and *doing just enough* were strongly related to students'

overall academic achievement in NCEA. They found that *doing my best* was a stronger (positive) predictor of gaining more NCEA credits and higher grades, while the reverse was true of *doing just enough*. The results for the four English achievement standards are listed in the following table.

Table 5.8: Students' attitudes (%) towards passing achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6 (n = 107)

Achievement standards	I don't intend to complete this achievement standard	I don't care what result I get	I just want to do enough to get a pass	I want to do my best
2.1 Creative writing	0.0	0.0	15.9	84.1
2.2 Formal writing	0.0	0.0	12.1	87.9
2.3 Extended or 2.4 Short written texts	0.9	0.9	17.8	80.4
2.6 Unfamiliar texts*	3.7	4.7	11.2	80.4

* For 2.6 n = 94

These results indicate that between 80% and 88% of students wanted to do *their best* on these achievement standards. Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in attitudes towards passing. The results for each of the four achievement standards were as follows for the 71 girls and the 36 boys. For 2.1 girls' *Mdn* = 4.0, boys' *Mdn* = 4.0, *U* = 1179, *z* = -.70, *ns*, *r* = -.07: for 2.2 girls' *Mdn* = 4.0, boys' *Mdn* = 4.0, *U* = 1171, *z* = -.75, *ns*, *r* = -.07: for 2.3/2.4 girls' *Mdn* = 4.0, boys' *Mdn* = 4.0, *U* = 1053, *z* = -1.64, *ns*, *r* = -.16: and for 2.6 girls' *Mdn* = 4.0, boys' *Mdn* = 4.0, *U* = 1114, *z* = -1.18, *ns*, *r* = -.11.

In relation to doing *just enough* and doing *my best*, Table 5.9 below reveals that aiming to do *just enough* did not necessarily result in students just passing with Achieved. Some passed with Merit. However, Table 5.9 also reveals that those who indicated they wanted to do *just enough* were unlikely to gain Excellence and they were more likely to gain a Not Achieved grade than those who wanted to do *their best*. Interestingly, only two students consistently indicated across all four achievement standards that they only wanted to do *just enough* to pass, with another six indicating that they wanted to do *just enough* to pass three of the four achievement standards.

Table 5.9: Grades (number of students [%]) of those indicating they wanted to do *just enough* and those wanting to do *their best* for 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6

Achievement standards	Not Achieved	Achieved	Merit	Excellence	Total
2.1 - Doing just enough	5 (29%)	9 (53%)	3 (18%)	0 (0%)	17 (100%)
2.1 - Doing my best	18 (20%)	34 (38%)	25 (28%)	13 (14%)	90 (100%)
2.2 - Doing just enough	4 (31%)	5 (38%)	4 (31%)	0 (0%)	13 (100%)
2.2 - Doing my best	11 (12%)	43 (45%)	28 (30%)	12 (13%)	94 (100%)
2.3/2.4 - Doing just enough	3 (15%)	12 (60%)	4 (20%)	1 (5%)	20 (100%)
2.3/2.4 - Doing my best	17 (20%)	43 (50%)	15 (18%)	10 (12%)	85 (100%)
2.6 - Doing just enough	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)
2.6 - Doing my best	15 (19%)	51 (64%)	12 (15%)	2 (2%)	80 (100%)

Overall, most students considered it quite important or very important to pass a number of achievement standards. However, most valued passing for extrinsic reasons rather than intrinsic reasons. Most students indicated they wanted to do *their best*. Doing *their best* tended to be associated with slightly less likelihood of failure (Not Achieved) and slightly more likelihood of gaining Excellence.

5.2.3. Students' Valuing of English as a Subject

In addition to establishing whether students valued passing a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, students' valuing of English as a subject was also assessed, because it was assumed that their valuing of English would influence their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English. To assess their valuing of English as a subject, students were asked if they had had a choice, would they have enrolled in Year 12 English (Initial/20a). They were asked this question because English was the one and only compulsory subject for all students in Year 12 (unless they were enrolled in te reo Māori). It was assumed that if students indicated that they would have chosen to enrol in English if they had been given a choice, then they valued English for some reason(s). All 107 students responded, with 96 indicating that they would have elected to enrol in Year 12 English.

Students were asked to explain why they would or would not have chosen to enrol in English (Initial/20b). Of the 11 students who would not have chosen to enrol in Year 12 English, seven reported they did not enjoy English or aspects of it, and two indicated they were not good at English. Of the 96 students who indicated they would have

chosen to enrol in Year 12 English, 93 provided responses that could be coded. These responses were initially coded on the basis of whether they contained intrinsic or extrinsic reasons (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Students' reasons for wanting to enrol in Year 12 English (n = 93)

Types of Motivation	Number of students	Examples from Initial/20b
Intrinsic reasons	9	<i>"I enjoy English" (80F).</i>
Intrinsic + extrinsic reasons	16	<i>"Because literacy credits are needed for university entrance and English is an interesting subject" (110M).</i>
Extrinsic reasons	68	<i>"It gives you more of a better understanding for things and it helps with getting a better job and with future career" (17F).</i>

The reasons within each of the three categories were then analysed for relevant recurring themes. Intrinsic reasons centred on enjoyment and interest. The analysis of extrinsic reasons revealed two key themes: the usefulness of English for attaining a career goal and its usefulness in everyday life. For example:

I need English for what I'm going to do in life – a primary teacher or high school Māori Teacher. (Initial/20b/29F)

Yes I feel it is a vital part of education and no matter how much I hate it at times, it's useful and you use it every day. (Initial/20b/57F)

Given that 82 of the 84 extrinsic responses focused on the usefulness of English, it is clear that most students valued English for its relevance and perceived utility value (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Lens, Simons, & Dewitte, 2001). Students appear to have recognised and internalised the importance of English in their lives, or in achieving their career goals. As a consequence, identified regulation appears to have been at the fore for many of the students who were extrinsically motivated to take English as a subject. They had internalised the importance of English to a greater or lesser degree, regardless of whether they liked it or disliked it. Students' responses also indicate many students had adopted a future time perspective (Lens et al., 2001).

The valuing of English as a subject was also assessed in the Final Questionnaire administered a year later. Students were asked if they had enrolled in Year 13 English (Final/15a) and their reasons for enrolling or not enrolling (Final/15b). English is not a compulsory subject at this level. Students' responses for Question 15b in the Final Questionnaire have been analysed somewhat differently to the responses students gave in the Initial Questionnaire as to why they would or would not have chosen to enrol in Year 12 English. In the Initial Questionnaire students were provided with one space to list a reason, but some choose to give more than one reason. Consequently in the Final Questionnaire students were given a choice to providing two reasons.

Of the 102 students still at school in Year 13, 92 of the 98 eligible students had chosen to enrol in Year 13 English. Ninety of the 92 responses could be coded using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation. Students' responses reflect the multifaceted nature of their motivation in relation to their valuing of English as a subject, as illustrated in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11: Students' reasons for enrolling in Year 13 English, coded using Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of human motivation (n = 90)

Types of motivation	Number of Students	Examples from Final/15b
Intrinsic	4	<i>"I enjoy English with teachers who seem really interested and motivated about their subject" (102F).</i>
Intrinsic + identified regulation	28	<i>"I did level 3 English so I can get into university and I think it would be good for me as I want to become a primary school teacher. I enjoy some English and I knew we would be studying Shakespeare at some point and I absolutely love Shakespeare" (91F).</i>
Intrinsic + introjected regulation	5	<i>"I really enjoy English because I love reading and watching movies. I enjoy English and want to excel in it" (72M).</i>
Intrinsic + external regulation	4	<i>"I enjoyed English last year, relatively easy credits so I did it in Year 13. My parents made me" (55M).</i>
Identified regulation	23	<i>"I need to do English for communicating ideas well for my degree in biology/chemistry. English is a good subject for general life" (93F).</i>
Identified + introjected regulation	9	<i>"I need it [English] for uni. My parents wanted me to [take English]" (40F).</i>
Identified + external regulation	8	<i>"I need level 3 English to keep future career options open. English filled a gap on my timetable (27M).</i>
Introjected regulation	2	<i>"Because it is a good subject to take so say my parents" (106F).</i>
Introjected + external regulation	1	<i>"My parents wanted me to [take English]. They knew I would want it later in life. I needed more UE credits." (45F).</i>
External regulation	6	<i>"My mum is making me because she said it will be good help before I go to Uni. I didn't have any other subjects that I wanted to take" (56F).</i>

Of the 90 students, 81 appeared to have experienced some degree of autonomy (i.e., identified or intrinsic regulation) in relation to enrolling in English, with a number finding intrinsic value in this subject.

These results, and those results that focused on the importance of passing a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, also need to be seen in light of the results from Question 16a of the Final Questionnaire. In this question about career aspirations, 90 of the 107 students indicated that they had identified a career path that

they intended to take after leaving school. Seventy-two of those students indicated that they intended to undertake a degree or they listed a qualification that required a degree. For example:

I am going to do a bachelor of nursing then get my masters then become a nurse practitioner. (Final/16b/106F)

I want to go to university and become a chartered accountant. You get rich and I'm good at accounting and economics and maths. (Final/16b/56F)

These 90 students had clearly adopted a future time perspective in relation to their career aspirations. Their career aspirations were also likely to have had an impact on their perceptions of the value of English and passing NCEA level 2 English achievement standards.

5.2.4. Students' Interest in English

Empirical research findings have repeatedly confirmed that a student's level of interest can have a powerful influence on learning (e.g., Ainley, Hidi, et al., 2002; Alexander & Murphy, 1998; Harackiewicz et al., 2000; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Pintrich & Zusho, 2002). As Covington (1999) noted, "people enjoy and appreciate learning more about what already interests them, than about topics that hold little interest" (p. 132). As the following discussion reveals, students' interest in English varied considerably and was often linked to specific aspects rather than English in general.

Students' interest in English as a subject was assessed through Questions 12, 13a, 13b, 14a, and 14b in the Final Questionnaire. In Question 12 students were asked to rank each of the six subjects in which they were enrolled from *most interesting subject* to the *sixth most interesting subject* (see Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: Students' ranking (%) of their interest in English against their other five subjects (n = 105)

Ranking	Percentage of students
English as most interesting subject	0.9
English as second most interesting subject	16.7
English as third most interesting subject	26.1
English as fourth most interesting subject	21.4
English as fifth most interesting subject	23.7
English as sixth most interesting subject	11.2
Total	100%

As shown in Table 5.12, 71.5% of students perceived English to be their third, fourth or fifth most interesting subject compared with their other five subjects in Year 12. These results indicate that English was not considered by most students to be one of their most interesting subjects.

The relationship between students' ranking of their interest in English as a subject and their overall aggregated result for NCEA level 2 English was investigated using the Spearman rho test. Determining an aggregated NCEA result involved assigning zero to Not Achieved results for each achievement standard or instances where students elected not to undertake an assessment for an NCEA English achievement standard, a score of 1 for those who gained Achieved for an achievement standard, 2 for those who gained a Merit and of 3 for those who gained an Excellence for an achievement standard. The scores for each individual achievement standard were then aggregated to attain a single score for each participant. There was a positive significant correlation between the two variables, $r = .24$, $n = 106$, $p = .05$, with those students who achieved higher overall scores in NCEA level 2 English tending to rank English as a more interesting subject.

The reason that there may not be a stronger relationship between achievement and students' interest in English is that a lower ranking does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest, while a relatively high ranking does not necessarily indicate a high level of interest. For example, a student may have ranked English as their fourth most interesting subject, but still found English interesting, whereas another student may have ranked English as their third most interesting subject, but did not find it particularly interesting.

Mathematics was the other subject in which similar numbers of students were enrolled ($n = 97$). This subject provided an interesting comparison with English. Of the 97 students enrolled in mathematics, none ranked it as their most interesting subject, 14% ranked it as their second or third most interesting subject, while 61% of students ranked mathematics as their fifth or sixth most interesting subject. These results suggest students on the whole perceived English to be more interesting than mathematics.

Students' interest in English was also examined by asking students if they found any aspects of English interesting (Final/13a). All 107 students responded, with 67% selecting *yes* and 33% selecting *no*. A chi-square test revealed no significant gender differences between males and females interest in aspects of English ($\chi^2(1) = 1.97, ns$).

Those who selected *yes* were asked to list up to two aspects of English that they found most interesting. Forty students provided only one response, while 33 provided two responses. These 106 responses were analysed for relevant recurring themes (e.g., finding the film study interesting). The results of this analysis are listed in Table 5.13, along with frequency counts and examples.

Table 5.13: Aspects of English students found most interesting

Themes	Number of responses	Examples from Final/13b
Film	43	<i>“The Slumdog Millionaire film. Dissecting the film into characters, settings, ironic situations, camera work etc. showed all the hidden decisions the director had to make. For me that was quite interesting” (14F).</i>
Creative writing	17	<i>“Creative writing was interesting as it gave me an opportunity to be free in my own writing and use my own knowledge of language and vocabulary” (89M).</i>
Literature (novel, plays, poetry, short stories)	15	<i>“Studying the war poems for our short texts was interesting. Learning about the different types of poems was also interesting (sonnets etc.) because I have only learnt Haikus and acrostic and rhyming poems before level 2 (Basically primary school poems.)” (11F).</i>
Monologues	10	<i>“I liked doing monologues as they were fun and I got E for my performance” (95M).</i>
Formal writing	5	<i>“I really enjoyed formal writing because I finally understood it. And passed with merit” (26F).</i>
Research	5	<i>“I did enjoy doing research about themes for my research report. I found that really interesting, my favourite thing that we did” (25F).</i>
Analysing texts in general	3	<i>“I love exploring deeper meanings in poetry/static images/films etc” (90F).</i>
Other	8	<i>“I found things that I was good at interesting because I would challenge myself to make it better” (28M).</i>

The responses highlight considerable variation in what aspects of English interested students. It is noteworthy that only 33 students could identify two aspects of English that they found *very interesting* after they had completed a year of study in English.

Students were also asked if they found any aspects of English boring (Final/14a). Of the 106 students who responded, 74.5% selected *yes* and 25.5% selected *no*. A chi-square test revealed no significant gender differences between males and females in whether they found aspects of English boring ($\chi^2(1) = 2.96, ns$).

Students who selected *yes* were asked to list up to two aspects of English that they found most boring (Final/14b). Fifty-four students provided only one response, while 26

provided two responses. These 106 responses were analysed for relevant recurring themes (e.g., finding the novel boring), the results of which are listed in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14: Aspects of English students found most boring

Themes	Number of responses	Examples from Final/14b
Literature (novel, plays, poetry, short stories)	33	<i>“Reading/studying ‘The God Boy’. I think it was the worst book ever” (102F).</i>
Shakespeare	18	<i>“SHAKESPEARE! Deciphering every word takes the fun out of everything. I also find him boring to read so...there!” (14F).</i>
Writing essays	13	<i>“Essays as I hate writing them” (24F).</i>
Unfamiliar texts	11	<i>“Learning about unfamiliar texts was really, REALLY boring. I don’t think I would ever read a newspaper article or look at the cover of a magazine and notice that the author used some special figurative language or that the illustrator placed the dominant image in the middle of the page. It was weird” (11F).</i>
Boring/repetitive class work	10	<i>“Going over the same stuff constantly was boring” (13F).</i>
Formal writing	8	<i>“Formal writing – for me there was no challenge and no creativity” (57F).</i>
Film	6	<i>“I found film boring because we saw it 10 times” (79M).</i>
Monologues	4	<i>“Monologue. If I wanted to do drama I would have. All it was was reciting lines. I didn’t see its relevance to English” (104F).</i>
Creative writing	3	<i>“Creative writing as I hate it” (9M).</i>

As with aspects students found most interesting about English, students’ responses to what they found most boring varied considerably. The analysis of the responses coded as *literature* focused mainly on a dislike of the particular novel studied. *Shakespeare* was included as a separate category, as a number of responses specifically identified Shakespeare or his plays. Students were particularly frustrated by Shakespearean language.

5.2.5. Students' Achievement and Their Perceptions of Their Achievement

Students' NCEA level 2 English results and their perceptions of their results affected their perceptions of factors that they believed significantly influenced their motivation to achieve NCEA Level 2 English. Their official results (supplied by NZQA) are listed in Table 5.15. A *did not attempt* category has been included, as students were not expected to attempt all the eight level 2 English standards.

Table 5.15: Students' results (%) for NCEA level 2 English achievement standards (n = 107)

Achievement standard	Did not attempt	Not Achieved	Achieved	Merit	Excellence
2.1 Creative writing	0.0	21.5	40.2	26.2	12.1
2.2 Formal writing	0.0	14.0	44.9	29.9	11.2
2.3 Extended written text	22.4	15.0	36.4	16.8	9.3
2.4 Short written texts	59.8	13.1	19.6	6.5	0.9
2.5 Visual or oral texts	17.8	24.3	35.5	15.0	7.5
2.6 Unfamiliar texts	12.1	16.8	55.1	14.0	1.9
2.7 Oral or visual presentation	31.8	14.0	31.8	12.1	10.3
2.8 Research	70.1	9.3	7.5	8.4	4.7

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in these NCEA results. The results for each of the achievement standards were as follows. For 2.1 girls' (n = 71) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 1246, *z* = -.22, *ns*, *r* = -.02: for 2.2 girls' (n = 71) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 36) *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 1131, *z* = -1.03, *ns*, *r* = -.10: for 2.3 girls' (n = 60) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 23) *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 641, *z* = -.53, *ns*, *r* = -.06: for 2.4 girls' (n = 30) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 13) *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 162, *z* = -.93, *ns*, *r* = -.14: for 2.5 girls' (n = 57) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 31) *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 846, *z* = -.34, *ns*, *r* = -.04: for 2.6 girls' (n = 64) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 30) *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 917, *z* = -.40, *ns*, *r* = -.04: for 2.7 girls' (n = 47) *Mdn* = 1.0, boys' (n = 26) *Mdn* = 1.0, *U* = 463, *z* = -1.82, *ns*, *r* = -.00: and for 2.8 girls' (n = 23) *Mdn* = 2.0, boys' (n = 9) *Mdn* = 0.0, *U* = 64, *z* = -.09, *ns*, *r* = -.02.

Table 5.16 sets out how many level 2 English achievement standards were attempted by students and the number they actually achieved.

Table 5.16: Number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards attempted and the number achieved by students (n = 107)

Number of achievement standards attempted	Number of students who achieved:						
	1 standard	2 standards	3 standards	4 standards	5 standards	6 standards	7 standards
3 attempted	0	1	0				
4 attempted	1	1	0	1			
5 attempted	1	5	4	2	10		
6 attempted	0	2	4	15	16	28	
7 attempted	0	2	2	3	5	1	3
Total number of students	2	11	10	21	31	29	3

Results reveal that 59% of the 107 students achieved five, six, or seven of the standards they attempted. However, 61% of the 107 students failed one or more of the English achievement standards they attempted. This is a marked increase on the 37% of the 106 students who failed one or more NCEA level 1 English achievement standards.

To gauge students' reactions to their NCEA level 2 English results, they were asked to rate how well they had done compared to their expectations (Final/1a). Their evaluations listed in Table 5.17 reveal that 69.2% of students had done as well as they had expected to do, or better than they had expected to do.

Table 5.17: Students' evaluations of their performance in NCEA English compared with their expectations (n = 107)

Expectations	Frequency in percentages
A lot worse than you expected	4.7
A little worse than you expected	26.2
About what you expected	45.7
Better than you expected	20.6
A lot better than you expected	2.8
Total	100.0

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in students' evaluations of the degree to which their performance met, exceeded or fell below their expectations (girls' [n = 71] *Mdn* = 3.0, boys' [n = 36] *Mdn* = 3.0, *U* = 1240, *z* = -.27, *ns*, *r* = -.03).

However, these evaluations only provide part of the information needed to ascertain students' perceptions of their performance. For example, a student who indicated he/she did *a little worse than expected*, may have passed six achievement standards all with Merit, but had expected to achieve at least two Excellences. However, on reflection this student may have been happy with his/her results. To provide a fuller picture of students' perceptions and emotional reactions to their academic results, students were also asked how happy they were with their results (Final/2a). The findings displayed in Table 5.18 reveal that 56.2% of the students were happy or very happy with their NCEA English results, while around 16% were unhappy or very unhappy with their results.

Table 5.18: Students' evaluations of their degree of happiness with their NCEA level 2 English results (n = 105)

Happiness levels	Frequency in percentages
Very unhappy	3.8
Unhappy	11.4
Neither happy, nor unhappy	28.6
Happy	48.6
Very happy	7.6
Total	100.0

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant gender differences in perceptions of happiness with their NCEA results (girls' [n = 69] *Mdn* = 4.0, boys' [n = 36] *Mdn* = 3.5, *U* = 1172, *z* = -.51, *ns*, *r* = -.05).

The relationship between students' self-reported expectations and their degree of happiness or unhappiness was investigated using the Spearman rho correlation coefficient. There was a positive and moderately significant correlation between the two variables, *r* = .59, *n* = 105, *p* = .01, with those who achieved better than expected being more likely to be *happy* or *very happy*, while those who did worse than they expected were more likely to be *unhappy* or *very unhappy*.

However, the results in Table 5.18 are not necessarily a reflection of how many achievement standards students actually achieved. Of the four students who were *very unhappy*, one achieved all seven achievement standards she attempted. She was only one of three students to achieve seven achievement standards. She was unhappy because she expected to get Merits rather than Achieved for her external assessments. Three of these four students also indicated that they did *a lot worse* than they expected, including the student who achieved seven achievement standards.

On the other hand, some students indicated they were *happy* or *very happy*, but they passed very few achievement standards. For example, one student failed three out of five achievement standards he attempted, yet rated himself as being *happy* with his results. Another student failed three of the seven achievement standards she attempted, but was *very happy* as she had become disengaged during the year because she found English very boring. These results suggest that some students may have had low expectations for passing and as a result were pleased to pass a small number of English achievement standards, rather than failing all of them.

In sum, around 60% of students achieved five, six, or seven English achievement standards, while a similar percentage of students had failed at least one achievement standard. In terms of the degree to which their English results had met, exceeded or failed to meet their expectations, nearly 70% of students' expectations were met or exceeded. Lastly, around half of the students indicated they were happy or very happy with their NCEA English results, while 16% indicated they were unhappy or very unhappy with their results. Students' achievement expectations and happiness levels were positively correlated.

5.3. Factors Significantly Influencing Students' Motivation to Achieve Four English Achievement Standards

A particular aim of this study was to examine what factors Year 12 students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, and to identify the ways in which these factors influenced their motivation (research Questions 2 and 3). While Section 5.4 of this chapter examines students' motivation in NCEA English over the entire year, this section focuses specifically on students' perceptions of factors that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve four specific NCEA level 2 English

achievement standards: 2.1 (creative writing); 2.2 (formal writing); 2.3 (extended written text) or 2.4 (short written texts) (students elected to do one or the other); and 2.6 (unfamiliar text).

These level 2 English achievement standards were selected because they were key achievement standards through which Year 12 students could gain the necessary literacy credits to achieve university entrance at the time of this study. Furthermore, asking students to identify factors significantly influencing their motivation for each of these achievement standards, just prior to their being assessed against each standard (pre-achievement standard questionnaires) and just after they received their results for each standard (post achievement standard questionnaires), provided insights into both the task-specific factors influencing students' motivation to achieve, and those factors that remained consistent across all four achievement standards.

Each of the achievement standards is described in more detail below. These descriptions have been included because a number of students make reference to specific achievement standards in their responses. As a number of these achievement standards have been revised since undertaking the data collection for this study, they are described in the past tense.

Achievement standards 2.1 and 2.2 focused on writing skills and were internally assessed during the year by classroom teachers. The students' work was marked against the required national assessment criteria by one or more of the Year 12 English teachers and then moderated by other members of the school's English department. Like all internally assessed NCEA achievement standards, random samples of students' marked work were then moderated by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for national consistency and appropriateness of marking against the specified criteria.

Achievement standard 2.1 focused on creative writing. Most students were assessed against this achievement standard early in the year. For students to pass 2.1 they were required to present "writing that develops and sustains imaginative and creative idea(s); is crafted to create effects; structured appropriately for the audience, purpose, and text type; and uses writing conventions accurately" (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2004, p. 1). The assessment process involved students selecting a topic from a set of topics determined by the school's English department, drafting a piece of writing in class, reworking it in class after receiving limited global teacher feedback

(e.g., “You need to work on run-on sentences”), and then submitting their final piece of writing for internal assessment.

Achievement Standard 2.2 focused on formal writing. To successfully pass 2.2 students were required to draft, rework, and present writing that “develops and supports ideas in formal, transactional writing; is crafted to create effects; structured appropriately for the audience, purpose, and text type; and uses writing conventions accurately” (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2010, p. 1). As with 2.1, teachers could provide limited global feedback on a draft of a student’s writing, before it was rewritten and submitted for internal assessment.

Achievement standards 2.3, 2.4 and 2.6 were assessed externally under exam conditions at the end of the school year. The national examinations for these achievement standards were developed by NZQA and administered under its auspices. The students’ work was marked and moderated by a panel of markers employed by NZQA.

For achievement standard 2.3, students were required to write an essay “of at least 300 words on one extended text (novel, non-fiction, drama script or hyper fiction) they have studied” (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2009, p. 1). For achievement standard 2.4, students were required to write an essay “of at least 300 words on at least two short texts of the same or different genre that they have studied” (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2009, p. 2). The texts studied for 2.3 and 2.4 needed to be “of sufficient depth and complexity to enable candidates to develop a full and detailed analysis of several aspects of content and crafting” (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2009, p. 1).

Many students were encouraged by their teachers to select either achievement standard 2.3 or 2.4 to be assessed against, rather than elect to be assessed against both. Of the 107 students in this study, 26 chose to be assessed against both 2.3 and 2.4, and only 15 students passed both of these achievement standards. Given that students were more likely to be assessed against only one of these two achievement standards (i.e., either 2.3 or 2.4), students were asked to complete the pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires for the one achievement standard they were most likely to complete in the exams. Eighty students completed the relevant questionnaires for 2.3, and 27 completed the relevant questionnaires for 2.4. The questionnaire results have been combined and treated as though it is one achievement

standard because of the similarity of the assessment tasks, hence the references to “2.3/2.4” and four achievement standards rather than five.

To pass achievement standard 2.6, students needed to read unfamiliar texts and analyse the ideas and language features found in these texts (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2009). In the examination, students were required to:

Answer questions based on four texts: one transactional writing (magazine article, autobiography, opinion piece), one poetic writing (poem or descriptive prose), one verbal/visual (a static image such as an advertisement, poster, packaging, cover) and one oral (e.g. transcript of a speech, drama script, transcript of a conversation). (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2009, p. 3).

Students were asked in each of the four pre-achievement standard questionnaires for 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6 (Question 9a), to list up to two factors they believed were most influential in helping them to feel **more** motivated to pass that particular achievement standard. They were then asked to list up to two factors that they believed were most influential in making them feel **less** motivated to pass that particular achievement standard (Question 9b). The same two questions were also asked in the four post-achievement standard questionnaires (Questions 8a and 8b). The reason for asking students to identify both positive and negative factors in each questionnaire was to capture some of the complexity and diversity in students’ motivation to achieve, as this information has implications for theory, research, and practice.

Because each of the 107 students could have potentially provided up to four positive and up to four negative factors for each of the four achievement standards (e.g., two positive factors for Pre-achievement Standard Questionnaire 2.1/9a and two positive factors for Post-Achievement Standard Questionnaire 2.1/8a), the focus here is on reporting the number of responses associated with a particular theme or category, rather than reporting on numbers of students.

Where a student provided two responses to the same question in the same questionnaire (e.g., Pre 2.1/9a), which were both examples of the same category or theme, these were counted as one response rather than being counted as two responses. They were counted as one response because the second response was often an elaboration on the first response, rather than a completely separate reason or

factor. For instance, in the example below a student has given two responses when asked to identify factors she believed had a significantly negative impact on her motivation to achieve achievement standard 2.6 (unfamiliar text). Both responses were coded as examples of the theme *difficulties with or dislike of aspects of 2.6*. They were counted as one response, because the second response elaborated on an issue raised in the first response.

9b1: This assessment is unpredictable so there is no set answer we can study from. 9b2: There are a lot of techniques to study and analyse in this assignment so I don't know what to study – the topics are too broad. (Pre 2.6/9b/32F)

Where a student provided two responses that were coded into two different categories, these were counted as two responses. Tallying responses this way provided a more accurate reflection of meaningful units of information, and thus avoided distorting the interpretation of the findings, which may have occurred if the focus was solely on the quantity of responses. As students were not asked to rank their responses in terms of importance, no assumptions were made about one response being more significant than the other in instances where students listed two responses for each question.

5.3.1. Factors Perceived as Positively Influencing Students' Motivation

A total of 1217 responses from Questions 9a (four pre-achievement standard questionnaires) and 8a (four post-achievement standard questionnaires) were analysed for factors students identified as being most important in helping them to feel **more** motivated to achieve the four achievement standards focused on in this study. Table 5.19 indicates how many responses were received for each achievement standard and how many students gave responses.

Table 5.19: Positive responses in the pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires for each achievement standard (number of respondents)

Achievement standard	Pre questionnaire responses	Post questionnaire responses	Total responses
2.1 Creative writing	158 (104)	161 (105)	319
2.2 Formal writing	164 (106)	148 (103)	312
2.3 Extended or 2.4 Short written texts	160 (105)	150 (98)	310
2.6 Unfamiliar texts	135 (100)	141 (96)	276
Total responses	617	600	1217

Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation was used to code responses where appropriate. In instances where responses could not be coded according to Ryan and Deci's taxonomy, these responses were analysed for other relevant recurring factors or themes. Also, where appropriate, the three innate psychological needs of self-determination theory (i.e., autonomy, competence and relatedness) (Ryan & Deci, 2000c), have been used as overarching constructs to explain the themes that have emerged from the analysis of students' responses across the four subsections.

Of the 1217 responses, 773 (63.5%) were able to be coded using Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of human motivation. The totals for each category across the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires have been presented and aggregated in Table 5.20.

Table 5.20: Factors influencing students' motivation to achieve 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6, coded using Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of human motivation

Types of motivation	2.1	2.2	2.3/2.4	2.6	Total number	Percentage of total
Intrinsic	31	41	25	3	100	13%
Identified regulation	14	10	13	12	49	6%
Introjected regulation	77	50	51	53	231	30%
External regulation	102	121	80	77	380	49%
Amotivation	2	3	6	2	13	2%
Total	226	225	175	147	773	100%

The results in Table 5.20 indicate that students were primarily extrinsically motivated, as 79% of the responses were coded as examples of external and introjected regulation. In other words, more controlling rather than more autonomous types of motivation were most prevalent.

A closer inspection of the responses within each category revealed that while *intrinsic motivation* was not as prominent as some types of extrinsic motivation, this dimension varied between achievement standards. Intrinsic motivation for achievement standard 2.6 was virtually non-existent. This lack of intrinsic motivation for 2.6 was not unexpected, as the assessment task required students to apply a set of skills to texts they had not seen before, which was likely to have much less appeal than examining a film or novel in depth.

Another noteworthy point was the specific focus of students' intrinsic motivation. While two or three students per achievement standard made statements about enjoying English in general, most comments were specific to a particular achievement standard. For example, 38 of the 41 responses coded as examples of intrinsic motivation for 2.2 focused on how much students enjoyed the particular film on which their film review was based. Students' comments below illustrate this specific focus:

I enjoyed what I was writing about so this influenced me to be interested in it. (Pre 2.1/9a/30F)

I felt very motivated because the movie we watched was very inspirational so it made me interested to write about it, so I tried quite hard to get a good mark because the movie was enjoyable. (Post 2.2/8a/32F)

What was evident from the analysis of students' responses was that situational interest, rather than individual interest, appeared to play an important role in many students' intrinsic motivation (Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

Examples of *identified regulation* were also not prominent amongst the responses for each of the four achievement standards. This result was somewhat surprising in light of the fact that identified regulation featured so prominently in relation to valuing English (see 5.2.3). Two themes were evident in the examples of identified regulation. Most were focused on career goals. However, some others wanted to do well in the various

English achievement standards in order to gain entry to Year 13 A Stream A English. The following two examples illustrate these two themes:

Future career prospects – I want to become a television producer and get a Bachelor in Broadcasting Communications. (Pre 2.2/9a/37M)

The fact that you have to pass this standard in order to do English A in level 3, as I wanted to do level 3 English. (Post 2.6/8a/104F)

A more detailed analysis of all the examples coded as *introjected regulation* revealed seven salient themes within this category. The results are displayed in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21: Analysis of examples of introjected regulation across the four achievement standards

Themes	Number of responses	Examples
Avoiding failure	58	<i>“Not wanting to fail. I don’t like failing things at all and didn’t want a Not Achieved on my record for English” (Post 2.2/8a/86F).</i>
Parents	53	<i>“The most influential thing that has made me feel more motivated has been my parents. They do not want me to fail” (Pre 2.4/9a/115M).</i>
Proving to oneself	43	<i>“I also wanted to prove to myself I could do it. I mucked about the whole year so wanted to change” (Post 2.4/8a/83F).</i>
Teachers	43	<i>“Wanting to prove to my teacher that I’m not bad at English” (Pre 2.1/9a/41F).</i>
Doing one’s best	37	<i>“I wanted to do my best in all my exams” (Post 2.6/8a/22F).</i>
Peers	29	<i>“Classmates were influential because I feel like I have to get better marks than them” (Post 2.2/8a/6M).</i>
Siblings	6	<i>“I wanted to do better than my sister and rub it in her face” (Post 2.1/8a/59M).</i>

The total number of responses in this analysis was 270, which is higher than the 231 responses recorded as examples of *introjected regulation* in Table 5.20. The reason for this was because more than one theme was evident in some responses. For example, a student stated:

Proving to my teacher and parents that I can do well in English by getting a good grade (merit/excellence) in creative writing. (Pre 2.1/9a/55M)

This response was coded twice; once in the category labelled *parents* and once in the category labelled *teachers*. Other responses containing more than one theme were treated similarly.

It is through introjected regulation that significant others appear to have had a marked impact on students' motivation to achieve. In the case of *teachers*, nearly all the responses focused on students proving to the teacher that they were capable of achieving. In a number of instances students' need to prove they could pass an achievement standard appeared to stem from their perception that their English teacher did not think they were capable of passing. In the case of *peers*, students wanted to do as well as or better than their peers, especially their friends. In relation to *parents*, students appear to have been seeking parental approval by wanting to do well to make their parents proud or to avoid disappointing their parents. Sibling rivalry appears to have played a much more minor role in introjected regulation.

Analysis of the responses coded as examples of *external regulation* revealed that 249 (66%) of the 380 responses focused on passing a particular achievement standard in order to gain NCEA credits in general, the required literacy credits for university entrance, or NCEA level 2. For example:

I need as many credits I can get to pass NCEA level 2, and also it accounts for my literacy credits. (Post 2.2/8a/18F)

Students clearly recognised the importance of passing these English achievement standards. A number of these responses indicated students felt under pressure to pass, with many using the phrase, "I need to ...".

Many of these responses were very brief statements, such as "I need the credits to pass NCEA level 2", "I need to get the literacy credits", and "I want to get university entrance". It is possible that gaining these outcomes was not an end in itself, but a means to an end, although students did not elaborate further. Students' external regulation (e.g., need to get credits to pass NCEA level 2) may have been linked to identified regulation (e.g., wanting to get the literacy credits so they could attend

university), or introjected regulation (e.g., wanting to pass to avoid the humiliation of failing).

Of the remaining 131 (34%) responses that were coded as examples of external regulation, 12 focused on other things such as being offered a reward by parents for passing, while 119 focused on gaining Merits or Excellences for the achievement standards, or having their NCEA level 2 certificates endorsed with Merit or Excellence. The following examples highlight the focus on Merit and Excellence grades:

I need to get merit so I worked hard. (Pre 2.2/9a/109M)

Getting excellence. I am close to getting endorsed with excellence so need to get E in this. (Pre 2.3/9a/5F)

Twenty-five students identified this desire or need to gain Merits or Excellences as a very important factor in their motivation to achieve in two or more of the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires. Of those 25 students, 18 students were awarded Merits and/or Excellences for some of their NCEA level 2 English achievement standards (results for certificate endorsements are unknown), suggesting that for a number the motivation to achieve at a higher level was a reasonably realistic and attainable goal, rather than wishful thinking. The fact that more students did not indicate that they were motivated to achieve higher results perhaps suggests that they believed that gaining Merits and Excellences were beyond their capabilities. Alternatively, their main priority was to pass rather than excel.

The last type of motivation in Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation is that of *amotivation*. As the results in Table 5.20 reveal, only a very small number of students indicated that they were amotivated. For instance:

There has been nothing to make me feel more motivated. There hasn't been any bribes offered whatsoever. Also, the NCEA system has not been adjusted to better accommodate higher achievers so I feel "what's the point". (Pre 2.2/9a/19M).

Nothing motivated me to do well in this standard as I did not enjoy it. (Post 2.6/8a/61M)

However, there may have been a small number of others who felt amotivated, as a few students chose not to respond to Questions 9a or 8a across the eight questionnaires.

While 773 of the 1217 responses had been coded using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation, the remaining 444 (36.5%) responses were coded into other relevant recurring factors or themes. These results are set out in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22: Other important factors perceived as positively influencing students' motivation to achieve 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6

Factors	2.1	2.2	2.3/2.4	2.6	Total number	Percentage of total
Past performance	35	27	83	89	234	53%
Teachers	20	17	13	15	65	15%
Study/effort	7	9	18	7	41	9%
Exemplars	17	13	4	3	37	8%
Parents and siblings	4	4	6	5	19	4%
Peers	5	9	4	1	19	4%
Other	5	7	7	10	29	7%
Total	93	86	135	130	444	100%

(The categories of *teachers*, *peers*, and *parents and siblings* in Table 5.22 have a different focus than those same labels used in relation to introjected regulation.)

As indicated in Table 5.22, *past performance* was perceived as an important factor by a large number of students across all four achievement standards. The majority of the 234 responses noted that achieving well in the past (e.g., passing the same achievement standard in level 1 English, doing well on practice assessment tasks, or passing mock exams) was a very important motivator. For these students, passing or doing well on a similar assessment task appears to have helped increase or maintain students' sense of self-efficacy or expectancy for success, as illustrated by the following students' comments:

Getting the first draft back and realising I had a chance. I could edit it and get achieved helped me work harder. (Post 2.1/8a/9M)

Doing well in last year exams helped me to have more confidence and knowing if I try hard I can pass has given me motivation. (Pre 2.2/9a/71F)

For a smaller number of students, doing less well than they had wanted or expected to do on trial assessments was an incentive to try to do better or to avoid failure.

Mock exams are just a really big wakeup call so they make me want to try and improve my mark. (Pre 2.6/9a/42F)

Further evidence confirming the importance of past performance was also found when students were asked in each of the four pre- and four post-achievement questionnaires (Question 7a) to rate how influential *getting good or bad marks in English* was in their motivation to achieve across the four achievement standards. Students were asked to rate this factor as *not applicable*, or having *minimal influence*, *some influence*, or *very influential*. Between 104 and 107 students responded. Across the eight questionnaires an average of 22.1% of students rated previous results as being *very influential* (results ranged from 15.0% to 37.4% across the questionnaires).

What was particularly noteworthy in the responses coded as past performance in Table 5.22 was the marked increase in the number of responses that focused on past performance for achievement standards 2.3/2.4 and 2.6, compared with the responses for 2.1 and 2.2. Mock exam results appear to have been the significant factor in this increase, with most students noting the importance of mock exams in their responses for 2.3/2.4 and 2.6. Students did not do mock exams for 2.1 or 2.2, although they did trial/practice assessments.

Many secondary schools use mock exams to help prepare students for their external exams, as they give students the opportunity to undertake trial assessments under exam conditions. The mock exam questions are usually modelled on previous years' external exam questions. Students appeared to have found that the results and/or teacher feedback from their mock exams gave them a clear indication of what they were doing well and areas in which they could improve. For many students their mock exam results appear to have helped to affirm that they were capable of passing, as revealed in these students' comments:

My merit in my mock exam shows me that I can do well and I want to do better now knowing that. (Pre 2.3/9a/26F)

I did well on mocks so it boosted my confidence. (Post 2.3/8a/20F)

For a number of other students, the mock exam results spurred them on to improve their performance or to avoid failure, as illustrated in the comments below:

The fact that I failed my mock exam motivated me to try a lot harder. (Post 2.4/8a/43F)

Failing the mock exams made me realise I needed to study which helped me feel more motivated. (Pre 2.3/9a/54F)

While identified in far fewer responses than past performance, the role of *teachers* clearly had a significant impact on a small number of students' motivation to achieve. The 65 responses focused on the importance of English teachers' support, encouragement, feedback, expectations, and enthusiasm, as illustrated in the following comments:

I found my teachers willingness to help and explain the task to me most important because it made me feel like she believed I could do it and she wanted me to do well. (Pre 2.1/9a/50M)

She gets us motivated by providing heaps of exemplars to look over and heaps of activities to help us pass, building up to assessments. (Pre 2.1/9a/107F)

My teacher makes me extremely motivated because she does her best to make sure we're prepared and believes in me. (Pre 2.2/9a/90F)

My teacher being enthusiastic and positive. Her thinking that I'm going to do well makes me want to do well. (Pre 2.6/9a/56F)

These responses suggest teachers were supporting students' need for competence and/or relatedness. Additional evidence of the important role teachers played in some students' motivation was found in students' responses to Question 6a in the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires. Students were asked to rate how much their English teacher had influenced their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. Their choices were: *not at all*, *a bit*, and *a lot*. Across the eight questionnaires, between 105 and 107 students responded. Those students who indicated that their English teacher had influenced their motivation to achieve *a lot*

ranged from 10.3% to 18.7% (mean = 15.3%) across the eight questionnaires. Of the 192 responses explaining how teachers had influenced students' motivation (Question 6b in the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires), 145 (75.5%) were positive. For example:

His responses to my mock papers also my practise essays really pushed me to improve my results and reach for an excellence. He was quite clear in the content to place in our essays. He helped me with understanding the question and the best way to answer it. (Post 2.3/6b/97F)

My English teacher explained really clearly what was required for the assessment. She gave constructive criticism for all my drafts. (Post 2.1/6b/8F)

Studying/effort was another important factor identified by a small number of students (41 responses). For example:

I had studied incredibly hard for this assessment and so was motivated to put good use to my study. (Post 2.3/8a/104F)

While applying more effort and/or studying for the achievement standard had been mentioned by a few students in relation to 2.1 and 2.2, it was listed more often for 2.3 or 2.4. This may have been because creative writing and formal writing are harder to study for. Alternatively, for some it may have been that the mock exams highlighted areas for improvement more effectively (students did not do mock exams for 2.1 or 2.2), or because teachers stressed the importance of studying for exams.

Another theme evident in 37 responses was that of the value of *exemplars*. A range of graded and annotated exemplars are available from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for different achievement standards. The exemplars appeared to have enhanced students' understanding of the task, the work/effort required to pass, and thus their sense of self-efficacy. For example:

The exemplars the teacher showed us helped me to understand what was needed to be done, so they helped me pass this achievement standard. (Post 2.2/8a/43F)

Parents and siblings were identified by very few students as having a significant role to play in helping them feel more motivated to achieve (19 responses). However, for those few students, parents and siblings' support and encouragement probably supported both a need for competency and a need for relatedness. For example:

Mum and Dad helped me study for this assessment. (Post 2.3/8a/53F)

My brother showing interest and trying to help me do revision. (Post 2.3/8a/115M)

Peers, particularly friends, also played a very important role in a very small number of students' motivation to achieve (19 responses). As two students noted, friends helped in different ways:

Studying with my friend for this made me want to pass. (Post 2.4/8a/110M)

Friends proof reading my work. (Pre 2.3/9a/53F)

There were 29 responses classified as "other". These responses were difficult to interpret and provided little insight into students' motivation, as can be seen by the following two examples:

Having seen the play performed. (Post 2.3/8b/50M)

When I thought of a good creative thought about a story. (Post 2.4/8b/63M)

In summary, external and introjected regulation were significant factors influencing many students' motivation to achieve the four specific English achievement standards. A large number of students felt compelled or under pressure to pass, avoid failure or to make their parents proud. As a result it is likely that many did not experience a sense of self-determination or autonomy. Those who were intrinsically motivated appeared to be motivated by situational interest rather than by an individual interest, with a particular novel, film, or creative writing topic capturing their interest. Past performance had an important role to play in many students' motivation, while teachers had a significant influence on a small number of students' motivation to achieve the four English achievement standards.

5.3.2. Factors Perceived as Negatively Influencing Students' Motivation

A total of 1067 responses from Questions 9b (four pre-achievement standard questionnaires) and 8b (four post-achievement standard questionnaires) were analysed for factors students identified as being most important in making them feel **less** motivated to achieve the four achievement standards focused on in this study. Students were questioned about factors they perceived as adversely affecting their motivation, to gain insights into the challenges they faced in being motivated to achieve the four achievement standards (see Table 5.23).

Table 5.23: Negative responses in the pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires for each achievement standard (number of respondents)

Achievement standard	Pre questionnaire responses	Post questionnaire responses	Total responses
2.1 Creative writing	141 (93)	132 (93)	273
2.2 Formal writing	143 (101)	131 (95)	274
2.3 Extended or 2.4 Short written texts	132 (92)	135 (93)	267
2.6 Unfamiliar texts	121 (93)	132 (91)	253
Total responses	537	530	1067

In relation to factors students identified as being important in making them feel **less** motivated to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation was not appropriate as an organising structure because intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and introjected regulation are unlikely to be associated with factors that students would have perceived as making them feel less motivated to achieve. Instead the analysis focused on other prominent recurring factors or themes that arose from the analysis of students' responses. These factors and the number of responses coded for each achievement standard are presented in Table 5.24.

Table 5.24: Important factors perceived as negatively influencing students' motivation to achieve 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6

Factors	2.1	2.2	2.3/2.4	2.6	Total number	Percentage of total responses
Difficulties with or dislike of aspects of English	95	87	103	96	381	36%
Other demands	57	59	43	45	204	19%
Peers	43	65	36	21	165	15%
Teachers	19	23	18	22	82	8%
Concentration problems	36	17	11	4	68	6%
Lack of study/effort	2	4	25	17	48	4%
Other	10	12	12	9	43	4%
Past performance	2	2	16	21	41	4%
Missing school	6	8	2	1	17	2%
Credits not needed	1	3	4	3	11	1%
Amotivation	3	2	1	1	7	1%
Total	274	282	271	240	1067	100%

In addition to the results highlighting the wide variety of factors negatively influencing students' motivation to achieve each of the four achievement standards, the results in Table 5.24 reveal that three factors account for 70% of the responses, with *difficulties with or a dislike of aspects of English* being the most prevalent factor negatively influencing students' motivation to achieve. In the category *difficulties with or dislike of aspects of English*, difficulties and dislikes have been examined together as they are often intertwined. For example, a student who dislikes a novel may do so because they struggle to understand it, as is aptly illustrated in the following comment:

Didn't enjoy the text "To Kill a Mocking Bird." Didn't fully understand the text. (Post 2.3/8b/80F).

Most of the 381 responses in this category of difficulties and dislikes highlight the influence of task-specific factors on students' motivation to achieve. However, some responses indicate teachers and students' sense of self-efficacy may have had important roles to play in students' difficulties or dislikes.

With regard to difficulties or dislikes in relation to 2.1 (creative writing), students struggled to think of what to write for the assessment task; felt constrained by the requirement to complete the assessment task in class time or by the limited range of topics; disliked creative writing or the topic choices (limited autonomy); or believed they lacked the necessary skills or abilities to be successful (low self-efficacy). For example:

When I first started this assessment I found what less motivated me was trying to think of a memory to write about. This really stressed me. I didn't know if my memory was good enough to write creatively about. (Post 2.1/8b/29F)

Self doubt – in my abilities in creative writing caused me to have negative thoughts which effected my ability to think. (Post 2.1/8b/5M)

In relation to difficulties with or dislike of aspects of 2.2 (formal writing), students' responses revealed that a number did not understand what was required to successfully complete the assessment, which involved writing a film review. For instance:

I was annoyed because we didn't have much time in class to study film reviews and I didn't know how to write one proply, I didn't fully understand how to. (Post 2.2/8b/73F)

Some students found it difficult to do the assessment for 2.2, because it had to be completed in class time, or because they believed they had insufficient skills to pass this standard. Other comments revealed a dislike of aspects of the assessment task itself, such as the drafting process and the amount of writing required. Another group of students disliked the film selected for the film review that they were required to write.

With regard to difficulties with or dislike of aspects of 2.3 (extended written text) or 2.4 (short written texts), several students did not enjoy the text(s) and/or found the text(s) difficult to understand. For instance:

I didn't understand the book and the language used. (Post 2.3/8b/17F)

I hated the book. (Post 2.3/8b/39F)

Other students indicated they were anxious about whether they could answer the exam questions, while some expressed concerns about their inadequate writing skills. In a number of instances feeling incompetent may have been an issue, especially if students had done poorly in the mock exams.

An analysis of the responses categorised as difficulties with or dislike of aspects of 2.6 (unfamiliar texts) revealed that many students found 2.6 difficult. Students made references to struggling to comprehend the requirements. For example:

I struggle to understand many concepts, sometimes I just procrastinate in order to avoid having to do 2.6 exercises. (Pre 2.6/9b/81F)

Other responses noted difficulties specifically associated with the 2.6 exam, particularly the questions asked in the exam. A further set of responses focused on the difficulty of knowing what and how to study for this achievement standard, as illustrated by the following comment:

I don't understand how to study for something such as unfamiliar text. Therefore I can't usually be bothered trying. (Pre 2.6/9b/61M)

A number of students expressed a very strong dislike of the requirements of 2.6. As one high achieving student commented:

I hate the standard and find answering the questions difficult. I do not like 2.6 and find it very hard to pass and thus lacked motivation for this external [exam]. (Post 2.6/8b/35M)

This student was awarded an Achieved for this achievement standard, although he had gained three Excellences and a Merit in other English achievement standards. Similar sentiments were echoed in responses written by other high achieving students who disliked 2.6.

While most responses focused on difficulties with or a dislike of particular aspects of an achievement standard, a small number focused on a general lack of ability in English as negatively influencing their motivation to achieve. In some instances the perception of lacking ability was the result of failing other English achievement standards, as illustrated by the comments below:

Not passing a previous standard and getting given a punctuation sheet made me feel dumb and hopeless about what I could do. (Post 2.2/8b/54F)

Just failing. I try but I still do not have the skills I need to pass the assessments. (Post 2.2/8b/94F).

As these comments suggest, difficulties with aspects of particular achievement standards or failure in practice essays or mock exams may have lowered students' sense of self-efficacy. Attributions to a lack of ability may have occurred in cases where students experienced repeated failure, and where they felt unable to understand content or lacked the writing skills to effectively express their ideas. In some instances attributions to a lack of ability in a specific achievement standard may have generalised to a belief in a lack of ability in English in general. In terms of self-determination theory, students experiencing failure may have had their need for competence unaddressed.

An analysis of the 204 responses categorised as *other demands* revealed that most students perceived that the demands of other school subjects made it difficult for them to feel more motivated to achieve the particular English achievement standards being examined in this study, or English achievement standards in general. In some cases students appeared to be overwhelmed, pressured, or stressed by the demands of other subjects. The following examples illustrate these concerns:

I can't study much for this as my other important subjects (chem, bio, geo) take up all my time, as well as chores and social life. I always find myself spending less time on my English this year. (Pre 2.1/9b/32F)

Needing to concentrate on numerous standards simultaneously, as well as commitments outside school. (Pre 2.3/9b/89M)

The fact that there are 6 exams to sit, so there is so much to do. Sometimes I feel as though I may burn out. (Pre 2.6/9b/104F)

A few students also found sporting, cultural, and/or work commitments meant there was little time or energy to devote to English. Alternatively they found that these activities were more interesting than English. For example:

Work pressured me to pick up shifts and I felt like I had to say yes. It left me with not much time to study. (Post 2.6/8b/76F)

Couldn't spend much time on this as I had sports and my part-time job and the musical at school to worry about. (Post 2.1/8b/73F)

Too much golf. (Post 2.6/8b/49M)

The issue of other demands, particularly with other subjects, highlights the continual need for students to make judgments about where to devote their time and energy, and the recognition that there are costs associated with every decision they made.

In relation to *peers* playing a markedly negative role in students' motivation to achieve, most of the 165 responses focused on friends as being a source of distraction or a disruption to students' learning, rather than classmates in general. For example:

My friends often distract me in class and I begin chatting forgetting what I'm meant to be doing, as I forget about the task, getting nothing done. (Pre 2.3/8b/5F)

Friends sitting next to me made me feel less motivated because they distracted me and made me want to relax and talk. (Pre 2.6/9b/55M)

Boys were just as likely as girls to identify friends as being a distraction. In such cases the need for relatedness appears to conflict with the need for competence.

Occasionally the opposite sex also proved to be a distraction. As one girl noted:

M[boy] is such a babe that I can't concentrate on my English work. (Pre 2.4/9b/62F)*

Also noted in this category were comments made by two students in relation to peers making it known that doing well was not considered "cool", as illustrated in the following comment:

Many of my classmates kept distracting me with opinions on the fact 'it was not cool' to pass with a good mark. (Post 2.2/8b/8F)

For a few students it was the class in general that negatively impacted on their motivation to achieve in English, as two students' comments illustrate:

People in my class are very loud and distract me. Half the time the teacher cannot control them. It gets frustrating and it affects my work ethic. (Post 2.2/8b/18F)

Often the class is too noisy for me to concentrate – not through lack of discipline, just general noise. I need silence to concentrate fully. (Post 2.2/9b/89M)

A similarly small number of students identified *classmates' behaviour and attitudes* as having a markedly negative impact across the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires in Question 7a. Between 104 and 107 students responded to Question 7a. Of those an average of 6.1% of students identified *classmates' behaviour and attitudes* as being very influential (range between 2.8-13.1% across the eight questionnaires). When asked to explain how their *classmates behaviour and attitudes* had a marked influence on their motivation (Question 7b in the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires), nearly all the responses indicated that classmates had a negative impact, mainly because they were disruptive. For example:

Some of my classmates are very disruptive, and this means the teacher has less time to focus on those who wish to succeed. (Pre 2.2/7b/104F)

Of note also was the fact that peers were perceived to be much more of an issue for achievement standard 2.2 (65 responses), than for each of the other achievement standards (e.g., 21 responses identifying this as an issue for 2.6). The reasons for this marked difference are unclear. However, it is possible that students were trying to focus on crafting their formal piece of writing in class for the internal assessment of 2.2 and were distracted by friends at a time when they needed to focus on their work.

Closely aligned to the issue of friends or classmates being a distraction was the issue of having difficulty concentrating. Sixty-eight responses made reference to being distracted, having trouble concentrating, or being tired. For instance:

I was very distracted in class so didn't concentrate and didn't get the right information. (Pre 2.4/9b/83F)

Tiredness. I can't be bothered some days so just sit there. Makes me less motivated. (Pre 2.1/9b/79M)

Although a number of students commented on being distracted in general terms (e.g., “*I get easily distracted in class*” Pre 2.1/9b/66F.), it is quite possible they were distracted by friends or classmates. There was also quite a contrast in the number of responses focusing on this as a factor across the four achievement standards (e.g., 36 responses for 2.1, yet only four for 2.6). Again, it is possible that because 2.1 was internally assessed, the students were more aware of being distracted when they should have been focused on their creative writing assessment.

Teachers accounted for 82 of the 1067 responses that focused on factors that students perceived as adversely affecting their motivation to achieve. Many of these negative comments are attributable to a very small number of English teachers. This point has been made to indicate that students did not perceive the majority of English teachers as having a significantly negative impact on their motivation. However, that said, it is concerning that some students' motivation was so adversely affected by those few teachers.

Just over half the responses indicated that students found that their English teacher provided insufficient support for a particular achievement standard. This included lack of suitable feedback, inadequate explanations, lack of encouragement, insufficient class time spent on preparation, and lack of help when requested. Some of these concerns are illustrated below:

My teacher didn't give me much detailed feedback which didn't help me much. (Pre 2.1/9b/48F)

My teacher not explaining the requirements of this assessment meant I lost a bit of interest, meaning I didn't feel as motivated. (Pre 2.2/9b/65F)

I had no help even when I asked for it. (Post 2.3/8b/54F)

In such instances students appeared to find that their need for competence was being thwarted by teachers not providing sufficient autonomy support or structure.

Of the remaining responses that identified teachers as having a negative impact on students' motivation to achieve, several students commented on finding the teacher boring or expressed a dislike of their teaching style. A few responses focused on students' dislike of their teacher, or the belief that their teacher disliked them, or that the teacher thought they were poor at English. For example:

I don't understand my teacher. She confuses me and tells me I am terrible at English and doesn't understand why I take English. (Pre 2.2/9b/103F)

My teacher does not like me and I don't like her. (Pre 2.1/9b/109M)

Lack of study or effort was another factor identified by a small number of students. The bulk of the 48 responses were linked to achievement standards 2.3/2.4 and 2.6. This difference is likely to be related to the fact that 2.1 (creative writing) and 2.2 (formal writing) were much more difficult to study for, given the nature of the assessment tasks and the fact students were assessed on work completed in class. Students had more opportunity to study for 2.3/2.4 and 2.6 and so the lack of study or effort may have been more salient to the students concerned. It is also quite possible that the amount of study did not feature strongly as a separate factor across all achievement standards, as it was partly encapsulated in the coding category *other demands*. In this latter category students identified the fact they could not devote much time to particular English achievement standards because of the need to focus on other subjects.

Past performance was also identified by a small number of students as a factor negatively affecting their motivation to achieve. Nearly all of the 41 responses were linked to achievement standards 2.3/2.4 and 2.6, and particularly to the mock exam results for these achievement standards. Just as the mock exam results positively influenced a number of students' self-efficacy, they also appeared to have lowered some students' self-efficacy, as illustrated by the following comment:

Not passing my mocks made me not want to complete the actual achievement standard. I wasn't confident I could pass when it really mattered. (Post 2.6/8b/83F)

A sense of despair was evident in a number of comments, particularly in relation to 2.6 (Pre 2.6), with some students believing that failing 2.6 was a foregone conclusion.

The numbers of responses for *past performance* were also possibly higher for 2.3/2.4 and 2.6, because these achievement standards were assessed externally at the end of the year. By this point in the year a few students had experienced considerable failure on both practice assessments and other English achievement standards over the year. For example:

Failing 12 out of 14 practice essays. (Pre 2.3/9b/51M)

Failing all the time. (Pre 2.6/9b/79M)

In such instances attributions to lack of ability seemed to have become more generalised.

Associated with beliefs about failure being a foregone conclusion is *amotivation*, the last category in Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation and the antithesis of intrinsic motivation. However, this was not a significant issue for most students with only seven responses making reference to being completely unmotivated, as illustrated by the following comments:

I'm not overly motivated in the first place so not much could make me less motivated. (Pre 2.6/9a/46M)

I don't enjoy English so that had a big impact on it. I wasn't motivated to pass. (Pre 2.2/9b/83F)

A very small number of students (11 responses) indicated that because they did not need the English credits this had lessened their motivation to achieve. Another small group of students noted that being absent from school for health reasons, or absent from classes because of other commitments, had an adverse effect on their motivation to achieve (17 responses).

The remaining category listed in Table 5.24 was that of *other*, which contained very small numbers of responses that could not be meaningfully coded or were associated with issues, such as students disliking school, or problems at home, that had adversely affected students' motivation to achieve.

In summary, difficulties with and dislike of aspects of particular achievement standards, other demands, and peers were the three key factors identified by students as adversely affecting their motivation to achieve the four English achievement standards. In relation to difficulties with and dislike of aspects of achievement standards, students' motivation was affected primarily by task-specific factors that varied across the four different achievement standards. In the case of other demands, it was mainly the demands of other subjects that detracted from students' motivation to achieve in English. With peers it was mainly friends, rather than classmates in general, who distracted students from learning.

To a much lesser extent, teachers, concentration problems, lack of study and past performance were identified as negatively affecting a small number of students' motivation to achieve. What is especially noteworthy though is that students identified a wide range of factors that they perceived as adversely affecting their motivation to achieve the four achievement standards examined in this study. These were factors that students had to simultaneously contend with and attempt to overcome the effects of, if they were to become sufficiently motivated to succeed.

5.4. Factors that Significantly Influenced Students' Motivation

Overall

This section examines factors students perceived to be most significant in influencing their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards **over the entire year** (part b of research Questions 2 and 3). To this end, students were asked in the Final Questionnaire (Final/11a) to identify factors that they believed had been most influential on their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. Up to four responses were requested to capture some of the complexity and diversity of the factors that students perceived as being very influential, and thus provide greater insights for teachers in order that they might better support students' motivation to achieve in NCEA. In responding to Question 11a, students were reminded that these factors could be positive or negative influences on their motivation. They were also asked to explain these factors as fully as possible.

Of the 107 students who provided responses, two identified only one factor, 26 identified two factors, 36 identified three factors, and 43 identified four factors. The fact that 74% of students listed three or four factors that they believed had a significant

influence on their motivation to achieve these NCEA achievement standards indicates that they recognised their motivation was influenced in a variety of ways. These results also highlight once again the complex and multifaceted nature of motivation (Hartnett et al., 2011).

After generating a list of up to four factors, and explaining why each was influential in Question 11a (Final), students were then asked to rank their responses from the most influential to the fourth most influential (Final/11b). The request for students to rank their responses to Question 11a (Final/11a) proved to be important, with 40 of 107 students listing what they deemed to be their most influential factor as the second, third or fourth factor in their original list of up to the four most influential factors. It was also significant in relation to the second most influential factor, with 61 of 105 students listing it as the first, third or fourth factor in their list of four. The following example illustrates this point. A female student (107F) listed the most influential factors in the order noted below for Question 11a. The ranks she then subsequently assigned to these factors (Final/11b) are in brackets:

11a1: *My teacher was a big help, as she was motivated & passionate about us all achieving as highly as possible. (2nd)*

11a2: *I wanted enough credits @ a high level to get UE and to do as well as I could. (3rd)*

11a3: *I'm passionate about English so my motivation was high. (1st)*

11a4: *I got good marks in the first three assessments so my motivation stayed high. (4th)*

After reviewing the factors listed by the students, it became clear that self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2002) once again provided the most useful lens through which to understand students' perception of factors that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve in high stakes assessment. In particular, Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation, and the three innate psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were used as key organising concepts for categorising and understanding students' responses. Other relevant categories were also employed as themes were identified.

Given that not all students gave three or four responses, the analysis of responses was limited to those factors identified as the **most** influential by all 107 students, and those factors identified as **second most influential** by 105 students (the other two students

had only given one response), to provide a fairer representation of factors perceived to be influential. However, in limiting the analysis to the most influential and second most influential factors, there is no suggestion that the third and fourth most influential factors identified by some students did not have an important role to play in their motivation to achieve.

5.4.1. Students' Perceptions of the Two Most Influential Factors on Their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English

In total 212 responses were analysed; 107 responses for the most important factor and 105 responses for the second most important factor. Of the 212 responses, 113 (53.3%) responses were able to be coded using the five types of motivation identified in Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation. The following examples of students' statements illustrate the types of statements made by students and how they were coded in the brackets that follow:

I'm passionate about English so my motivation was high. (Intrinsic motivation)

Getting Uni entrance was important and motivated me because I know that with it you have more options for your future. (Identified regulation)

Doing bad in mock exams made me want to try harder so I wouldn't fail. (Introjected regulation)

I worked hard because I wanted to gain merit endorsement.. (External regulation)

I became really unmotivated after the first term as I noticed I was really behind from being out of class for Gateway and I couldn't catch up so I just gave up. (Amotivation)

The results of this coding are displayed in Table 5.25.

Table 5.25: Most important and second most important influences on students' motivation to achieve, coded using Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of human motivation

Type of motivation	Most important influences	Second most important influences	Total number	Percentage of total responses
Intrinsic motivation	2	1	3	3%
Identified regulation	9	8	17	15%
Introjected regulation	17	18	35	31%
External regulation	29	21	50	44%
Amotivation	4	4	8	7%
Total	61	52	113	100%

The findings reveal a similar pattern and similar numbers of responses in each category between the most important and second most important responses, with external regulation accounting for the most responses in both sets of results, followed by introjected regulation. Given the similarity, subsequent comment on these findings will focus on the collapsed data across the most important and second most important factors.

The prevalence of examples of external regulation and introjected regulation also reflects the same pattern as was found for factors positively influencing students' motivation to achieve each of the four achievement standards, as discussed in the previous section. These two categories also accounted for a similar percentage of the responses that were able to be coded using Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of human motivation: 79% of the responses across the four achievement standards, and 75% of the responses across the most important and second most important influences overall. These results strongly suggest that students felt considerable pressure to achieve NCEA level 2 achievement standards and to avoid failure or gain approval. Few appear to have felt autonomously motivated or self-determined.

Analysis of introjected regulation reasons for the two most important factors revealed two distinct themes. Of the 35 responses coded as examples of introjected regulation, 21 responses focused on ego-enhancement. Students wanted to do well for their own self-esteem (14 responses), do better than their friends/classmates (five responses), or to gain parental approval (two responses). The remaining 14 responses were focused

on students wanting to avoid failure. The following examples highlight these different facets of introjected regulation:

I wanted to achieve results that I could be proud of, so I could look back and know I couldn't have done any better. (Final/11b/89M)

I always wanted to do good compared to others in my class. It's a self-esteem thing. (Final/11b/65F).

I wanted to make my parents proud. (Final/11b/5F)

The fact that I hate failing was a big influence on my motivation as it made me more motivated to work harder and want to pass. (Final/11b/57F)

Similar themes were also present in the analysis of examples of introjected regulation across the four achievement standards (see Table 5.20). These were: *proving to oneself, doing one's best, avoiding failure, making parents proud, and doing better than friends*. However, what was absent from these responses for NCEA English overall was students' desire to prove to teachers that they were competent at English, and their desire to do better than their siblings.

A detailed examination of the 50 examples of external regulation also revealed two distinct themes. Thirty-three students focused on getting a qualification; that is they indicated that they needed or wanted to pass level 2, pass the required literacy credits, or gain university entrance. For example:

The most motivating factor was how much I wanted to pass level 2. I knew I needed English credits to pass so I tried extra hard. (Final/11b/76F)

I wanted enough credits to pass NCEA level 2 so I could get the literacy credits for UE. (Final/11b/2M)

However, for 13 other students the focus was on getting the rewards for doing well; that was gaining Merits or Excellences for their achievement standards, or having their level 2 NCEA certificate endorsed with Merit or Excellence. Nearly all of these 13 students did in fact gain Merits or Excellences, suggesting their goal was potentially attainable and reasonably realistic.

The fact that only 17 responses in total were coded as examples of identified regulation is somewhat surprising, given the high number of students ($n = 72$), who in the same questionnaire (Final/16b) indicated that they intended to go to university, or enter a career that required a university degree, for which university entrance and literacy credits were essential. However, a few students had clearly internalised the importance of English for their future careers, as shown in the following example of identified regulation:

English skills are necessary to study and practise law, which is what I aspire to. (Final/11b/104F).

A greater percentage of responses were coded as identified regulation in this current analysis, compared with the percentage of responses coded in the same category across the four achievement standards (15% vs 6%). This difference possibly reflects students' focus on significant factors across the year, rather than a focus on factors related to each achievement standard.

There was a marked drop in the percentage of responses identified as examples of intrinsic motivation in this current analysis (3%) from the percentage of responses coded as examples of intrinsic motivation across the four achievement standards (13%). Again this is possibly explained by the fact that students were identifying significant factors across the year in more general terms, rather than factors linked to a specific achievement standard. Also the low number of students who were intrinsically motivated is probably explained by the salience of the high-stakes nature of the assessment and the pressure to pass.

Amotivation is more prevalent in these results (7%) than in Section 5.3. Once again this finding is possibly because students were looking more globally at their motivation across the year rather than in relation to a specific achievement standard. For example:

That English just doesn't interest me and just got worse as the year went on. (Final/11b/50M).

While this student had no interest in English, despite passing five out of six achievement standards, the remaining students had not done well overall in English (three had clearly failed English, while another three only passed three achievement standards). Three of these students subsequently left school at the end of Year 12

without sufficient literacy credits to gain university entrance, which had implications for their future career options.

While 113 responses of the 212 responses (Final/11b) were coded using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation, the remaining 99 (46.7%) responses were coded according to a number of factors that recurred during the analysis of these responses. These factors are listed in Table 5.26.

Table 5.26: Other factors perceived as being most important or second most important in students' motivation to achieve

Factors	Most important influences	Second most important influences	Total number	Percentage of total responses
Teachers	20	17	37	37%
Peers	4	10	14	14%
Past performance	8	5	13	13%
Dislike of English	5	7	12	12%
Studying	0	8	8	8%
Home circumstances	0	4	4	4%
Parents	4	0	4	4%
Not codable	5	2	7	7%
Total	46	53	99	99%

The results reveal that *teachers* played quite a prominent role in students' motivation to achieve, with just over a third of the responses identifying teachers as the most important or second most important factor. Of the 37 responses which identified teachers as having a significant influence, 23 indicated teachers had a significantly positive influence. For example:

My English teacher was a huge influence on me as she explained everything and encouraged me to do my best so I felt confident to succeed.
(Final/11b/8F)

In the remaining 14 responses, students saw their English teachers as having a detrimental influence on their motivation to achieve through ineffective teaching and/or a lack of enthusiasm. For example:

*My English teacher was a big influence, as she was horrible at teaching.
Probably shouldn't have a teaching licence. (Final/11b/106F)*

However, as the negative comments were mainly attributable to a very small number of teachers, poor teaching was not a widespread issue.

Further confirmation that teachers played an important role in a number of students' motivation was found in their responses to another question specifically focused on the role of teachers. Students were asked to rate how much their English teacher had influenced their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English (Final/4b). Their choices were: *not at all*, *a bit*, and *a lot*. Of the 106 students who responded, 25 indicated that their English teacher had influenced their motivation to achieve *a lot*. When asked in the next part of the question to explain how their English teacher had influenced their motivation *a lot* 19 comments were positive and six were negative.

The positive comments focused on aspects such as: the teacher's encouragement; clear explanations: effective teaching, good preparation for an upcoming assessment, enthusiasm, effective feedback, belief that they could do well, caring attitude, and willingness to go the extra distance for them. The following comments illustrate these points:

He had high expectations for me which gave me confidence. (Final/4b/6M)

*My English teacher was very helpful with feedback on my essays and I was able to improve a lot because of her help. English became my favourite subject because of her teaching so I wanted to do really well all year.
(Final/4c/16F)*

Very enthusiastic! And so made me enthusiastic. Extremely caring and knew how to help me and where to help! (Final/4b/81F)

My teacher explained to me carefully how to interpret questions. He also gave me good ideas to prepare for my exams. (Final/4b/97F)

The positive comments made about teachers in the Final Questionnaire (Questions 11b and 4c) indicate that teachers helped students to feel more motivated in ways that enhanced their sense of self-efficacy and addressed their need for competence. At

times teachers also appear to have addressed students' need for relatedness through their caring and encouragement.

The six negative comments (Final/4b) focused on the same themes as the positive comments, but instead how those things were lacking or inadequate, such as poor teaching and inadequate or misleading feedback. For example:

Because she was so bad I didn't want to do anything. She gave me really bad feedback like saying I was doing really well then giving me an achieve.
(Final/4b/106F)

As revealed in Table 5.26, peers also played a role in students' motivation to achieve, although they were perceived to be less influential than teachers. Of the 14 responses, three focused on the support provided by friends, nine focused on friends being a distraction, one focused on the class as a whole, and one complained of an issue with a classmate. The following comments highlight these issues:

My friends had a huge impact on my English results. Too much time mucking around. (Final/11b/ 53F)

My classmates – they made it clear they hated English and wouldn't focus so I lost interest because the teacher seemed to give up on us.
(Final/11b/7F)

There was this racist girl who sat by us and distracted me when I was learning. Was a distraction throughout the year. (Final/11b/74F)

The results in relation to peers were virtually identical to the results for Questions 5a and 5b in the final questionnaire. In Question 5a students rated the influence of their friends. Of the 107 students who responded, 15% indicated that their friends had had a lot of influence on their motivation to achieve (Final/5a). Those who identified that friends had a lot of influence were asked to explain how their friends influenced their motivation (Final/5b). These open-ended responses revealed a very similar set of responses to those discussed above.

For *past performance* the results were also mixed. In 10 of the 13 responses students' sense of self-efficacy was enhanced, particularly by their mock exam results. For example:

Getting excellence in my mock exam made me want to get excellence in NCEA. (Final/11b/56F)

For three students poor results appear to have negatively affected their motivation to achieve:

I became less and less motivated in English throughout the year as my mock results were not very good and I failed practise essays. (Final/11b/44M).

Interestingly, there was less emphasis on the positive impact of past performance in the current analysis, compared with the emphasis placed on its importance across the four achievement standards, where it was identified as a key factor in helping students feel very motivated to achieve (see Table 5.20).

Twelve responses indicated that students' *dislike of English* or aspects of it had a markedly negative impact on their motivation to achieve, as illustrated by the comment below:

I never really had much motivation for 2.6 or the monologue, so I didn't work as hard on these assessments. (Final/11b/58F)

Studying, parents, and home circumstances accounted for a small proportion of the overall responses. The results for studying were mixed, with some students indicating that they either had put in considerable effort, or alternatively that other demands had meant that they could not put in the effort they believed was necessary to succeed. Four students identified issues at home as having a negative impact on their motivation to achieve as their second most important factor.

Another four students identified parents as being the most important positive influence on their motivation to achieve. The only other references to parents in Question 11b were made by two students in relation to introjected regulation; that is they wanted to make their parents proud. Parents were not perceived as being one of the two most

important influences on students' motivation to achieve, except by a very small group of students. Further support for these findings comes from students' rating of the influence of their parents (Final/3b). The results revealed that 9.3% of students (n = 107) considered that their parents had influenced their motivation *a lot*, another 66.4% indicated that their parents had influenced their motivation *a bit*, while 24.3% indicated that their parents had not influenced their motivation at all. The remaining seven responses were not able to be meaningfully coded.

Overall, the results suggest that around a quarter of students felt pressured to pass NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, and that teachers had an important role to play in students' motivation. This role was largely, but not always, a positive role. What was also noteworthy was the variety of factors students identified as influencing their motivation to achieve, and the fact that students' motivation was simultaneously being influenced both positively and negatively in a number of instances.

Underpinning the majority of responses was the need for competence, whether that was the need to pass NCEA level 2 English, the need to prove to themselves and others that they were competent, the need to pass in order to achieve an important personal goal, or the need to be supported by significant others to become more competent. There is some indication that the need for relatedness also had a role to play in students' motivation, with some students indicating that they valued the emotional support of their parents, English teacher and friends, while others found relationships with significant others negatively affected their motivation to achieve.

5.5. Factors Few Students Perceived as Having a Significant Impact on Their Motivation to Achieve

This section focuses on other factors, not previously discussed. These other factors were identified at the outset as potentially having a markedly positive or negative impact on students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English, but were subsequently not identified by most students as having a significant impact on their motivation. The rationale for examining these factors that were logically assumed to have an impact, but in fact had little influence on most students' motivation, is to provide a more complete picture of the perceived influences on students' motivation to achieve.

These factors were identified by the pilot group and formed part of the list of factors in Question 6a in the Final Questionnaire. (Other factors from the list that were considered to be influential by more students have been discussed in previous sections, such as *getting good or bad marks*.) The factors that were identified as not being very influential by most students were:

- Part-time work,
- Sports, music, or drama commitments,
- Activities outside school,
- Home commitments,
- Extra tutoring, and
- Brothers and/or sisters.

Students were asked to rate each factor from *not applicable* to *very influential*. Four of the factors in the list above focused on commitments and activities outside class. These factors are listed below in Table 5.27. They are accompanied by the percentages of students who rated them as *not applicable*, or having *minimal influence*, *some influence*, or being *very influential*. Between 105 and 107 students responded to each factor.

Table 5.27: Students' ratings (%) of the degree of influence of various factors (Final/6a) (n = 105-107)

Factors	Not Applicable	Minimal influence	Some influence	Very influential	Total
Part-time work	44.3	23.6	26.4	5.7	100
Sport, music, and drama commitments	31.8	34.6	29.9	3.7	100
Outside school activities (e.g., youth group)	18.1	52.4	25.7	3.8	100
Home commitments (e.g., chores)	10.2	69.2	15.9	4.7	100

As can be seen from Table 5.27, a high percentage of students considered activities and commitments outside the classroom had no or little impact on their motivation to achieve. Very few students identified these factors as very influential.

These four factors were also explored in more detail in the Outside Class Activities Questionnaire (OCA Questionnaire) because it was thought that they may adversely

affect students' motivation to achieve NCEA English. It was assumed that time spent on these other activities would lessen the number of hours available for study, be a desirable distraction, and/or result in tiredness and inability to concentrate. However, not only were these four factors considered by most students not to be markedly influential when rated for Question 6a (Final Questionnaire), they were rarely identified by students in their responses to the key open-ended questions in relation to factors perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve the four specific achievement standards (Questions 9a and 9b in the four pre-achievement standard questionnaires, Questions 8a and 8b in the four post-achievement standard questionnaires) and NCEA English overall (Final/11b). Thus, there was consistency and confirmation in these findings.

It was somewhat surprising that activities and commitments outside class were rarely mentioned in key open-ended responses or listed as *very influential* (Final/6a), given the number of students involved in such activities or commitments. Of the 107 students who responded, 61 indicated they had part-time jobs (OCA/6), 76 had regular sporting commitments (OCA/1 and 2), 42 were involved in music or cultural activities (OCA/3 and 4), and 27 were involved in organised clubs or activities (OCA/5). However, it is possible that some references in students' key open-ended responses to lack of study, tiredness, difficulty concentrating, and being busy with other demands may have been linked in part to the impact of these activities or commitments.

For the small number of students who indicated that activities or commitments were very influential, heavy time commitments (e.g., doing ballet for 30 hours per week, or working 20 hours per week during a school week), or multiple commitments appear to have been a significant factor. These issues are illustrated below:

Work is always calling me in to work after school and I always say yes so I get money. Study and homework is a last priority. (Pre 2.1/7b/76F)

I'm so busy with dancing it's hard to find time to study/practice formal writing, and with no practice I just don't feel motivated. I'm so tired from the amount of dancing I do I just don't have the energy to be motivated about this standard, even though I DO want to pass. (Pre 2.2/7b/57F)

I have 3 sports at the time of the assessment and Shakespeare rehearsal 3 times a week plus my performance was during the assessment. (Post 2.1/7b/103F)

In addition to outside class activities and commitments, students were also asked to identify activities that involved five or more hours of their free time (OCA/8). In the four spaces provided in the Outside Class Activities Questionnaire, 102 students provided a total of 231 responses. The results are displayed in Table 5.28.

Table 5.28: Activities students spent five or more hours on per week (n = 102)

Activity	Number of students
Watching television	50
On the computer or play station	46
Home commitments (e.g., chores)	28
Socialising with friends	28
Hobbies	18
Doing homework	14
Texting or phoning friends	13
Reading	10
Sport	10
Listening to music	7
Other (e.g., shopping)	7

While students were obviously involved in a range of activities outside school, it was rare for there to be any direct reference to these as factors negatively impacting on their motivation to achieve in their key open-ended responses. This is in spite of the fact that a number of students may have spent many more than five hours a week doing these activities (e.g., playing computer games). Only a small number of students specifically mentioned that such activities detracted from their motivation to achieve. For example:

My friends are very influential because they make me hang out with them at the weekends and even if I have essays due I still go out with them. (Pre 2.1/7b/76F)

Outside activities include going out with mates, going to gym etc. and that affected it because I felt more motivation to do those things than work hard for assessments. (Post 2.2/7b/83F)

Another factor in the list (Final/6a) was *tutoring*. Of the 107 students who rated the impact of tutoring on their motivation to achieve, 94.4% indicated that tutoring had no influence (*not applicable*) or *minimal influence*. Also in the same list was *brothers and/or sisters*. Of the 107 students who rated the influence of this factor, 88.8% indicated that siblings had no influence (*not applicable*) or *minimal influence*. These findings confirm why these factors were virtually absent from students' key open-ended responses.

5.6. Chapter Summary

The analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from selected questions across 11 questionnaires revealed that students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards was multifaceted, situated, dynamic, and complex.

Section 5.2 addressed the first research question in its examination of students' motivation-related attitudes. The information generated in this analysis was also designed to provide contextual information to enhance the understanding and the interpretation of students' perceptions of factors that influenced their motivation to achieve the four specific English achievements standards and NCEA level 2 English overall.

The analysis of the data indicated that most students expected to pass a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. They believed they had sufficient skills and the capability to pass or excel on the achievements standards they attempted. Most students also valued passing a number of English achievement standards for extrinsic reasons. Given that high-stakes assessment by its very nature is likely to engender extrinsic motivation, rather than intrinsic motivation, this extrinsic focus is not surprising. Most students also wanted to do their best rather than just enough. Furthermore, most students valued English as a subject, primarily because it had perceived utility value in helping them achieve career goals and/or because of its usefulness in everyday living. These results indicate identified regulation was prevalent, and that many students had adopted a future time perspective.

Students' interest in English varied. While English was not listed as students' most interesting subject, it was also rarely considered the least interesting subject in which students were enrolled. Around two thirds of students found aspects of English very interesting, while three quarters of students also found aspects of English very boring. These results indicate that there was not a widespread dislike of or disinterest in English. However, nor was widespread interest in English evident. These results help explain why very few students indicated that they found English intrinsically motivating overall, and why a number identified a dislike for aspects of English in their open-ended responses.

In relation to their NCEA English results, most students attempted five or six achievement standards, with nearly two thirds of students failing one or more of the standards they attempted. Many students' expectations were met or exceeded in relation to passing their English achievement standards, while around half of the students were happy or very happy with their results.

Throughout the five subsections, quantitative results were analysed in terms of gender using the Mann-Whitney U test and Chi-square test for independence. Overall there were no significant statistical differences between boys and girls, with the exception of the girls' stronger desire to pass one achievement standard. However, it is worth noting that there was a large difference in the number of girls (62.5%) and boys (37.5%) in Year 12 A Stream English in both co-educational schools. This difference will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Section 5.3 focused on data related to the identification of factors that students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve the four specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards (part a of research Question 2) and the impact of these factors on students' motivation (part a of research Question 3). A two-part analysis was undertaken. First, factors that students perceived as having a significantly positive influence on their motivation were examined (subsection 5.3.1). Second, factors that students perceived as having a significantly negative impact on their motivation were examined (subsection 5.3.2).

In the first part of Section 5.3, an analysis was undertaken of student responses across the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires of factors students perceived as being important in helping them feel **more** motivated to achieve English achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6. For responses categorised using

Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation, *external regulation* accounted for nearly half of the students' responses, with two thirds of those focused on passing level 2, gaining the literacy credits or gaining university entrance, while the remainder focused on the goal of gaining Merits and Excellences.

Introjected regulation accounted for around a third of the responses, with students indicating that they wanted to avoid failure, make their parents proud, avoid disappointing their parents and themselves by doing poorly, prove to their teachers that they could pass, do their best, or do better than peers or siblings. A further 13% of responses were examples of *intrinsic motivation*, often linked to a specific achievement standard. Another 6% were examples of *identified regulation* which focused on students' career goals, or students' goal of getting into Year 13 A Stream A English. Examples of *amotivation* were rare.

Past performance was seen as being as being a significant factor in students' motivation to achieve. They identified their performance in mock exams as being particularly useful in helping them feel more confident or providing them with the impetus to do better. Some students also indicated that the support and encouragement provided by their English teachers was very important in helping them to feel more motivated.

An analysis of factors that students identified as being important in making them feel **less** motivated in the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires revealed that just over a third of responses focused on *difficulties with or dislike of aspects of English* factors. A fifth of responses identified *other demands*, especially from other school subjects, as having a marked negative effect on their motivation to achieve.

In relation to significant others, 15% of responses identified *peers* as having a significant role in negatively affecting some students' motivation to achieve. However, friends were a much greater source of distraction than classmates in general. *Teachers* accounted for a further 8% of responses. Students expressed concerns about lack of adequate explanations, lack of useful feedback, insufficient time spent preparing them for an assessment, lack of enthusiasm, a dislike of the teaching style, or relationship issues with the teacher.

Section 5.4 examined the two most important factors identified by students as significantly influencing students' motivation to achieve NCEA English over the entire year (part b of research Questions 2 and 3). Once again, extrinsic motivation was prominent. Of the responses analysed using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation, external regulation was most prevalent, followed by introjected regulation. These results paralleled those in Section 5.3. Far fewer examples of identified regulation were evident in students' responses, in spite of the fact most students indicated that they had career aspirations which made passing a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards a necessity, and the fact that they valued English for identified regulation reasons. Few students identified intrinsic factors or described themselves as amotivated.

Teachers played a very important role in students' motivation to achieve overall. This role was positive in most, but not all cases. Far fewer students identified peers/friends as having a significant impact on their motivation to achieve and when they did, friends were often identified as a distraction or someone to compete against academically. Parents and siblings were rarely listed as an important factor.

Section 5.5 explored other factors that were originally thought to be potentially influential in students' motivation to achieve, but proved not to be considered by most students to be influential. Outside class activities or commitments were not identified as being very influential by most students, despite students often committing considerable time to these activities or commitments. Tutoring and siblings rarely rated a mention.

Overall, the results reveal that nearly half the students' responses for specific achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall were examples of external regulation or introjected regulation. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2002), the students concerned were likely to have felt less self-determined and experienced less autonomy than those who had identified with the importance of passing the achievement standards for reasons such as wanting to attend university. Identified regulation, intrinsic motivation and amotivation were not strongly influential.

Past performance was also a significant factor in helping a number of students to feel more motivated to achieve across the four achievement standards, but not overall. For many students their previous results, especially from mock exams, increased or maintained students' sense of self-efficacy and expectancy for success. Teachers also

had a marked influence, especially in NCEA level 2 English overall, either in supporting students' need for competency, autonomy, and relatedness or failing to address these needs. A number of students found difficulties with or their dislike of aspects of different achievement standards as very influential in making them feel less motivated, especially across the four achievement standards, highlighting the marked influence of task-specific factors on students' motivation. Other demands and friends were also perceived as having an adverse effect on students' motivation to achieve.

Evidence of the dynamic, complex, situational, and multifaceted nature of motivation was prevalent in this analysis, with the variety of factors identified by students and a number of factors being more salient for one achievement standard, while being less salient for another. Furthermore, students had to contend simultaneously with factors they perceived as adversely affecting their motivation to achieve, while trying to remain sufficiently motivated to meet the requirements of the varied assessment tasks. At times their need for competence was in conflict with their need for relatedness.

Motivation also appeared to operate on different levels, with students' motivation being influenced by immediate and task-specific factors (e.g., frustration of not knowing what or how to study for 2.6), while also being influenced by more global factors, in particular the need to remain sufficiently motivated across a range of assessment tasks in order to address the important goal of passing a number of English achievement standards to gain their literacy credits and university entrance.

Chapter 6.

Phase Two Results

6.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the responses of 16 students who participated in Phase One of the study and who were subsequently interviewed in Phase Two. The 16 students were selected on the basis of their NCEA level 2 English achievement standard results and gender. The students were placed into four groups: those who gained mainly Excellences, those who gained mainly Merits, those who gained mainly Achieved grades, and those who gained mainly Not Achieved grades for their NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. Each group contained two females and two males.

These eight males and eight females formed a stratified purposive sample of the larger purposive sample of 107 students who participated in this study, and included students who gained Excellences, Merits, Achieved or Not Achieved in NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. The information these students shared in their questionnaire responses and interviews provides insights into similarities and differences amongst students who achieved different outcomes in NCEA level 2 English.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each of the 16 students, 14 months after the study began. The purpose of the interview was to ask students to elaborate on or clarify points they had made in their open-ended responses in the 11 questionnaires they had completed over the 12 month period. While each of the interview schedules was highly individualised, they contained three common questions: *Can you tell me what it was like for you doing NCEA English last year; What advice would you give teachers on how to help students feel motivated to do well in Year 12 NCEA English; and Thinking about your motivation in NCEA English are there any other points you think it would be good for me to know about?* The first question was asked at the beginning of each interview and the other two questions were asked at the end of the approximately 30 minute interviews.

Each of the 16 students was given a pseudonym, none of which are the real names of any student who participated in this study. For ease of identification and differentiation

between the four groups, students were assigned names starting with the letter of the NCEA result that they primarily were awarded; that is, names beginning with E for Excellence, M for Merit, A for Achieved, and N for Not Achieved. The names are listed in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Pseudonyms assigned to students on the basis of NCEA results and gender (n = 16)

Names	Excellence	Merit	Achieved	Not Achieved
Female	Edith	Mary	Amy	Nina
	Erin	Molly	Anne	Nola
Male	Edward	Mark	Aidan	Neil
	Evan	Martin	Alan	Nigel

The next section provides information about students' motivation-related attitudes. In particular, it focuses on students' perceptions of their capabilities of succeeding and their valuing of passing a number of standards and of English as a subject. It also includes some additional background information considered pertinent to better understanding factors students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve, such as their career aspirations and out of school activities. Section 6.3 examines four key factors in students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Patterns of discernible differences and noteworthy anomalies between groups are reported, although not every student's response is necessarily reported each time group responses to a particular question are discussed. This approach is to avoid excessive detail that adds little to the discussion and understanding of key points. On other occasions individuals' responses are examined to reveal the variety and complexity of factors influencing students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards.

6.2. Students' Motivation-Related Attitudes

The 16 students were drawn from nine of the ten Year 12 A Stream English classes from which students in Phase One were drawn. All were 16 years old at the commencement of the study, except one student who was 15 years of age. In terms of

ethnicity, 15 students identified as Pākehā/New Zealand European, while one identified as Māori and Pākehā.

Table 6.2 lists the results the students predicted they would be awarded for each of the NCEA level 2 English achievement standards (Initial/15a) early in Year 12. Alongside these predictions are students' actual results from NZQA. This information has been presented to show how closely aligned students' predictions were with their results. It is also referred to in later sections.

Table 6.2: Students' predicted grades (Initial/15a) and actual NCEA level 2 English achievement standard results (n = 16)

Names	P* 2.1	A 2.1	P 2.2	A 2.2	P 2.3	A 2.3	P 2.4	A 2.4	P 2.5	A 2.5	P 2.6	A 2.6	P 2.7	A 2.7	P 2.8	A 2.8
Edith	E	E	E	E	E	E	0	0	E	E	E	E	E	E	0	0
Erin	E	E	M	E	E	E	E	0	M	E	M	M	E	E	M	0
Edward	E	E	E	M	E	E	M	0	M	E	M	A	M	A	M	0
Evan	M	E	M	E	M	A	E	M	M	A	M	A	0	0	0	E
Mary	E	E	E	E	E	A	E	M	M	M	M	M	E	0	E	M
Molly	M	M	E	M	E	M	E	0	E	M	M	M	E	M	0	0
Mark	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	0	M	E	M	0	M	A	M	0
Martin	E	A	E	M	E	M	E	M	E	0	E	M	N	N	N	0
Amy	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	0	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	0
Anne	M	A	M	A	M	A	0	0	0	A	A	A	A	A	0	0
Aidan	M	A	0	A	M	A	M	A	M	0	M	0	E	M	E	0
Alan	M	A	A	A	A	0	A	0	A	A	M	A	0	0	A	A
Nina	M	N	M	N	M	A	M	N	M	N	M	0	0	0	M	A
Nola	A	N	A	A	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	0	0	0	A
Neil	A	N	E	A	M	0	A	0	M	N	M	A	E	0	E	N
Nigel	M	A	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	0	M	N

*P for predicted, A for actual results, E = Excellence, M = Merit, A = Achieved, N = attempted, but Not Achieved, and 0 = not attempted.

Students' predictions revealed that all, except Martin, expected to pass all the achievement standards they thought they would be attempting. A comparison of students' predictions against the results they were awarded reveals that a number of students appear to have been realistic in their assessment of their task-specific capabilities in English (e.g., Edith, Mark, and Amy). The exceptions to this are Nina and Neil who consistently predicted much higher grades than they were awarded. Nina's predictions were perhaps the most discrepant, as she had failed three achievement standards in NCEA level 1 English out of the eight she attempted. However, she and

Neil both gained two Merits in NCEA level 1 English, suggesting they were capable in some areas of English.

Further evidence that a number of these students were reasonably realistic in their predictions was found in their explanations as to why they thought they would get the results they predicted (Initial/15b). Those in the Excellence group made reference to the fact that they found aspects of English easy or were competent at English; that is they had attributed their success in the past to their ability. For example Edith stated:

Because I'm good at English and I got E's last year. (Initial/15b)

In contrast, Amy, from the Achieved group, believed that she would only get Achieved because:

*I find English hard and exams seem to be getting harder and harder.
(Initial/15b)*

On the other hand, three out of four students in the Not Achieved group indicated that they would get the particular results they had predicted because they were going to try harder, suggesting that they had possibly attributed their level 1 results to a lack of effort, and thus believed with more effort that they could do better in level 2 than they had in level 1 English.

In Question 5a in each of the four pre-achievement standard questionnaires, students predicted what they might be awarded for the achievement standard concerned just prior to being summatively assessed against it. Their predictions are listed along with their initial predictions in the Initial Questionnaire (15a) and their results for the four achievement standards in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Students' predicted grades (Initial/15a and question 5a in the pre-achievement standard questionnaires) and actual NCEA level 2 English achievement standard results for 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6 (n = 16)

Names	IP* 2.1	2P* 2.1	A* 2.1	IP 2.2	2P 2.2	A 2.2	IP 2.3/ 2.4	2P 2.3/ 2.4	A 2.3/ 2.4	IP 2.6	2P 2.6	A 2.6
Edith	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Erin	E	M	E	M	M	E	E	M	E	M	E	M
Edward	E	M	E	E	M	M	E	M	E	M	A	A
Evan	M	M	E	M	M	E	M	M	A	M	E	A
Mary	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	M	A	M	M	M
Molly	M	E	M	E	E	M	E	E	M	M	E	M
Mark	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	A	M	M	A	0
Martin	E	A	A	E	A	M	E	M	M	E	M	M
Amy	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Anne	M	A	A	M	A	A	M	A	A	A	A	A
Aidan	M	M	A	0	M	A	M	E	A	M	A	0
Alan	M	M	A	A	M	A	A	0	0	M	A	A
Nina	M	A	N	M	A	N	M	A	A	M	NA	0
Nola	A	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	N	A	A	N
Neil	A	A	N	E	A	A	M	A	0	M	A	A
Nigel	M	M	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N

IP for initial prediction, 2P for later prediction in the pre-achievement standard questionnaires, A* for actual results, E = Excellence, M = Merit, A = Achieved, N = attempted, but Not Achieved, and 0 = not attempted.

Of the 64 predictions (16 students each making four predictions) made in the four pre-achievement standard questionnaires (Pre 2.1/5a, Pre 2.2/5a, Pre 2.3/2.4/5a, and Pre 2.6/5a) 52% of the predictions remained the same as the predictions students made in the Initial Questionnaire (15a), 37% of the predictions were one or two grades lower than students' initial predictions, while 11% of predictions were one or two grades higher than students' initial predictions. Overall, students were less inclined to predict a higher grade than that which they had originally predicted in the Initial Questionnaire. It would appear that many students' had re-evaluated their grade expectations in light of the results they achieved on practice assessment tasks and feedback. These predictions from the pre-achievement standard questionnaires also revealed that all 16 students continued to expect to pass, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4, and 2.6, except Nina who predicted she would fail 2.6.

In terms of students' perceptions about their skill level for passing each of the four achievement standards (Question 1a in the four pre-achievement standard

questionnaires), all 16 students believed they had just enough skills or a good range of skills to pass all four achievement standards, except Nina who believed she did not have enough skills to pass 2.6. All of those in the Excellence group and three of the Merit group believed that they had *a good range of skills to pass* all four achievement standards. Martin, Aidan, and Nina believed that they had *a good range of skills to pass* two of the four achievement standards, while the remainder believed that they had *just enough skills to probably pass* all four. Once again students' perceptions of their skill levels appear to be reasonably realistic in light of their results, with perhaps the exception of Nina.

In the pre-achievement standard questionnaires (Question 1b), students rated how easy or difficult they believed it would be for them to pass each of the achievement standards from *far too difficult for me* to *very easy for me*. The estimations of difficulty tended to reflect students' outcomes. Edith and Mary consistently predicted they would find passing all four achievement standards *very easy*, while the others in the Excellence and Merit groups believed it would be *quite easy* to pass each of the four achievement standards. Three members of the Achieved group rated passing the standards as being *just manageable*, while three of the Not Achieved group identified at least two achievement standards as being *just manageable* and at least one achievement standard as being *quite difficult*. No students identified any achievement standards as being *far too difficult* for them to pass. In light of their subsequent results, most students appeared to have been quite realistic about how challenging it would be for them to pass these four achievement standards.

Overall, the analysis reveals that students' predictions about succeeding, their assessments of their skill levels, and how challenging it would be for them to pass each of the four achievement standards, indicate that students' sense of self-efficacy and expectancy of success was quite closely aligned to their subsequent results.

In relation to students' reactions to their NCEA English results, students evaluated the degree to which their results met, exceeded or fell short of their expectations (Final/1a), and how happy they were with their results (Final/2a). While the results are somewhat mixed, there was a tendency for the Excellence and Merit students to do *better than expected* or *about what* they expected. Those in the Achieved group did *about what* they expected, while the Not Achieved students did *a little worse* than expected. Noteworthy was the finding that no members of the Not Achieved group indicated that they did *much worse* than they expected, even though they had all originally expected

to pass all of their achievement standards (Initial/15a). This finding suggests that because they encountered failures with internal achievement standards during the year, they had lowered their expectations and their sense of self-efficacy. In terms of how happy or unhappy students were with their NCEA English results (Final/2a), three of the Excellence group, two of the Merit group and three of the Achieved group were *very happy* or *happy* with their results. Nola and Nigel were *unhappy*. The remaining students were *neither happy nor unhappy*.

In relation to valuing passing a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, all students in the Excellence and Achieved groups, along with Mary, Molly, and Neil, considered it to be *very important* to pass a number of English achievement standards. The remaining five students considered it *quite important*. Students' reasons for why it was very important or quite important to pass a number of English achievement standards were all extrinsic (Initial/16b). The results were further explored using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation, with reference to external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation.

All but one student gave at least one response. While there was no variation in the pattern between achievement groups, introjected regulation was found to be most prevalent. Ten students gave an example of introjected regulation. For example, Edward noted it was *very important* to pass because:

I know that I have the potential to do well in English. I feel I would be letting myself as well as others down if I did not achieve well. (Initial/16b)

Aidan also explained it was *very important* for him to pass because:

I would be dissatisfied if I fail anything because I know I can pass. My parents would also be very dissatisfied. (Initial/16b)

In terms of valuing English as a subject, all except Nigel and Neil would have enrolled in English if it had been optional in Year 12 (Initial/20a). Nigel wanted to take subjects more suited to his future career aspirations, while Neil would not have chosen Year 12 English because:

I do not like English very much. It is my weak point. (Initial/20b)

This comment is surprising given that Neil predicted he would gain three Excellences and three Merits in English in the same questionnaire. In contrast, Evan, Edward, Erin, Mary, and Mark indicated they were intrinsically motivated to want to take Year 12 English because they enjoyed English. Edward, Erin, Edith, Mary, Molly, Allan, Nina, and Nola made statements that suggest they had all internalised the importance of English because of its perceived usefulness for their future careers or everyday life (identified regulation). For example, Edward noted he would have chosen to enrol in English if it had been an optional subject in Year 12 because:

I enjoy it and it is useful in every aspect of life. It is used at university, school, life in general. It is useful and a strong area for me. (Initial/20b)

With regard to Year 13 English, all who were eligible had enrolled in Year 13 English, except Mary and Mark (Final/15a). Mary did not need it for her career choice and had not enjoyed Year 12 English, while Mark was not sure why he had not enrolled. The four members of the Excellence group provided intrinsic and identified regulation reasons for enrolling in Year 13 English. They all stated that they enjoyed English and that it was important for their career aspirations, with three also noting that they were good at English. As Edward pointed out:

I need to take English in order to fulfil university entrance requirements for Health sciences. It is a subject that I do well in and enjoy and can therefore gain Merit/Excellence credits leading to an endorsement. (Final/15b)

Molly and Anne enrolled in Year 13 English because they too enjoyed it, while Alan and Amy also recognised English was important for their future careers. All four students in the Not Achieved group had re-enrolled in English to get the level 2 English credits they failed, because they knew they needed to pass these if they were to have a range of career choices open to them.

Students were asked to identify if they had any career paths that they intended to follow when they finished school (Final/16a), as it was assumed that these may have an important bearing on students' motivation to achieve. Mark, Martin and Aidan did not have any careers in mind or chose not to respond. Table 6.3 lists the remaining students' career aspirations.

Table 6.4: Students' career aspirations (n = 13)

Names	Career Aspirations (Final/16b)
Edith	<i>Going to university to study history and eventually get a PhD and be a history lecturer, because I love history.</i>
Erin	<i>I intend to go to Massey university to complete a veterinary science degree as I enjoy working with animals.</i>
Edward	<i>Go to university and study medicine because I enjoy the sciences and think I could do well in this area.</i>
Evan	<i>Law – I want to study the legal system and how it was designed, as it is so vital in modern society.</i>
Mary	<i>I want to go to uni to take a B.SC so I can do research work in the area of quantum physics. (Her dream job is to work at CERN on the Hadron Collider.)</i>
Molly	<i>Animal science. Leading into animal nutrition/genetics (live on a farm and love animals and science). I have wanted to do this for years.</i>
Amy	<i>I only recently have become more interested in sports science and biology and am wanting to go onto university and do something medical.</i>
Anne	<i>I intend to study accounting at university as I enjoy working with numbers.</i>
Alan	<i>I intend to do a design course as I like creating things.</i>
Nina	<i>I hope to go to university and study Occupational Therapy because I would really enjoy a career in this field.</i>
Nola	<i>I intend to go to university to become an event manager because I enjoy organising events like birthdays.</i>
Neil	<i>I am going to uni to study IT.</i>
Nigel	<i>I intend to go to UCOL to study ICT, as I love technology.</i>

These responses indicate that tertiary study was very important for these students' career aspirations and that they would need to gain the level 2 English literacy credits to gain university entrance, before they could embark on tertiary study. However, as this information was collected in the Final Questionnaire, not all of these students necessarily held these particular career aspirations during Year 12.

In relation to commitments and activities outside school, there is one noteworthy group difference. No students in the Excellence group had part-time jobs, but three of the four students in the Not Achieved group did. On average Nina did ten hours per week, while Nola did 14 and Neil did 25 hours of work a week. Martin was the only other student to have a part-time job, which involved ten or more hours per week. He worked on average 12 hours per week. The three other students who had part-time jobs worked five hours or less per week.

Neil had indicated that he liked working, as it meant he could have fun with friends and could earn money at the same time (Post 2.1/7b). He also acknowledged that while working helped him to be financially independent, it also took away some study time that he could have used (Final/6b). However, he explained that work:

Didn't affect my motivation at the start of the year but towards the end when it came to exams that's when it started to affect me. So I did cut down a bit. But with English I wasn't very motivated so it didn't make that worse.
(Interview)

Martin also provided a similar rationale for his lack of motivation in English:

I actually enjoy work at ... more than I do school anyway. Like if I went home there's only so much you can do. You need something else. So when I go to work and then when I get home that's when I focus on all my other activities and because I don't prioritise homework very high I don't usually get round to doing it. (Interview)

Conversely, Nola had indicated in three questionnaires that work had affected her motivation. She admitted that some weeks she did more than 14 hours and that as a result she would get very tired, so she did not feel like studying.

At an individual level, the only person to be extensively involved in sporting and cultural activities was Molly, who spent 21 hours per week horse-riding and five hours at music practices at school. However, she explained that she took school work with her and studied when she was away at horse events. The other 15 students spent less than twelve hours per week on such activities or involved in outside organisations, with most spending around five hours per week with these types of activities. Although a number of these students may not have spent time involved in organised activities, a few indicated that they did not spend time studying as they preferred to do other things.

The results presented above indicate where there were group differences and similarities in motivation-related attitudes. The results also provide important background and contextual information about aspects that are likely to have influenced students' perceptions of their motivation to achieve in NCEA level 2 English.

6.3. Factors Influencing Students' Motivation to Achieve

An analysis of students' interview and questionnaire responses highlighted a number of factors they perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve in the four English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall. Four themes in particular stood out as warranting closer examination because they featured as key factors in students' motivation to achieve. These themes were: the role of teachers; interest in and enjoyment of aspects of English; beliefs about abilities, capabilities and effort in relation to achieving; and students' goals of excelling versus passing NCEA level 2 English achievement standards.

6.3.1. Teachers

As noted in the previous chapter teachers played a significant role in a number of students' motivation to achieve in English. Their impact was highlighted by six of the 16 students as having a significant influence on their motivation to achieve overall (Final/11b). Two of the four members of the Excellence group perceived their English teachers to be very effective, supportive, encouraging, and willing to provide additional assistance. For example, Evan stated:

My English teacher knows how to encourage and motivate us. (Pre 2.1/6b)

My teacher is good at helping me enjoy English, which means I want to try harder. (Pre 2.2/6b)

My teacher returns any practice essays I do with a lot of feedback, so I know what to do. She taught us the novel clearly and thoroughly. (Pre 2.3/6b)

She was teaching in a more personal way, to make us enjoy it more. It wasn't "we have to teach this so you can pass this" it was more about you enjoying English itself rather than having to pass NCEA or whatever. ...She used to write paragraphs telling me how to improve, how to get it up to excellence or merit. (Interview)

Erin also explained how her teacher helped her:

My English teacher knows I am confident in English so she has high expectations. My English teacher is good at explaining standards and what is required so I know what is expected. (Pre 2.2/6b)

The whole way she looked at preparing us for exams was very encouraging so it motivated you to do well because it was almost like she was putting in the effort for her students as well which was quite cool. She was open to giving us feedback and all that so it adds to the motivation to do well for her. Obviously she cares about what results we get. (Interview)

On the other hand, Mary and Neil made numerous negative comments about their English teacher, with both identifying their teacher as being the most influential factor in their motivation overall (Final/11b). Mary came from a home where a love of literature was clearly fostered. She indicated in her interview that she spent hours discussing Macbeth with her sister and discussing practice essays with her mother. She made it clear early in Year 12 that she wanted to do her best in English because she enjoyed it (Pre 2.1/4b). However, English became boring for Mary. Furthermore, she had a number of issues with her teacher. For example:

My teacher seemed to lose interest in teaching towards the end of the year, so I lost interest in learning. (Post 2.3/8b)

My teacher did very little to make it interesting and sometimes actively turned me off the subject. (Final/1b)

My teacher didn't enjoy the class well, and couldn't control it well, so I got bored and lost interest in doing well. She also didn't seem to notice or care when I actively slacked in class and read instead. (Final/4c)

If I'd have been in a more enthusiastic class then I'd have really quite enjoyed English because I do have the skills that are necessary to do quite well at it. ... I felt that she didn't really care about teaching us at all. ... I'd get on my essay or paper – it would come back with an M or an E, nothing else. No tick marks indicating good stuff, nothing underlined, no comment. If I wanted feedback I had to go to my teacher in my own time and say "Hey, what did you actually think about this?" And it would take twenty or thirty minutes. (Interview)

Like Mary, Neil began the year motivated to learn, but he also became discouraged and disengaged, as the following excerpts illustrate:

At the start of the year I was motivated to learn and achieve as much as possible. But as the year went on I lost faith in my teacher and started to demotivate myself. (Final/9b)

My teacher is not motivated at all to teach our class. (Post 2.2/8b)

My teacher sometimes doesn't explain things clearly and moves too quickly before I get to understand the concepts. My teacher doesn't give notes very effectively. (Pre 2.1/6b)

My English teacher does not have enough confidence with me and does not help me with this. (Pre 2.3/1c)

She wasn't helpful with where I was at with a challenging task. She kind of taught one way for all of us no matter what stage we were at. (Interview)

Both Mary and Neil reported that they enjoyed Year 11 English and felt they had been well-supported by their Year 11 English teachers. However, in Year 12 neither enjoyed English. They appeared to have their need for competence thwarted and indicated that their teacher did not support their need for relatedness, with her lack of support and lack concern for their progress. Evan and Erin's experiences provide a marked contrast. Their teachers appeared to have enhanced their sense of self-efficacy, fostered their love of English, shown a genuine interest in their progress, held high expectations for them, and given them effective feedback.

Nola also listed her English teacher as the most important overall influence on her motivation to achieve NCEA. She stated:

I lost motivation when the teacher started telling us we were worse than her pre-trad class. (Final/11b) [pre-traditional is a course for students who would potentially struggle with an A Stream English course]

This teacher's message had a marked impact on Nola, as she made virtually the same statement 12 months earlier:

My teacher isn't very motivating at the start of the year she told us that we were worse than pre-trad. It lost my motivation for English. It [motivation] dropped a lot. (Initial/15b)

When asked to elaborate during the interview on the impact of the teacher's statement, Nola added very little information. However, she was clearly upset by her teacher's low expectations of the class. Molly was also negatively affected by what she perceived to be low teacher expectations for her and some other able

students in her class, and had complained about this issue in questionnaire responses. In the interview she explained why she had thought she could not get Excellences:

Oh, the teacher not teaching us Excellence level, so I thought that maybe that meant that she didn't think we could get to Excellence. (Interview)

Nola's and Molly's cases illustrate that teacher expectations played a particularly important role in some students' motivation. The impact of teacher expectations was also evident with Erin's and Evan's teachers expecting them to do well and supporting them to do so, while Mary's, Molly's, Nola's and Neil's English teachers revealed in a range of ways that they did not expect them to achieve at a higher level.

Other students also made positive and/or negative comments about their English teachers in their interviews and questionnaires, but they made far fewer comments and none were identified as significant influences on their motivation to achieve. This finding suggests these students did not perceive their English teachers to have had such a significant impact on their motivation compared with those students discussed above. At the other end of the continuum of influence, Edith believed her English teacher had no influence on her motivation to achieve in English, despite liking her teacher. As Edith explained:

I think just because I'm very self-motivated I don't really get influenced by stuff like my friends and even the teacher doesn't - I can have a good teacher and I can have a bad teacher it doesn't change that I still want to get an excellence. (Interview)

While Edith is perhaps an exception, the above examples illustrate the range of ways teachers can have an impact on a number of students' motivation to achieve. Out of the subsample of 16 students, six students identified their teacher as a crucial factor in their motivation to achieve. Their motivation was influenced by the level of support and encouragement they received from their teacher, the interest the teacher took in their learning, teacher enthusiasm, the quality of teacher feedback they received, the teachers' skills at managing the class, and the teachers' academic expectations of them.

The impact of teachers on students' motivation was also indirectly assessed by asking each student at the end of their interview what advice they would give Year 12 English teachers. This question was asked to elicit from students what they found more or less motivating about the teaching they received. An analysis of students' comments revealed a variety of points.

Mary, Molly, Martin, Erin, Anne and Neil all believed teachers needed to better address individual students' needs. For example, Mary believed that English teachers should find out who is enthusiastic about a topic and then "*don't slow the enthusiastic people down at all*". She and Molly both recommended teachers find ways to extend the enthusiastic and capable students. As Mary pointed out:

If we were given more stuff to think about, more stuff to do I would have stayed really motivated all the way through. (Interview)

Anne also argued that teachers should extend students, because she believed her teacher put most of her energies into those who were not passing, rather than helping ones like her who wanted to do better than just pass.

Edith, Evan, Mark, Aidan and Nina all stated that teachers should make English relevant and interesting, with Evan and Mark recommending teachers make English enjoyable, just as their Year 12 teachers had done. To make English more enjoyable, Edith advised teachers to have more discussion in class and suggested teachers choose "*novels that aren't a thousand years old and really boring too*". Nina recommended that teachers should vary their teaching to make English more interesting. Mark also advised teachers to:

*Make the class fun but make sure you are teaching something as well.
Find a good balance. Don't be afraid to be stricter if being fun isn't working.
(Interview)*

Anne made the same point about teachers needing to be strict and recommended teachers remove those who disrupted other students' learning: something she felt her Year 12 teacher needed to do more frequently. In a similar vein, Nigel believed teachers should separate students from their friends, so that students are not distracted from learning; again something he had wished his teacher had done.

Anne, Alan and Erin all recommended teachers give detailed feedback and advice on how to improve. Edward advised teachers to give students practice questions each week as his Year 12 teacher had done. These practice questions had helped him and his friends “*feel better*” because they knew that they were improving. Nola recommended teachers advise students who are struggling to go to support classes offered by the school. Lastly, Erin believed that all English teachers should be like her Year 12 English teacher; they should teach effectively, and give students support and encouragement.

6.3.2. Interest and Enjoyment in English

In the previous chapter, students’ interest in, or liking or disliking of English or aspects of English, was identified as an important factor by a number of students in their motivation to achieve specific English achievement standards. While there is a difference between interest (a fascination for something) and enjoyment (satisfaction with something) as discussed in Chapter Two (S. A. Turner, Jr. & Silvia, 2006), they can significantly overlap (Ainley & Ainley, 2011; Harackiewicz et al., 2000). Students in this study have often treated these two aspects as being synonymous. This subsection explores students’ interest and enjoyment in more detail to more fully understand their impact on students’ motivation to achieve NCEA English.

When focusing on the 16 students’ interest in English as a subject there were no clear group differences in relation to how interesting students perceived English to be compared to their other five subjects (Final/12). However, three of those in the Not Achieved group tended to perceive English as less interesting than most other subjects, rating it as fifth out of their six subjects.

There was, however, a difference between the Excellence, Merit and Achieved groups, and the Not Achieved group in relation to whether they found anything *very interesting* about English (Final/13a). All the students in the first three groups, except Martin, found some aspects of English *very interesting*. However, Neil, Nina and Nola all indicated that they found no aspects of English *very interesting*, although they did identify some aspects in their questionnaires and interviews that they found quite interesting or enjoyable. An analysis of what aspects students found *very interesting* (Final/13b) revealed no marked differences between any groups. The results were highly individualised and varied. There were also no differences between groups in terms of finding aspects of English *very boring* (Final/14a). All the students found some aspects

of English *very boring*, except for Mark and Erin. An analysis of what aspects they found *very boring* (Final/14b) also revealed considerable variation and no discernible group differences.

In terms of enjoying English as a subject overall, all the students in the Excellence group, three in the Merit group, and Anne indicated in various questionnaires and interview responses that they generally enjoyed English. However, this observation does not suggest that they enjoyed all aspects of English, as Edith's comments illustrate:

Certain novels or films really grab me. I can get really obsessed with a book or a film and really love it and want to pull everything apart and understand everything there is to know about the characters; but then there's unfamiliar text, or poetry, or short stories which I can't stand because I don't find them interesting. So there is one half of English I really love and the other half I find really boring and awful. (Interview)

While Anne stated that she liked English but was "*not good at it*", the other seven indicated that one reason they enjoyed English was because they were good at it. Some also found it enjoyable, because they found it was "*easy*". Finding it "*easy*" enabled them to achieve good results, as Edward noted:

I've always done well in it [English] so I enjoy it because I understand it and because I do well and I also enjoy it because I love studying novels and films and seeing the ideas beyond rather than just what's on the surface. (Interview)

Aidan, Amy, Alan, Neil, Nina, and Nola did not enjoy English as a subject, although they found some aspects quite interesting or enjoyable. In part this appears to have been because they found some aspects difficult and struggled to pass. Martin did not enjoy English or any aspects of it. He found English "*relatively boring and repetitive*". Nigel believed he lost his enjoyment of literature in Year 12.

A number of the students had identified a long-term individual interest in reading and writing in the Outside Classroom Activities Questionnaire and/or in the interview. The four students in the Merit group, and Evan, Anne, and Nigel all identified reading as an interest. When this interest was explored during the interview, Evan commented that he

had “*always just been into reading, particularly at high school*”. In her interview, Mary expounded at length on her love of reading, as highlighted in the following excerpts:

I have a really deep and abiding love of books. ... We've got somewhere in the region of three thousand books at home. ... The only trouble is when we get a new book in we need to get multiple copies of it because we all want to read it at once. ... No one really wants to wait so we have a lot of conspiracy and stealing books while people are in the shower and whatnot. ... I just don't have any truck with these little hundred and fifty page or three hundred page novels. ... Well my favourite book at the moment is just shy of a thousand pages long. ... “The Wise Man's Fear” by Patrick Rothfuss. He's about the most amazing author ever. It takes him about four or five years to write a book, but when you pick it up every single word is exactly where it has to be. And you don't so much read it as taste it. (Interview)

Martin stated that he always read “*heaps of books*” as it helped him develop his vocabulary, which he thought was very important. Nigel commented how he loved reading, particularly fantasy fiction. He said he read at least one or two books a week and mentioned the names of three of his favourite authors without any prompting.

Edith listed writing in the Outside Classroom Activities Questionnaire as something she spent more than five hours per week doing. During the interviews it also became apparent that Mary and Evan also enjoyed writing as a hobby. As Evan stated:

I've always just enjoyed writing and stuff and to be able to get credits for something you enjoy is pretty awesome. (Interview)

However, as the subsequent discussion on students' interest or enjoyment of aspects related to the four specific achievement standards reveals, students' individual interest and/or enjoyment of reading and/or writing outside school did not necessarily equate to enjoying Year 12 English or finding aspects of it interesting.

Erin, Evan, Edward, Mary, Mark, Aidan, Alan, Anne, Nina, and Nigel all really enjoyed creative writing (2.1). Edward and Mary both commented that creative writing was their favourite part of English. As Edward explained:

I naturally love writing and I always have since I was little. (Interview)

Several students explained that they loved creative writing because it allowed them to be creative, and use their own language, style and structure. Anne noted that creative writing allowed her to write “*freely*”, while Nigel explained that:

This is one of the only parts of English that allows me to be me. (Pre 2.1/4b)

Erin and Anne also commented in their interviews that they enjoyed being able to write about things that were personally meaningful to them. In these examples creative writing appeared to address some students’ need for autonomy, in that they had some degree of choice and flexibility. However, in the case of Edith a long-term love of creative writing was insufficient to overcome a dislike of the topics for the 2.1 assessment task.

In relation to formal writing (2.2), eleven students indicated that they enjoyed watching and analysing the film for the film review they were required to write. Their reasons varied and included such aspects as the depiction of historical events, the acting, the characterisation, the underlying themes or message, and the camera work. Although they enjoyed the film, Erin, Aidan, and Amy did not enjoy writing the film review. However, it would appear that the detailed examination of the film triggered sufficient situational interest and maintained it for the remaining eight of these students to engage in writing the film review without complaining that it was boring. On the other hand, Edward disliked the film selected by his teacher, although he normally enjoyed analysing films, while Mary did not enjoy analysing films, as she did not see films as literature.

For 2.3, students were required to analyse extended texts, such as a novel or a play. Generally, these students did not enjoy the novels selected for them to read, although several students in Phase One had indicated they had enjoyed the novel they were required to read. Anne, Amy, Alan, and Nina found the books they studied boring. Amy commented that the novel she read was “*horrible*” because it was “*an older novel*”, while Anne disliked “*being forced to read things*” that she did not like.

Evan found the novel he studied interesting because of its “*deep, poignant messages*”, while Erin found it interesting “*to learn about the morals behind the story*”, in the novel she studied. Edith also recognised there were powerful messages in the novel she was required to read. However, all three made it clear that they did not enjoy the novels

they studied. Edward only liked the novel he studied because it had so many themes to discuss that it enabled him to gain Excellence.

Edith, Mark, Nigel, and Aidan all enjoyed studying a Shakespearean play for 2.3, which they each listed as one of the two most interesting aspects of Year 12 English (Final/13b). While Mary loved Shakespeare and had been involved in Summer Shakespeare, she did not enjoy studying “Macbeth” in class. She was frustrated by the fact that:

Many people in my class weren't sufficiently willing, interested or literate enough to read "Macbeth" aloud. ...I had to sit there and listen to one of my favourite plays being quietly mangled. (Interview)

Both she and Martin detested having to listen to the play being read aloud by people who could not read for meaning. Also, because she read “*revoltingly fast*”, she was frustrated that she had to sit in class going through three or four pages per lesson. Martin also found the pace at which they moved through “Macbeth” painful. Unlike Mary though, he thought Shakespeare was “*really basic*”, the plots were “*boring*”, and there was no character development. Molly and Nina did not enjoy the Shakespearean play they studied as they found it hard to understand.

For achievement standard 2.4, students studied either short stories or poems. Evan and Neil listed short stories as one of the things they found *most boring* about English. Edward, Alan, and Nigel also did not enjoy short stories. Nigel stated that the ones he studied did not “*cry out as good*”. Mary had become bored with Katherine Mansfield. She believed they should have studied a broader range of short stories. Edith did not enjoy short stories or poetry because they did not provide the same opportunity to analyse the characters compared with extended written texts and films. Nina found the messages in the war poetry she studied interesting, but did not enjoy studying poetry.

Most students expressed a strong dislike for 2.6 (unfamiliar texts). Edith simply said:

I HATE 2.6! (Final/14b)

Molly and Alan also expressed similar sentiments. Evan disliked 2.6 as he felt that in the exam there was insufficient time to fully analyse the texts and he was also afraid of getting it wrong. Edward detested 2.6. He also believed he had not been well prepared

for it by his teacher, while Mary disliked 2.6 as she felt she could not prepare for it herself. Anne did not enjoy analysing unfamiliar texts as she couldn't be creative, while Nina simply did not like analysing texts. Nola disliked 2.6 as she got confused with the language features. This achievement standard stood out as the most difficult or disliked, not by just these students but across the wider group of students. It would appear that the nature of this task did not foster a sense of autonomy or competence.

In addition to the focus on specific aspects of particular achievement standards, a number of students also commented about essay writing (e.g., writing an essay about the themes of a novel). Edward and Erin both enjoyed writing essays. Edward loved essay writing because he was good at it and it was something he could practice in advance. Erin enjoyed writing essays as there were:

No right or wrong answer and you can think outside the square. ... I enjoy the challenge of different essay questions and I enjoy having to write about them. (Interview)

However, Martin, Aidan, Amy, and Nigel all listed essay writing as something they found *very boring* about English.

Overall, most students found there were aspects of NCEA level 2 English that they enjoyed or found interesting and other aspects that they did not enjoy or found uninteresting. Martin and Neil were the exceptions. Neither found anything interesting or enjoyable. Many students enjoyed the film they studied and creative writing, while short texts, the assigned novel, and unfamiliar texts were not viewed positively by most students. These results mirror those of the wider group. The reasons for finding an aspect interesting or uninteresting, enjoyable or not enjoyable, varied considerably between students, and not just in relation to their level of achievement in Year 12 English. Once again these results highlight the complexity and multidimensional nature of task-specific motivation.

Five other noteworthy points are also evident in this analysis. First, students' need for autonomy appears to have been rarely addressed within the constraints of NCEA English. The exception to this appeared to be creative writing, which students enjoyed because it involved some degree of choice, the opportunity to be creative, and to write about something that was personally meaningful.

Second, there were a number of students who had a long-held passion or strong individual interest in reading and/or writing. However, this interest was often undermined by situational factors, such as being required to write about a particular topic, reading a novel that was not of their choosing, or being forced to listen to texts being read slowly and poorly by classmates. Situational interest appeared to be particularly paramount in relation to enjoyment of aspects of NCEA level 2 English. Individual interest in and of itself appeared to be insufficient to create or sustain motivation, if not accompanied by situational interest, as illustrated by Mary's love of *Macbeth* being eroded by the way it was taught, or Edith's love of writing being diminished when confronted with topics she did not like, or Anne's enjoyment of reading when faced with a novel she disliked.

Third, for the students in the Excellence and Merit groups, interest in or enjoyment of aspects of English did not necessarily play a major role in their motivation to excel, as will be highlighted in more detail in a later subsection. These students appear to have been able to overcome their lack of interest or enjoyment when addressing their need for competence. Fourth, for those who struggled to pass, interest in or enjoyment of aspects of English appeared to be insufficient to help them pass or achieve well. For example, Nigel was excited by creative writing and yet he did not pass. Last, those in the Achieved and Not Achieved groups also appeared to find fewer aspects of English enjoyable or interesting than those in the Excellence and Merit groups.

6.3.3. Beliefs about Abilities, Capabilities and Effort

Students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards appeared to have been significantly affected by their beliefs about their abilities, the need for effort, and their assessment of their capabilities to pass each of the different achievement standards. Partial confirmation of this hypothesis was evident in the previous chapter where past performance was identified by many students as having a significant influence on their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards.

An analysis of the 16 students' questionnaire and interview responses revealed that a number had attributed their past successes or failures in English to their abilities and/or effort. These accumulated experiences of success or failure in English appeared to have had a marked effect on students' attributions and sense of self-efficacy. As previously noted, research indicates that individuals' causal attributions for their

success or failure on achievement tasks can influence students' behaviours and expectations on similar tasks in the future (Schunk et al., 2014; Weiner, 1992). Significant others appear to have also played an important role in some students' attributions and sense of self-efficacy.

Responses of those in the Excellence group revealed that they had known for quite some time that they were very capable and competent at English. Three of the four also recognised that their successes were also attributable to effort. For example, Edward made a number of statements indicating that he had attributed his past success to ability and effort and therefore expected to succeed on similar tasks in the future:

I passed creative writing in Level 1 NCEA with Excellence. (Pre 2.1/5b)

In all of our practice essays this year I have got a merit/majority excellence and know that I can write to that standard that I have done previously. (Pre 2.3/5b)

I was very happy with this result as I put in a lot of work and effort and was rewarded with a top mark. (Post 2.3/4b)

In the mock exams I got two excellences and a merit. This gave me the confidence I needed and believed that I could get these marks again. I have always done well in English since year 9 and also the top of my class throughout the year in Yr 12 so maintaining these marks had a significant influence on my motivation. I studied really hard for my essays and 2.6 in order to maintain and/or improve my previous marks. (Final/6b)

Edward was also influenced by comments his teachers and friends had made about his abilities in English. When asked in his interview what had helped him believe he could do well in English, he explained that, in addition to getting good results in English, his teachers had confirmed that he was capable by telling him that he was good at English. He also stated that his friends knew he was very competent and as a result expected him to get top marks.

Erin made a number of similar comments, such as:

I studied quite hard for English because I knew I had the ability to do well. (Post 2.6/5a)

My mock assessment results proved that I had the ability to do well. (Post 2.6/7b)

Getting good marks throughout the year gave me confidence in my capability to do well. (Final/6b)

When asked in her interview what helped her believe she was capable, Erin explained that her results from Years 9, 10, and 11 English had shown her she was capable. Furthermore, her Year 12 English teacher had told her that she was capable of getting Excellences and reinforced this during parent-teacher interviews. As she noted when her teacher said at parent-teacher interviews, “*Your daughter’s capable*”, it made her think “*well I am actually capable of good results in English*”.

In his interview, Evan explained that he knew he could do well in Year 12 because he got some Excellences in NCEA level 1 English. As a result he knew “*with study*” he “*could do well in level 2*”. As with others in the Excellence group, he had found English relatively easy.

Edith also indicated that it was her past successes that had convinced her she would be successful in NCEA level 2 English. Excerpts from her questionnaire responses highlight her confidence in her abilities:

Because I’m good at English and I got E’s last year. (Initial/15b)

I’ve always been good at writing. I’ve had recognition in competitions. (Pre 2.1/1c)

I am naturally talented at English and I’ve never failed an English assessment before. (Pre 2.2/1c)

I’ve gotten excellence in all the practice assessments without really studying so I’m pretty confident. (Pre 2.6/1c)

Edith also said that during Year 12 when she got Excellences for things she had done in mock exams or trial assessments, she thought to herself:

*“Sweet! I can do this. Fine, excellence is attainable for me. Go and do it.”
(Interview)*

However, unlike the other three in the Excellence group, Edith made no reference to effort/study being a contributing factor for her success, although effort may have well played a part in her successes.

Mary had also attributed past successes to her ability, particularly her writing ability. Consequently, she was confident about her capabilities to successfully pass a number of English achievement standards, as the examples below illustrate:

I adore writing and I'm quite good at it. (Initial/18b)

I never have any trouble passing standards involving writing – I usually get excellence, sometimes merit. Also, it should be easy because last year I got excellence in my formal writing. (Pre 2.2/1c)

In her interview, Mary was able to identify the point at which she became aware that she was able to write well. She recalled an incident that occurred in Year 6, when she wrote a story “*in the style of Gary Paulsen*”. She said that her teacher thought it “*was pretty awesome*” and so did the class, which helped Mary believe she was good at writing. From that point on her friends repeatedly demanded to read what she had written and continued to encourage her to write. Mary also noted that she always got the best mark in the class for creative writing in English in Years 9 and 10, so this also helped her believe she could write well.

When questioned in the interview about what helped her believe she was capable of doing quite well in English, Molly, like Erin, found that teachers’ comments at parent-teacher interviews helped to convince her she had ability and was capable of getting good marks. Friends also repeatedly told her that she could “*do better than just a Merit or just an Achieved*”. In her questionnaire responses Molly indicated that, although she knew she was reasonably capable, to do well she knew she needed to work hard:

I did well last year so I was confident. (Post 2.1/8a)

It should be very easy as I have done it throughout high school and I have achieved very well. (Pre 2.2/1c)

I have got E in every practice this year. I have spent a lot of time studying. (Pre 2.6/5b)

To gain M/E I needed to study hard. I can't just go to an exam like some people and pass. (Final/6b)

Mark indicated in his interview that it was getting Merits in NCEA level 1 English achievement standards that helped him to believe he had some ability in English. However, he also admitted he was somewhat surprised that he did so well in level 1 English. His parents also believed he was “quite smart”. While he appeared to have some belief that he was quite able in English, his questionnaire responses suggest that he had less confidence in his capabilities of doing well compared with those students discussed above. He also placed more emphasis on the need to apply effort:

It should be reasonably easy to pass, however for higher grades I may need to do more work. (Pre 2.1/1c)

I did a lot better than I expected I would. (Post 2.1/4b)

I wanted to do well so I tried hard. (Post 2.1/5a)

It should be quite easy as I did well in level 1, but I need some practice. (Pre 2.3/1c)

Martin provided little information about what made him believe he could do well. While he noted that he had not done very well in English in Years 9 and 10, he had done better in Year 11. His comments suggest that he believed he was quite capable, but that was irrelevant because he was unwilling to apply much effort as he found English “boring”. As a result Martin recognised he had done *a lot better than expected* (Final/1b) because he “*didn’t study and expected to fail*”.

In her interview, Amy admitted that she did not feel confident in English. It was her “*hardest subject*” and because she struggled with it she did not find it interesting. She indicated that she had trouble with spelling and sentence structure when writing. She also explained that she had evaluated her English abilities against those of a friend who got Excellences and decided she was only capable of gaining Achieved. Excerpts from her questionnaire responses illustrate Amy’s lack of confidence in her ability in English, her low expectations for success, and her recognition that considerable effort would be needed to pass:

I don’t always pass very well but I believe I may just pass if I try my hardest. (Pre 2.1/5b)

I’m a kind of slow writer. (Post 2.1/5a)

Didn't really understand how to write/what to write. (Post 2.2/5a) I don't think I studied as much as I could have. (Post 2.3/5a)

I think it will be manageable for me as I think I understand the criteria to pass but not exactly enough to pass with ease. (Pre 2.6/1c)

In his interview, Aidan acknowledged that he had been quite confident he had the ability to do reasonably well, because he had passed three NCEA level 1 English achievement standards with Merit. Those level 1 results got him thinking he “*could actually do English*”. The excerpts from his pre-achievement standard questionnaire responses below illustrate that he believed he was quite capable, but his post-achievement standard questionnaire responses indicate he was not so convinced:

It should be quite easy because I have always been rather good at creative writing. (Pre 2.1/1c)

I was happy because I didn't fail which was good enough for me. (Post 2.1/4b)

It should be quite easy because I have been relatively successful with English this year. (Pre 2.6/1c)

I didn't do an awful lot of study for 2.6, hence why I failed it. (Post 2.6/8b)

However, as suggested in his Post 2.6 comment above and confirmed in his interview, Aidan attributed his relatively weaker performance in Year 12 English to a lack of effort and being distracted:

I don't think it was so much that I couldn't do it, it's just that I couldn't be bothered to or was too distracted by other things. (Interview)

Alan indicated during his interview that the results of some practice tests helped him believe he “*could do it*”, as well as the written and verbal feedback from his English teacher. However, he admitted poorer results on some other practice tests also made him doubt his ability at times. These mixed messages appear to have influenced his sense of self-efficacy for different achievement standards, as shown in a sample of his questionnaire responses below:

It should be reasonably easy because I passed with a merit last year and am talented in creative writing. (Pre 2.1/5b)

*Because I study hard and try my best and believe I am quite good at this.
(Pre 2.2/5b)*

*It will be just manageable because I'm not that strong with analysing
poems. (Pre 2.4/1c)*

*I find it a bit hard but will probably be able to do it if I try my best. (Pre
2.6/1c)*

When Alan was not as successful as he expected to be, he too tended to attribute his results to a lack of study. For example:

I didn't study hard enough before the assessment. (Post 2.2/5a)

*I haven't studied as much as I should for it so will only get achieved. (Pre
2.6/5b)*

Not studying as hard as I should have. (Final/8b)

It was difficult to gain any clarity around Anne's beliefs about her ability and capabilities. At one point during the interview she stated that she "*always knew*" she "*had the ability to do well in English*". Given that she gained an Excellence, three Merits and two Achieved in level 1 English, her belief in her ability is not surprising. She indicated that her parents also believed she was capable. However, at another point in the interview she commented that she liked English, even though she was "*not good at it*". What was clear though was that she too attributed her poorer than expected performance to the fact she "*didn't put in the effort*" and "*wasn't willing to study for it*".

Neil and Nola both stated in their interviews that they had known since primary school that they were not good at English. Nola noted that once she started doing English as "*a proper subject*" at secondary school "*it all went downhill*". She admitted that as a result she did not feel confident when it came to NCEA level 2 English, as shown in the following examples:

My ability for doing well for creative writing is not too good. (Pre 2.1/5b)

*I am not the best at English so I just want to pass so I can get the credits,
but I am trying my hardest. (Pre 2.2/5b)*

However, Nola also attributed her failure in part to a lack of effort. As she stated:

If I sat down and studied real hard and worked it out that would be fine but I'm not motivated. (Interview)

Neil commented in his interview that since primary school he had “*always had problems with English comprehension*” and that over the years his teachers had told him that he had comprehension problems. He had not enjoyed English as a consequence and did not “*feel motivated at all*”. However, he had gained confidence in his abilities in level 1 English, as he had gained five Achieved and two Merits in level 1 English. He attributed these results to the support of his English teacher who he believed had helped him to succeed. This confidence appears to have been short-lived as the following excerpts from his questionnaire responses reveal:

I generally find English hard because I don't have very many skills in that area. (Pre 2.1/1c)

*Creative writing is not my best achievement standard in English.
Throughout my schooling life I have found it hard to express myself. (Post 2.1/4b)*

I think it will be quite hard for me to pass this assessment because I did not pass creative writing assessment so my confidence is not high. I think that I will have to try very hard to pass because my writing skill level is not at level 2. My English teacher does not have enough confidence in me and does not help me with this. (Pre 2.3/1c)

I did not study enough, I keep putting it off. (Post 2.3/5a)

This achievement standard will be difficult for me because I struggle with comprehension. (Pre 2.6/1c)

My skill level at the moment is a not achieved. I need to strive to get the achieved grade. (Pre 2.6/5a)

In Nigel's case he thought he would do well with creative writing (2.1) because he enjoyed creative writing and put in a lot of effort. However, he made many similar comments in his questionnaire responses to Neil and Nola about struggling with other aspects of English. For example, for formal writing (2.2) and short texts (2.4) he noted:

I think it will be very hard as in level 1 English I did not pass, and found it hard to grasp the concept. I also find it hard to express my ideas in words, so this will be quite difficult. (Pre 2.2/1c)

I think it will be very challenging for me as I find it difficult to express my answers. (Pre 2.4/1c)

When questioned in the interview he thought he “*probably did have the ability but ... didn’t put enough into it*”.

Nina began Year 12 English believing she would do quite well, because she had gained three Achieved and two Merits (she had failed three standards too) in NCEA level 1 English. She explained that in Year 11 English she had “*kind of bummed around but ... still got good results*”. Nina admitted that because she thought she was good at English, she did not need to try, suggesting she had attributed her success in NCEA level 1 English to ability rather than effort. When it came to assessing her capability of meeting the different NCEA level 2 English achievement standard requirements, she was confident she could do well at creative writing. However, she also recognised she would struggle with other aspects. For example:

Don’t think I’ll get any higher [than Achieved] because formal writing isn’t my strongest thing in English. (Pre 2.2/5b)

I don’t think I have the skills to get more than achieved at this point in time. (Pre 2.4/5b)

Don’t understand how to analyse different texts fully. (Pre 2.6/5b)

As the following excerpts reveal, Nina attributed her subsequent failure in NCEA level 2 English mainly to a lack of effort, although she did list her poor punctuation skills as a contributing factor:

I could have passed but I couldn’t really be bothered. (Post 2.2/4b)

I’m not really keen on coming to school anymore so I don’t bother with anything. (Post 2.2/5a)

I’ve got bad marks all year in English so I gave up trying. (Post 2.2/7b)

Didn’t study so I didn’t understand it properly. (Post 2.6/4b)

I failed assessments that I could have passed but didn't pass because I couldn't use my punctuation correctly. (Final/1b)

I didn't really care about what I got. Didn't put the effort in so I didn't get anything out of it. (Final/2b)

I knew I could do it. It was just that I stopped doing well. I doubted myself and everything. (Interview)

All four in the Not Achieved group admitted that failure had led them to apply less effort in English as the year went on, suggesting that effort had become a double-edged sword (Covington & Omelich, 1979). It would appear that they applied effort initially early in the year, but when they did not do as well as they expected they applied less effort. To have continued to apply significant amounts of effort and then to have subsequently achieved more poorly than expected would have meant that they could only attribute their poor performance to a lack of ability.

Overall, this analysis reveals that those in the Excellence group, along with Mary and Molly, all had comprehensive and sustained evidence over a long period of time that they were capable of achieving well. They all had attributed their previous successes to ability. With the exception of Edith, they also recognised that effort was a critical component of their success in NCEA level 2 English. They appear to have had high levels of self-efficacy as a result of their past successes on similar tasks in NCEA level 1, their successes in practice assessments and mock exams, and their evaluations of their ability to meet the criteria to gain a number of Merits or Excellences in NCEA level 2 English. Most had their ability confirmed by teachers and/or peers, suggesting interpersonal attributions may have influenced these students' beliefs about their ability (Weiner, 2000; Weiner, 2005). During the interviews, these students appeared to feel a sense of pride and pleasure from doing well in English, and knowing that others thought they were capable.

Mark was much more tentative about his abilities, possibly because he lacked a long history of doing well in English. He recognised that effort was very important if he was to succeed. Martin was atypical. While he recognised he had ability, he was unwilling to apply the effort needed to excel, hence his surprise that he gained a number of Merits without studying.

In examining the responses of those in the Achieved and the Not Achieved groups, there were a number of similarities between the two groups. None appeared to have had a consistent history of success in English, although Nina, Neil, Anne, and Aidan felt temporarily buoyed by their success with some NCEA level 1 English achievement standards. When Neil and Nola encountered failure early in Year 12 it was likely that their failure reaffirmed their earlier beliefs that they were not good at English. All, except Aidan, recognised in advance that they would struggle to pass a number of the level 2 English achievement standards without applying effort.

As will be seen in the next subsection, these students' attributions to ability and effort, along with their beliefs about their capabilities of succeeding in NCEA level 2 English, had an important role to play in their academic goals.

6.3.4. Students' Goals of Excelling Versus Passing

Throughout the questionnaires a number of students made repeated reference to their academic goal of excelling at or passing a number of NCEA English achievement standards as an important factor influencing their motivation to achieve. An analysis of students' questionnaire responses revealed a strong tendency for those in the Excellence and Merit groups to focus on excelling in the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, while those in the remaining two groups focused on passing the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall. The goal of excelling or passing was discussed in more depth during the interviews.

Before discussing students' goals here, it is worth noting that for achievement standards 2.1, 2.2, and 2.6, all 16 students considered it *quite important* or *very important* to pass these achievement standards. There were no identifiable group differences between *quite important* and *very important*. With the exceptions of Mark and Amy, the remaining 14 students also believed it was *quite important* or *very important* to pass achievement standard 2.3/2.4. Mark and Amy both indicated that they did not consider it particularly important what result they achieved for 2.3/2.4.

Also worth noting, is that for achievement standards 2.1 and 2.2 all the students interviewed had indicated in their questionnaire responses that they wanted to *do their best*, except Martin who wanted to do *just enough*. For achievement standard 2.3/2.4, all the students wanted to *do their best*, except Martin and Amy who indicated in their questionnaire responses that they wanted to do *just enough to pass*. For achievement

standard 2.6, all the students wanted to *do their best*, except Nina and Nigel. Nina indicated in her questionnaire response that she wanted to do *just enough to pass 2.6*, while Nigel indicated that he did not care what result he gained for 2.6.

All four students in the Excellence group identified the goal of gaining Merits or Excellences as the factor that motivated them most in English in the Final Questionnaire (11b). As Edith stated:

I just wanted excellence for as many assessments as possible. (Final/11b – most important factor)

Getting an excellence endorsement was what motivated me all year – that, and doing as well as I did last year. (Final/11b – second most important factor)

Similarly Mary, Molly and Mark all stated that they wanted to gain Merits or Excellences as their first, second or third most important factor influencing their motivation to achieve in NCEA level 2 English (Final/11b). Evidence that the goal of wanting to excel was a long-term and sustained goal for all seven students was found throughout their questionnaire responses for different achievement standards, as illustrated in samples of Edward's, Edith's and Mary's questionnaire responses:

Edward: I want to get excellence credits to count towards an endorsement. (Pre 2.3/3b) I have got good marks in this area of English before and wanted to gain 3 excellence credits. (Post 2.2/7b)

These credits will help me get into 13 ENG A next year, a course that I really want to do. (Pre 2.3/9a)

I want to get merit/excellence because it will help towards endorsement. (Pre 2.6/5b)

I was always very driven right from the start and knew what marks I wanted and what my goals for the year were. (Final/9b)

Edith: I want to do my best because I need as many Excellence credits as I can get. I passed NCEA level 1 with Excellence (79 E credits!) and I want to at least match that. (Pre 2.2/4b)

I'm interested in it [the movie] because I want the credits. That's really all – I don't care what the movie is because it doesn't make any difference to me – even if I hate the film, I still want the E credits. (Pre 2.2/8b)

I always do my best – I collect excellence credits. I am an overachiever. (Pre 2.3/4b)

Mary: I will work at it until I am assured of getting an excellence – if I get an excellence I will be proud of myself. (Pre 2.1/5b)

I really want the potential excellence credits I can get from this exam, so this has motivated me a lot. (Pre 2.3/9a)

I need 17 more excellence credits to get level 2 with excellence, and English is fairly easy credits. (Pre 2.6/7b)

While Martin did not list it as one of the most important factors, he stated he wanted Excellence in the Initial Questionnaire, but then indicated he wanted Merits in three other questionnaires. In the following statement he explained why he changed his mind:

No point aiming for excellence. Excellence endorsements require study, all excellence credits are just overkill. (Pre 2.6/5b)

In contrast, the four students in the Achieved group aimed to pass rather than excel, as revealed in their responses as to what were the most important factors influencing their motivation to achieve in NCEA English (Final/11b). Alan's statement below reflects the same message as that made by Aidan, Amy and Anne:

I wanted enough credits for literacy to gain the credits needed for University Entrance. (Final/11b – second most important factor)

Although all four students had indicated in their open-ended responses that their focus was to pass rather than excel, it needs to be noted that Alan and Anne had predicted in the Initial Questionnaire that they would get a mix of Achieved and Merits for their English achievement standards, while Aidan predicted he would get Merits and two Excellences (see Table 6.2). On the other hand, Amy always predicted she would gain Achieved and aimed for just a pass, as can be seen in a sample of her responses across different questionnaires:

I was happy with the results as it was just a pass and that was what I was aiming for. (Post 2.1/4b)

I am hoping for Achieved to be able to pass. (Pre 2.2/5b)

This is important as I want to pass NCEA level 2 and not having any NA [Not Achieved] on my record. (Pre 2.6/3b)

Of the four students in the Not Achieved group, only Neil indicated that needing to pass was one of the two most important factors influencing his motivation to achieve (second most important factor – Final/11b). Nina, Nola, and Nigel listed other factors, none of which were linked to any goals. However, they each indicated in various questionnaires that they wanted to pass rather than excel, as illustrated in a sample of Nigel's comments:

I need to get as many credits as I can. (Pre 2.1/3b)

I just want to do enough to pass as my formal writing is bad already. (Pre 2.2/4b)

It's quite important [to pass this achievement standard] because to pass NCEA level 2 I need my 4 reading credits. (Pre 2.4/4b)

I just want to do enough to pass so I leave room to study for my other subjects. I just want to pass so I can get level 2 english. (Pre 2.6/4b)

The goal of excelling versus the goal of passing was clearly influenced by students' attributions in relation to their ability and effort, and their sense of self-efficacy. However, there were also a range of other reasons for focusing on the goal of excelling or passing. These reasons are varied and highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of motivation, and the influence of social and contextual factors on motivation.

Beyond students believing that striving for Merits and Excellences was a realistic and attainable goal for them, there were other reasons for wanting to excel. In Evan's case he wanted to do better than two of his friends in class. He also explained that he intended to go to a particular university and that therefore Excellences were important:

I researched a long time ago that if you get excellence level 2 you are guaranteed a scholarship of \$5,000 and I just knew it was possible for me

to get excellences in a subject like English. The thing is I got 48 excellence credits and you need 50, which is gutting. (Interview)

Another reason Evan gave for giving English his all was linked to coping with on-going family issues (family issues were listed as the second most important factor affecting his motivation – Final/11b). While he was informed that he would not be asked about the issues during the interview, he was asked how these issues affected his motivation. Evan noted that:

It probably had a different effect than you think it would because school sort of became an escape. Especially a subject like English that I enjoyed. I could throw myself into it and think about that rather than other things. (Interview)

Edward also identified a variety of reasons for striving for Excellences. One reason was that he enjoyed English. Another reason was to gain entry to Year 13 English A. He also explained that his peers expected him to do well and that this was a reputation that he felt that he needed to maintain:

My friends put pressure on me to do well as I had previously in English, and in order to live up to this expectation I studied very hard. (Final/5b)

Interestingly, at least four other students from Phase One commented that they were motivated to do well in English in order to do as well as or to do better than Edward. He was the standard against which they judged their academic performance in English. For Edward it was also important to do well so that he could “uphold” his “reputation” with his teacher. When asked if his teacher’s opinion of him was important, he stated:

An awful lot, particularly in English because it is a subject I can do well in and I want ... to know I can do well in it. (Interview)

Interestingly, Edward also noted that another reason for doing well was so that he could then help teach his friends if they were having difficulties.

While Edith was motivated to excel because she knew good results were important for entry into university, she was especially motivated to do her best. She knew she was capable of achieving Excellences and saw little point in not excelling. As she stated:

I know I can get them so why not try to? I guess it is the sort of thing that if you are good at something you might as well do it well. (Interview)

Edith had made the same point in several questionnaires. When questioned further about why gaining Excellences was so critical for her, she refuted any notion of trying to impress her peers or maintain her reputation. Edith believed that she had already established her reputation as “*an excellent student*” and so there was no need to prove anything to anyone. However, she also acknowledged that she gained considerable pleasure from getting an E on an assessment task.

Mary expressed similar points to Edith when asked why gaining Excellences was important to her. As she explained:

It comes right back to when I was in primary school. One of the main values that we had was you must always do your best. It doesn't matter what actually happens if you've done your best. ... Do your absolute best and then do a bit more and I guess that just carried through. Also for me I really love English. It's really simple for me to get excellence, I just have to put in more work than I would like to. I could just coast and get merit, but I really enjoy getting stuff back with a big E on the top. ... I like to have confirmation I am intelligent. (Interview)

However, unlike Edith, Mary knew she needed input from her English teacher to help her achieve her goal of gaining Excellences. She expressed considerable frustration that she was not given detailed and timely feedback to help guide her to that goal. Peer and teacher approval were also important to her. More importantly for Mary though, was the pleasure she gained from telling her mother that she had gained an Excellence for an achievement standard. Mary also acknowledged that friends had played a role in motivating her, because they shared her love of writing and Shakespeare. However, she explained that she was not interested in competing against her friends or other peers. Mary also noted that she wanted to do well to avoid the shame and embarrassment of failing.

In her interview, Erin also indicated that she was motivated to do her best, as she wanted results that reflected her ability in English. She did not want to be disappointed in her results. Like others, Erin felt rewarded when she got good results. Her motivation to excel was also influenced by her knowledge that it was important to have good

results for entry into university. She too liked other people to know that she was capable of excelling, and was particularly motivated to get good results to make her parents proud because they wanted her to do well. As the eldest in her family, she also felt under extra pressure to meet her parents' expectations. In addition, she was motivated to meet her teacher's expectations, because her teacher had told her she was capable of getting Excellences.

For Molly, the reasons were equally complex. In the interview she explained that she wanted Excellences because she was very competitive. However, she also explained that her friends played an important role in encouraging her to aim for Excellences, because they believed she was capable of achieving these; a reputation she wanted to sustain. Molly also indicated that she wanted to get good results to set an example for her younger siblings, and that it was important for her to do well as she would be the first in her family to ever go to university. Furthermore, there were financial reasons for doing well too. As she explained:

I need the good results to get scholarships. We're not financial enough to be able to go to University without any scholarships. So it's always been "go and do your best" so we can get the money for University. (Interview)

In addition to wanting a university scholarship, Mark also wanted Excellences as proof of his ability, and to please his parents as they thought he was "quite smart". He indicated that enjoying English also motivated him to want to do well. Peers were influential in Mark's desire to excel too. Friends had also dared him to do 2.3 (extended text) in the exam, for which he got Merit. He had not intended to do it as he thought he would not pass it. Mark also wanted to excel to keep up with the female student who was top in English. Moreover, he wanted to do well so that he would not be seen as a "complete loser" by his friends.

Martin differed markedly from the others in the Excellence and Merit groups, as he felt forced to do well in an effort to meet parental expectations. As he stated:

If I wasn't expected to do anything I'd have walked in and just passed but because I am expected to achieve a decent result at the end of the year I had to put some substantial effort in. (Interview)

He said that he “*grudgingly conformed*” to these parental expectations to avoid having arguments at home about why he was “*not doing well at school*”. He also admitted that he knew that he needed to pass to get a good job. He concluded by saying:

I pass because I don't know what would happen if I failed. ... I do it because I have no options. (Interview)

In relation to the Achieved group, there may have been the desire by Anne, Aidan and Alan to achieve higher results in English as shown by their predictions in Table 6.2. However, unlike the students discussed above, there was little evidence of a strong commitment to achieving these results. For example, Anne admitted that she really did not care about getting higher than achieved until at the end of Year 12. When asked to elaborate on this she explained:

It was because I didn't realise that NCEA level 2 was so important – like you needed good marks to get into a good [university] hostel. So I didn't try because I just wanted to cruise through. And now I've realised that it means so much, and there is a good chance I won't even get put in a hostel because I didn't try hard enough. (Interview)

When explaining why she had originally wanted Merits, Anne acknowledged that it was to compete with her more academically able sister who always did well at everything, and a “*really smart*” friend who made her feel inadequate at times. She also wanted to do better than some other friends who were not so good at English.

Aidan and Amy also indicated that they were motivated to pass in order to get into Year 13 English, and Alan and Amy wanted to prove to themselves they could pass. However, Aidan, Amy, and Alan all admitted that they had been motivated to put their energies into other subjects that they considered more important to them than English. Fear of failing was also a big motivator. As Amy noted:

The scare of failing anything made me more motivated to pass. (Pre 2.3/8a)

Aidan did not want to be perceived as a “*loser*”. He, Anne, and Amy also wanted to pass to avoid disappointing their parents. Like Anne, Amy felt the need to compete against her sister. Amy also recognised she needed to pass to enhance her career opportunities, but she indicated that she did not strive for Excellences because:

I have a friend who always got excellences and I've always just thought, "Oh I can't do that, I'll aim for achieve." In a way I guessed that I couldn't do it. (Interview)

Unlike those students in the Excellence and Merit groups whose friends also seemed to be committed to doing well academically, Amy, Aidan, and Anne found friends tended to distract them and thus affected their motivation to achieve. As Aidan noted:

The people who sit next to me also failed and they weren't really trying, just like me, so they weren't exactly helping me. (Post 2.1/7b)

Amy also found that socialising competed with the notion of excelling. She had felt under "pressure to have a social life, to fit in etc". She believed this socialising had really affected her motivation, as she spent less time studying. Her friends also thought it was "uncool" to study. As she stated in the Final Questionnaire:

I wish I could have been more motivated and more concerned about school in general rather than spending time with friends. (Final/10b)

Her need for relatedness clearly conflicted with her need for competence.

For those in the Not Achieved group, academic goals in English appear to have been eroded quite rapidly after failing achievement standards early in the year. Originally Nigel, Nina and Neil had predicted they would do well in a number of English achievement standards in the Initial Questionnaire, while Nola predicted she would gain Achieved for all her English achievement standards (see Table 6.2). When asked again in the four pre-achievement standard questionnaires, all four predicted they would get Achieved for 2.1, 2.2, 2.3/2.4 and 2.6. The exceptions were Nigel, who predicted he would get Merit for 2.1 because he loved creative writing, and Nina who predicted she would fail 2.6 (unfamiliar texts). These predictions suggest that none expected to excel once they evaluated their skills more closely against what was required, and had undertaken trial assessments. Yet they all recognised it was important to gain their level 2 literacy credits.

However, there were also other factors negatively impacting on these students' goal to pass the English achievement standards. Nina indicated in her questionnaire responses that she became amotivated because of a major personal difficulty that was

unrelated to school. Assured she would not be questioned about the issue in the interview, Nina had explained how the issue had affected her motivation:

I wouldn't be focusing on my study and when I was in school I wouldn't be thinking about schoolwork or anything I'd just be thinking about outside of school stuff. It got too much eventually and I just gave up, kind of. ... I went to the counsellor every week. (Interview)

Nina indicated that as a result of this issue she was regularly absent from school which made it difficult to catch up with the class work she missed. She admitted she came extremely close to dropping out of school. While her disengagement was affected by her absenteeism, it was also exacerbated by failure (listed as her most influential factor overall – Final 11/b), and the presence of five friends in her class who were unfocused and distracted her (second most influential factor overall – Final/11b). In addition, Nina's motivation to pass was also affected by her lack of interest in much of what she was taught in Year 12 English, despite enjoying English in Year 11 and achieving Merit in some Level 1 English achievement standards. (An interesting aside was that, despite being absent regularly from school, Nina regularly turned up to complete the questionnaires for this study. When questioned about this she explained that as I had given up my time, so should she to help me.)

Neil's motivation to pass was negatively influenced by the fact that he found Year 12 English much harder than Year 11 English. More importantly, he believed his Year 12 teacher had not supported him appropriately to succeed (most influential factor overall – Final/11b). Despite wanting to pass (second most important factor – Final/11b) he gave up because he kept getting bad results (third most influential factor overall – Final/11b). As Neil stated:

I did begin thinking I could do it and began starting to try, but then I kept getting negative results so I got less motivated to try hard as I could to get it [NCEA English]. ... I came out [of Year 12] believing I couldn't do it very well. (Interview)

In addition to the above factors, Neil explained that he had not enjoyed English throughout his years at school. Furthermore, he acknowledged that he had not been motivated to study for English and that he had preferred to “hang out” with his friends instead. They too were struggling to pass.

For Nola her teacher's statement at the beginning of Year 12 that Nola's English class was worse than her pre-traditional English class had a very negative impact on her motivation to pass (most important factor overall – Final/11b), although at one point she did want to prove to her teacher she “*was not bad at English*”. However, failure put paid to that as Nola explained:

I failed my first assessment in creative writing and I found I just went downhill from there. I stopped trying as much. (Interview)

As Nola struggled with English, her parents hired a tutor to help her. While she appreciated the tutoring she received, she felt pressured to work harder because her parents were paying “*quite a bit*” for the tutor. She admitted that she preferred studying for mathematics because she knew she could do well in mathematics. Nola noted too that she and her friends spent time in class talking rather than focusing on what they were being taught. Feeling tired from her part-time job also affected Nola's motivation to study.

Like Nola, Nigel also found failure made him feel less motivated:

I became really unmotivated in English when I failed assessments and gave up on them. (Most influential factor overall - Final/11b)

Failing previous English assessments has made me feel less motivated towards English as a whole. But I still enjoy reading my novels and books, but more topics I am familiar with and enjoy. (Post 2.6/8b)

He too enjoyed studying for other subjects more than studying for English. In part though, this was because he found that he had no idea how to go about studying some aspects of English, despite his younger brother and his parents trying to help him. While Nigel wanted to avoid disappointing his parents, he also admitted that his friends distracted him in class and that their disinterest in English also impacted negatively on his motivation to pass. His motivation was also affected by his lack of interest in most aspects he studied in Year 12 English.

In summary, the analysis of students' reasons for wanting to excel or just to pass provided interesting insights into the multifaceted and complex nature of motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment. While there were a variety of reasons for students to want to excel or just pass, there were some common trends. Students

who focused on excelling academically in English tended to find English relatively easy, and get considerable pleasure and satisfaction from gaining good results (external regulation). They also strived for good results because these results affirmed their abilities and ensured they were perceived by significant others as capable and competent (introjected regulation). They tended to share an ethos that it was important to do one's best. Furthermore, they appeared to enjoy aspects of English (intrinsic motivation), and to be surrounded by friends who shared their drive to excel or who had high expectations of them. They valued doing well as good results enabled them to gain entry to university and possibly gain scholarships (identified regulation).

On the other hand, those who strived just to pass all recognised the importance of passing English for them personally (identified regulation), but they tended to find English more difficult than some other subjects. They tended to enjoy English less compared with other subjects (lack of intrinsic motivation) and to put more effort into those subjects they believed were more important than English, or subjects in which they could gain higher grades. They also tended to be negatively influenced by their friends' attitudes to English and studying. Effort appeared to have been spent trying to avoid failure rather than excelling (introjected regulation). When failure occurred it tended to affirm a lack of ability and result in students becoming less motivated or amotivated.

6.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter examined students' motivation to achieve through the lens of eight female and eight male students who had achieved different outcomes in NCEA level 2 English achievement standards; that is primarily Excellence, Merit, Achieved or Not Achieved. It was established at the outset that they all expected to succeed, and for the most part their predictions were reasonably closely aligned with their actual NCEA results; that is those who achieved at higher levels tended to predict they would gain higher grades and the reverse tended to be true of those who predicted they would receive lower grades. Given their subsequent results, most were also relatively realistic about their skills and the ease with which they might achieve the four key achievement standards focused on in this study. All valued passing a number of English standards for extrinsic reasons. Most valued English sufficiently to want to enrol in Year 12 and Year 13 English. Nearly all had career aspirations involving tertiary study.

Four themes arose from an analysis of factors that the students identified as important in influencing their motivation to achieve. These themes were: the role of teachers; interest in and/or enjoyment of English; students' beliefs about their capabilities, abilities and effort; and students' goals. Teachers played an important role in at least six students' motivation to achieve. Teachers' expectations, feedback, enthusiasm, and support, or the lack of these factors, were identified as having a significant impact on these six students' motivation. In terms of interest/and or enjoyment, students' interest in aspects of English was largely task-specific, situational, and highly individual. However, those in the Excellence and Merit groups tended to also enjoy English because they gained good results and found it easy, whereas those in the Not Achieved group tended to find English difficult and therefore did not particularly enjoy it as a subject. With the exception of creative writing, most aspects of English did not tend to meet students' need for autonomy.

In relation to students' beliefs about their capabilities, abilities, and effort, those in the Excellence group and two students in the Merit group had a sustained history of success in English and saw themselves as capable of doing well. Their beliefs about their capabilities and abilities were also reinforced by teachers and/or peers. With the exception of one student, they all recognised effort was also important in achieving success. Conversely, most of those students in the Achieved and Not Achieved groups lacked a sustained history of success and their sense of self-efficacy was not high for some of the achievement standards. They recognised the role of ability and effort and tended to attribute their poorer results to a lack of effort.

In terms of students' goals, those in the Excellence and Merit groups by and large aimed to excel (i.e., gain Excellences or Merits), while those in the Achieved and Not Achieved were more focused on passing rather than excelling. In essence these goals were realistic in light of the students' subsequent NCEA English results. However, the reasons for striving for high grades or passing were multifaceted and complex. External regulation featured strongly, but with marked group differences. Those in the Excellence and Merit groups tended to value the rewards they could attain (i.e., Merits and Excellences), while those in the Achieved and Not Achieved groups tended to feel pressured to pass.

Introjected regulation also featured strongly. Most of those in the Excellence and Merit groups wanted to affirm their capabilities and to gain the approval of significant others, while those in the Achieved and Not Achieved groups were more anxious about failing

and disappointing their parents. Although identified regulation was also evident with most students recognising the value of English for their future, there were no obvious differences between those striving to excel and those aiming to pass. Intrinsic motivation was more prevalent in those striving to excel, with those wanting just to pass tending to find English less appealing and less enjoyable than other subjects.

Chapter 7.

Discussion

7.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine students' motivation in relation to high-stakes certification assessment, in particular their motivation in relation to four English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall. Specifically the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What motivation-related attitudes do students have regarding NCEA English?
In particular, do they:
 - a) expect to succeed in NCEA level 2 English?
 - b) value passing NCEA level 2 English?
 - c) value English as a subject?
 - d) find English interesting?

2. What factors do Year 12 students perceive as having a significant influence on their motivation to achieve:
 - a) specific level 2 English achievement standards?
 - b) NCEA level 2 English overall?

3. In what ways do Year 12 students perceive that the factors they identified as significant influence their motivation to achieve:
 - a) specific level 2 English achievement standards?
 - b) NCEA level 2 English overall?

Gender differences were also examined in the course of the study.

Data were gathered in Phase One from 107 students who each completed 11 questionnaires over a 12 month period. Additional data were sought from a stratified purposive sample of 16 students interviewed in Phase Two of the study.

This chapter discusses and synthesises the key findings presented in the two previous chapters in order to address the three research questions. The discussion takes a person-in-context approach in its examination of students' motivation, in recognition that motivation emerges from the interactions between personal, social, and contextual variables (Urduan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

The following section addresses research Question 1, while Sections 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, and 7.6 address research Questions 2 and 3. Throughout this chapter the findings are examined in light of existing literature and within the overarching theoretical framework of self-determination theory. Other motivational constructs are drawn on when needed to interpret the findings.

7.2. Students' Motivation-Related Attitudes

In addressing research Question 1, this section focuses on students' motivation-related attitudes with respect to NCEA level 2 English. In particular, it examines the students' expectations for success, whether they valued passing a number of English achievement standards and valued English, and the degree to which they found English interesting.

With regard to students' expectations for success, nearly all the students believed they were capable of passing the four English achievement standards focused on throughout this study and NCEA level 2 English overall. Most students' grade predictions tended to be reasonably realistic in light of the grades they were subsequently awarded. Students' grade predictions also tended to reflect the skill level they believed they possessed and how difficult they would find the assessment task. For example, the students who predicted getting Merit or Excellence tended to be the students who indicated that they had *a good range of skills* and that they would find the assessment task *quite easy* or *very easy*.

Past performance in NCEA level 1 English, trial assessments, and mock exams clearly played an important role in students' beliefs about their capabilities to achieve, which is in keeping with self-efficacy theory and research findings in this area (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Most students appeared to have moderate to high levels of self-efficacy in relation to passing the various achievement standards, with most students believing that they had sufficient skills to do so. These

results are consistent with Walkey et al.'s (2013) finding that task-related aspirations were significant predictors of student outcomes.

In relation to whether students valued passing a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, all students believed it was *quite important* or *very important* to pass a number of English achievement standards when questioned early in the year. At that stage nearly 80% considered it *very important* to pass a number of English achievement standards. However, only around 45% considered it *very important* to pass each of the four specific achievement standards, with a similar proportion considering it *quite important* to pass each of the achievement standards. While it is not clear why there was a shift in the degree of importance placed on passing, nearly 90% considered it was *quite* or *very important* to pass each of the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 overall.

Most students gave extrinsic reasons for why it was important to pass, providing external, introjected, and identified regulation reasons. In nearly half the cases students had indicated that their motivation to pass was influenced by more than one type of extrinsic motivation (e.g., introjected and identified regulation). This finding is one of many in this study that highlights the complex, multidimensional, dynamic, and situated nature of students' motivation to achieve. A need for competence was strongly reflected in the various extrinsic reasons students gave for why it was important for them to pass. Such a focus is not unexpected in this high-stakes assessment context in which competence is crucial in both the short- and the long-term, and being incompetent has a number of serious ramifications.

Between 80 and 88% of students indicated that they wanted to do their best across the four achievement standards, with a small number indicating they wanted to do just enough to pass. In their research on NCEA, Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) found that *doing my best* was a stronger positive predictor of the higher grades awarded and the number of credits achieved, while *doing just enough* was a stronger negative predictor of the number of credits achieved and the grades awarded. However, in this study *doing my best* and *doing just enough* were not strong indicators of students' grades with regard to individual English achievement standards. There was a tendency, though, for those indicating that they wanted to do *just enough* to pass to be more likely to get a Not Achieved grade and less likely to be awarded an Excellence grade. Of note though, *doing just enough* and *doing my best* were assessed somewhat differently in each study.

In terms of students' valuing of English, around 90% of students valued English sufficiently to want to enrol in Years 12 and 13 English. When asked why, most students indicated that they valued English for its utility value; in particular, its usefulness in daily life and/or because of its importance in achieving future career aspirations. These results indicate that identified regulation was very prevalent in relation to valuing English and that many students had internalised the importance of English. However, as discussed in the next section, it is noteworthy that identified regulation was not as prevalent in factors students identified as significantly influencing their motivation across the four achievement standards or in NCEA level 2 English overall. This difference suggests that while students valued English primarily for identified regulation reasons, it did not feature as one of the most influential factors identified by students as influencing their motivation to achieve.

Furthermore, the results indicate that many students had adopted a future time perspective in relation to English. Future time perspective has been associated with a number of academic benefits, particularly in relation to enhanced motivation to study and higher examination performance (e.g., de Bilde et al., 2011; Elias et al., 2011; Van Calster et al., 1987). Interestingly too, Durik, Vida, and Eccles (2006) found that, "the importance individuals placed on English predicted both high school courses and career aspirations" (p. 389).

In this study, the finding that nearly all students perceived themselves to be sufficiently competent to pass the four English achievement standards, and that most students valued English, contrast with the findings from studies undertaken by Jacobs et al. (2002) and Watt (2004). In their studies, students' competency beliefs and valuing of English tended to be low in senior secondary students. The difference in findings may be attributable to different English programmes. It is also plausible that the high-stakes context shaped students' valuing of English in this study, given English was the only compulsory Year 12 subject. It is also possible that competency beliefs differed as the students in this study were drawn from A Stream English classes; that is, they had all been relatively successful in NCEA level 1 English.

Regarding students' interest in English, the results indicate that students perceived English to be less interesting than some of the other five subjects in which they were enrolled. Around 70% of students ranked English as their third, fourth, or fifth most interesting subject. However, English was perceived as more interesting than Mathematics by many students. The fact that students did not rank English as one of

their most interesting subjects is in keeping with Garden's (2012) New Zealand finding that Year 11 students did not rate English as their most favourite subject.

Around 70% of students found some aspects of English interesting. Fewer than half of those students identified two aspects they found very interesting, while the remainder could only identify one aspect. While the aspects students found interesting varied considerably, the film study stood out as most interesting. Around 75% of students also indicated that they found some aspects of English boring, with a third of those identifying two aspects they found very boring. Again the aspects that bored students varied quite markedly, although a number of students identified the novel they were required to read as very boring. Overall, there was not widespread interest in various aspects of English, but equally there was not widespread disinterest in various aspects of English. These findings help explain why intrinsic motivation did not feature strongly as a factor significantly influencing students' motivation to achieve overall, as discussed in more detail in the next section.

These findings also highlight the differentiated nature of students' interest within English and support other findings that show students' academic interests become more differentiated as they move through the school system (Denissen et al., 2007; Hidi & Ainley, 2002; Schiefele, 2009). Furthermore, the findings point to the importance of examining students' interest within a subject to gain a more detailed understanding of their interest in relation to that subject.

7.3. Different Types of Student Motivation

This section, along with Sections 7.4, 7.5, and 7.6, addresses research Questions 2 and 3. These two questions focus on the factors students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve the four specific English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, and the impact of these factors on students' motivation to achieve in this high-stakes assessment context.

The specific focus of this section is on the students' responses to key open-ended questions in the four pre- and four post-achievement standard questionnaires and responses from the Final Questionnaire coded using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation. While these different types of motivation are discussed separately to highlight important aspects associated with each type, the evidence presented in the previous two chapters clearly points to the fact that students endorsed

more than one type of motivation at any given point in time, and that positive and negative factors influencing students' motivation to achieve interacted in complex ways.

7.3.1. External Regulation

External regulation involves individuals feeling externally controlled by the promise of rewards or the threat of punishment (Reeve, Deci, et al., 2004). This was by far the most common type of motivation evident in students' responses in relation to Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy. It was also the most frequently identified factor influencing students' motivation in NCEA level 2 English overall and the most frequently identified positive factor across the four achievement standards.

The predominance of this type of extrinsic motivation was predictable given the continual focus on high-stakes certification assessment in Years 11, 12, and 13, and the requirement to pass key English achievement standards for university entrance. External regulation is a salient and unavoidable part of a high-stakes certification context. As Harlen and Deakin Crick (2002) have noted, students develop a strong extrinsic orientation towards grades when there is a strong emphasis on evaluation.

Two themes were salient in the analysis of responses coded as examples of external regulation. The most prevalent theme was the goal of wanting or needing to pass the literacy credits in order to be awarded university entrance and/or pass NCEA level 2 (referred to in the following discussion as *passing* or *to pass*). Given the importance of passing, the prevalence of this theme was to be expected. The other notable theme involved the goal of striving for Merits or Excellences, particularly to gain certificate endorsements (referred to in the following discussion as *excelling* or *to excel*). In both instances, acquiring these performance-contingent rewards inherent in this high-stakes environment was clearly a key motivator for a significant number of students. Interestingly, there was little evidence that many students were offered tangible rewards by their parents, unlike in Garden's (2012) or Meyer, Weir, et al.'s (2009) studies. If these types of rewards were offered, they were rarely identified by students as a significant factor in their motivation.

Those students who identified wanting to excel as an important factor influencing their motivation to achieve for at least two achievement standards tended to be the students who gained Merits and/or Excellences. These results are consistent with Meyer et al.'s

(2006) finding that students who wanted to excel gained higher numbers of achievement standards with Merits or Excellences.

Key to whether students sought to pass or to excel was their past academic performance and their sense of self-efficacy. As Deci and Ryan (1985) have stated, “typically people will not engage in a behaviour that they expect to yield desired reinforcements if they do not expect that there is a good chance of their succeeding at the behaviour (i.e., of their being efficacious)” (pp. 223-224). Students who consistently strove to excel tended to have experienced considerable success in the past in English, compared with those students who were focused on passing. They believed they were capable of excelling based on their previous success on similar trial assessment tasks or NCEA level 1, an awareness of what was required to gain Merit or Excellence for each achievement standard, and significant others affirming their abilities. They had attributed their past successes to ability and effort, which was also in line with Meyer, Weir, et al.’s (2009) findings in relation to students’ attributions to their best grade achieved in NCEA.

Beyond acquiring the necessary literacy credits for university entrance, the students striving to excel were often motivated to gain Merits or Excellences for the additional benefits that were inextricably linked to the accumulation of these grades, such as: NCEA certificate endorsement (external regulation); (re)affirmation of their competence (introjected regulation); approval of significant others (introjected regulation); guaranteed entry into A Stream English in Year 13 (identified regulation); increased likelihood of entry into a range of university courses (identified regulation); increased likelihood of gaining a place in a university hostel (identified regulation); and the possibility of acquiring a university scholarship (external regulation).

Certificate endorsement was introduced to counter concerns about able students not striving to excel in NCEA (Meyer et al., 2006; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2007). Most of the students aiming for higher grades were motivated to do so in order to have their level 2 certificate endorsed with Merit or Excellence, as endorsement was the key to accessing some of the benefits noted above. This recent incentivisation of NCEA clearly motivated able students in this study to excel, and aligned with Meyer, Weir, et al.’s (2009) findings.

What is unclear from these findings is the degree to which all students had been made aware early in Year 12 or late in Year 11 of the various benefits associated with gaining

high grades in NCEA. For example, some students did not appear to be aware that good Year 12 grades guaranteed entry into Year 13 A Stream English or a place in some university hostels, until much later in Year 12. Without sound knowledge of the range of benefits well in advance, students may potentially underachieve, thereby limiting their future opportunities and missing out on the additional benefits available. More importantly, knowledge of such benefits may foster both identified regulation and a future time perspective, both of which have been found to enhance more self-determined forms of academic motivation (e.g., Creten et al., 2001; de Bilde et al., 2011; Kauffman & Husman, 2004; Koestner & Losier, 2002; Miserandino, 1996; Vallerand et al., 1997; Van Calster et al., 1987; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004).

A number of those students who focused on passing rather than excelling were more inclined to view passing as something that had to be done, with numerous references to the “need” to pass. These students exhibited what Ecclestone (2002) has described as “a ‘pragmatic acceptance’ of the need to gain a qualification” or “strategic compliance” (p. 31). However, while these students may have focused on passing rather than excelling, it did not mean that they only wanted to do just enough to pass. As previously noted, most students wanted to do their best, rather than do just enough to pass the four key achievement standards, and only a small proportion of these were students who wanted to excel.

Given their subsequent results, many of those students who consistently indicated they wanted to excel had set themselves a realistic and attainable goal. They had high aspirations; a key influential factor identified by Garden (2012) in her study of students’ motivation in NCEA level 1 English. It is also likely that many of those who strove to pass also may have set themselves realistic and attainable goals, as most acquired sufficient English credits to enable them to enter Year 13 English. It is also possible that some may have had the potential to excel, but chose to invest their limited time and energy in other subjects or activities.

While many students were externally regulated, with regard to individual achievement standards it is quite plausible that the desire to pass or excel may have been proximal goals perceived as important in attaining personally valued future goals. Consequently, the goals to pass or excel may not have been ends in themselves, but linked to other forms of extrinsic motivation such as introjected regulation and identified regulation.

External regulation is the most controlling form of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), and from an academic perspective the least desirable. Research indicates that external regulation undermines intrinsic motivation, and results in poor functioning during task engagement, poorer coping strategies in examinations, surface learning, lower levels of persistence and effort, lower grades, and increased vulnerability to amotivation (e.g., Crooks, 1988; Deci et al., 1999; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Vallerand et al., 1993; Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). Yet half the students in this study gained at least two Merits or Excellences for the achievement standards they attempted, suggesting that external regulation did not have a markedly adverse impact on the academic achievement of a number of students who indicated that they were externally regulated. This finding and possible reasons for the limited negative impact of external regulation are discussed in more detail in Section 7.6.

A major concern about students being externally regulated by performance contingent rewards is that their intrinsic motivation can be undermined (Deci et al., 1999; Deci & Ryan, 1985). However, Hidi (2000) noted that much of the research related to the impact of external rewards on intrinsic motivation has been undertaken on relatively simple and short-term activities. She has argued that this negative relationship may not exist between delayed tangible rewards and long-term, complex, and effortful engagement.

On the other hand, in this study it was clear that most students were not intrinsically motivated to study English or aspects of the Year 12 English programme (see discussion below on intrinsic motivation). In the absence of intrinsic motivation, external rewards may have helped motivate students to engage with the academic requirements for NCEA English, albeit in a controlling manner. As Harter (1981) has argued, extrinsic motivation (i.e., external regulation) may be adaptive in some situations. Engagement triggered by external regulation may also bring benefits. Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) point out that, “if students become engaged in academic tasks, there is at least a chance that genuine interests and intrinsic motivation will emerge” (p. 159).

7.3.2. Introjected Regulation

The second most prevalent type of motivation was introjected regulation across the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall. Introjected regulation involves individuals feeling internally controlled or pressured to act in ways that are

focused on enhancing their sense of pride, avoiding the guilt or shame associated with failure, or to gaining approval from others (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). While not considered as maladaptive as external regulation, introjected regulation has been associated with a range of negative outcomes, such as increased anxiety, poorer coping responses, and uncertainty over one's self-worth (Assor, Vansteenkiste, & Kaplan, 2009; Ryan & Connell, 1989). However, according to Assor et al. (2009), introjected regulation is commonly experienced by students. As they have noted, "putting effort into schoolwork to feel worthy and proud of oneself or to avoid feeling unworthy and ashamed is a common motivation among school children" (p. 482).

Fear of failure or wanting to avoid failure was one prominent theme in students' examples of introjected regulation in the pre- and post-achievement standards questionnaires and the Final Questionnaire. Given the high-stakes nature of NCEA and the issues students may face if they fail, it is not surprising that students identified avoiding failure as a significant motivator. Putwain (2009) also found students undertaking the General Certificate of School Education in England were very concerned about failing because of the implications for their future.

Failure-avoidance behaviour in an academic context is usually associated with a performance-avoidance goal orientation, which has been linked to a constellation of behaviours considered detrimental to effective learning, such as surface learning, test anxiety, self-handicapping strategies, disorganised study habits, and lower achievement (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Elliot & McGregor, 1999; Liem et al., 2008; Midgley & Urdan, 2001; Urdan, 2004; Wolters, 2004). However, for most students in this study anxiety about failing was clearly not sufficiently high to be markedly detrimental. Data in this study indicate that concerns about failing had the opposite effect in a number of instances; it spurred students on to study harder and apply more effort.

While other research has found that assessment anxiety increases for those who receive low grades (Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2003), those students who received a number of Not Achieved grades in this study were not the students who identified concerns about failing as a major factor influencing their motivation to achieve. Almost all the students who identified wanting to avoid failure as a major motivator in the Final Questionnaire not only passed five or six achievement standards, they also passed some of those standards with Merits or Excellences. This pattern of success was also true of most students who indicated that wanting to avoid failure was a significant factor

in their motivation to achieve in one or more of the four achievement standards. However, repeated success did not make students immune from experiencing subsequent concerns about failing.

The other three key themes that emerged from the analysis of students' examples of introjected regulation were gaining the approval of parents and teachers, competing against friends or siblings, and being proud of oneself. All three themes are forms of ego-enhancement. While wanting to make their parents proud or avoid disappointing them was virtually non-existent in the Final Questionnaire, it was quite prevalent across the four achievement standards. This need for parental approval is likely to be linked to students' need for relatedness. Evidence of students wanting to meet parental expectations, to gain their approval, or avoid disappointing them has also been found in other studies (Garden, 2012; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009; Putwain, 2009). In some cases the need for approval may reflect the impact of parents' ego-involvement in their son's or daughter's academic performance (La Guardia, 2009).

Gaining teacher approval also featured, but also only in relation to the four achievement standards. Students' responses revealed that they were motivated to pass to prove to their English teacher that they could do it, or they wanted to impress their teacher by excelling. In a few cases students were highly motivated to achieve because they believed that their English teacher held low expectations about their abilities and felt the need to prove them wrong.

A number of students were strongly motivated to do as well as or better than their peers, particularly their friends, while a very small number were motivated to do better than their siblings. In both instances, a performance-approach goal orientation appears to have been at the fore with students' desire/need to prove themselves to be more competent, or as competent, as their peers or siblings (Elliot, 2005; Senko & Harackiewicz, 2002), and in the process enhance their own self-esteem. While the shift from a norm-referenced system to a standards-based assessment system was expected to minimise competition between students (Crooks, 1988), normative or social comparisons clearly still occur, albeit possibly less often. Both Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) and Garden (2012) also reported that students made reference in focus group interviews to competing against friends as a motivating factor in NCEA.

The remaining key theme in students' responses coded as examples of ego-enhancement was that of being proud of oneself. There were two versions of this

theme: students wanting to do their best, and students wanting to prove to themselves that they were capable of passing or doing well. In focus group interviews, Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) noted that students made reference to wanting to do their best as a factor influencing their motivation, although these authors classified this as a form of intrinsic motivation. In this current study, students' references to wanting to do their best were clearly related to ego-enhancement, and thus introjected regulation. Some students also made reference to not wanting to be disappointed with themselves as part of their response. In such cases a mastery-avoidance goal orientation may explain students' concern about wanting to avoid being disappointed in themselves, as this orientation involves a concern about not losing competence or failing to master what is being taught (Madjar et al., 2011).

The findings discussed above also parallel key reasons senior high school students cited for pursuing performance goals in a qualitative study undertaken by Urdan and Mestas (2006). They too wanted to please their parents, outperform their peers, impress their teachers, appear competent, avoid appearing incompetent, and feel proud of themselves.

While introjected regulation may have had a negative impact on some students' anxiety, coping strategies, and sense of self-worth, its impact did not appear to markedly affect the academic performance of most students who listed introjected regulation reasons as a significant factor in their motivation to achieve in the Final Questionnaire. Most of the students passed five or six achievement standards, with two thirds of those gaining at least two Merits or Excellences. A number of those who had listed introjected regulation reasons as a significant factor in their motivation to achieve were high achievers.

Lastly, in examining the responses coded as examples of introjected regulation, these findings challenge the claim made by some researchers that students rarely spontaneously identify performance goal orientations (e.g., Brophy, 2005; Lemos, 1996). Some students in this study spontaneously identified factors which were clearly examples of performance goal orientations. However, given that the goal structure surrounding high-stakes assessment is likely to foster a performance goal orientation, these results were not unexpected.

7.3.3. Identified Regulation

Identified regulation is a more self-determined or autonomous form of extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It has been associated with a range of positive academic outcomes (e.g., Assor et al., 2009; Doron, Stephan, Maiano, & Le Scanff, 2011; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Hardre & Reeve, 2003; Koestner & Losier, 2002; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Vallerand et al., 1997; Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). In this study, identified regulation was much less prevalent than external or introjected regulation, in relation to factors students perceived as having a significant influence on their motivation to achieve. Very few students listed examples of identified regulation as being significant factors influencing their motivation across the four achievement standards. However, identified regulation was ranked as the third most influential type of motivation in NCEA level 2 English overall, although by relatively few students.

A small number of responses coded as examples of identified regulation focused on wanting to do well in order to gain entry to Year 13 A Stream English. The majority of responses focused on wanting to gain university entrance for tertiary study and/or a future career.

The small percentage of students listing identified regulation reasons for their motivation was unexpected, given that in the Final Questionnaire approximately two thirds of students had identified career aspirations that required them to gain the necessary literacy credits for university entrance. It is possible that a number of those students who identified that wanting to pass or to excel in NCEA as a significant factor in their motivation to achieve (i.e., external regulation), may have been focusing on the immediate goal of passing a particular achievement standard or gaining their literacy credits, knowing that their future career aspirations were severely compromised without the necessary literacy credits for university entrance or sufficient credits to pass NCEA level 2.

Compared with the number of students who identified the two controlling types of extrinsic motivation as important, the small number of students who listed identified regulation reasons as important is possibly cause for concern, given that there are many benefits associated with this more autonomous form of motivation (e.g., Assor et al., 2009; Burton et al., 2006; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Koestner & Losier, 2002). Identified regulation has also been found to be strongly associated with the possession of an extended future time perspective (de Bilde et al., 2011), which has been strongly linked

to more adaptive patterns of learning in secondary students (e.g., increased persistence, better allocation of study time, deeper processing of material being studied, and more on-task behaviour) (de Bilde et al., 2011; de Volder & Lens, 1982). After comparing the impact of introjected and identified regulation on children and adolescents' academic outcomes, Assor et al. (2009) argued that educators should be focusing on helping students appreciate the personal value in what they are doing rather than focusing on fostering high self-esteem.

While identified regulation did not feature more prominently in students' perceptions of factors significantly influencing their motivation to achieve, it is plausible that some of the more negative or controlling effects of external and introjected regulation may have been moderated by the fact that students valued English for its usefulness in their future lives. Partial support for this assumption comes from a study in which Singaporean students who perceived English to be important for their future goals were more motivated to develop competence in English and employed deeper processing strategies (Liem et al., 2008).

7.3.4. Intrinsic Motivation

For discussion purposes *intrinsic motivation* will incorporate the constructs of enjoyment and interest, as Ryan and Deci (2000a) have defined intrinsic motivation as involving both constructs. However, in doing so, there is no clear consensus as to whether interest (maintained situational interest and individual interest, although not triggered situational interest) is separate from or an important component of intrinsic motivation (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Schiefele, 2009; Schunk et al., 2014). There is also a pragmatic reason for incorporating the two constructs within intrinsic motivation: in this study students have tended to treat these two constructs as being synonymous in their open-ended responses.

Very few students (3%) identified interest in and enjoyment of English as one of the two most important factors influencing their motivation in NCEA level 2 English overall. These were students who gained some Merits and/or some Excellences in English and had not failed any achievement standards they attempted. In other words, they were not students who struggled with English. The fact that so few students identified intrinsic motivation for English as a significant factor in their motivation to achieve is in keeping with international findings which indicate that intrinsic motivation for academic subjects tends to decline as students progress through the school system (e.g., Gillet

et al., 2012; Hidi, 2001; Jacobs et al., 2002; Krapp, 2002; Watt, 2004). These results were consistent with the fact that English was not students' most interesting subject, and with Garden's (2012) finding that English was not students' favourite subject .

However, more students identified interest in or enjoyment of specific English achievement standards as an important factor in their motivation to achieve (13% of responses). These students particularly enjoyed creative writing, the film analysis, or the novel or play they studied, but the reasons for enjoying these aspects or finding them interesting were diverse (e.g., finding the film interesting because of its depiction of historical events, or the camera work, or characterisation). The task-specific nature of these students' intrinsic motivation appears to be largely linked to maintained situational interest, rather than individual interest. Students were interested in a particular film, novel, or writing about a particular topic. Their interest in or enjoyment of these specific aspects was not necessarily linked to any long-standing interest in reading or writing. Long-term interest in or enjoyment of aspects of English (e.g., a love of writing or a love of reading) were not sufficient in and of themselves to counter a boring novel, a badly read play, a tedious film, or uninviting creative writing topics. Ainley, Hidi, et al. (2002) also found that high school students' individual interests did not solely determine their engagement with assigned texts.

The students who indicated they were very motivated by particular aspects of an achievement standard tended to be the students who subsequently gained Merits and Excellences. However, this was not always the case. There were a few students who did not enjoy English, had a history of not doing well in English, but who were intrinsically motivated by a particular aspect related to an achievement standard. Conversely, there were students who excelled, but did not identify interest or enjoyment as a significant factor in their motivation to achieve. In some cases it would appear that external regulation, introjected regulation or identified regulation were much more influential. This focus was well-illustrated by Edith's statement in the previous chapter, when she indicated that it was irrelevant whether the film was interesting or not because she was only focused on gaining Excellences. She was also the student who was awarded the greatest number of Excellences in English of all 107 students in this study.

On one hand it is concerning that so few students identified enjoyment or interest as a key factor in their motivation to achieve, as research is overwhelmingly clear that intrinsic motivation enhances the quality of students' learning (e.g., Gottfried, 1985;

Lepper et al., 2005; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). On the other hand, it is logical that many students perceived the need to pass, to avoid failure, or to consider their future career goals, as more important than their enjoyment of or interest in English in relation to their motivation to achieve, given the high-stakes nature of NCEA. In these types of situations Brophy (2010) has argued that “intrinsic motivation will be the exception rather than the rule” (p. 11).

Furthermore, according to Koestner and Losier (2002), intrinsic motivation is essentially a short-term focus on the more immediate experience. To be successful in NCEA requires a long-term focus on acquiring sufficient credits over the year to pass. In addition, rewards, deadlines, and evaluation place students under pressure and can undermine their intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Other findings in this study help explain why intrinsic motivation rarely featured as an important factor influencing students’ motivation to achieve. As noted, previously many students found aspects of English boring. However, of particular concern is that *difficulties with or dislike of aspects of English* was the factor most frequently identified as having a markedly negative impact on students’ motivation to achieve across the four achievement standards. This factor accounted for just over a third of all responses. It also accounted for 12% of the responses in the Final Questionnaire. Such things as students’ dislike of the novel they were studying or the creative writing topic from which they had to select, their difficulty understanding Shakespearean language, and their frustration at not knowing what to study for unfamiliar texts, or how to write a film review, all resulted in a lack of enjoyment, and often left students feeling inadequate or incompetent. While it is unrealistic to assume all students should be or will be intrinsically motivated by everything they are taught (Brophy, 2010), the findings consistently indicate that there is considerable potential for improving students’ intrinsic motivation in English.

Also of note is the difference between the two sets of results coded as intrinsic motivation (3% vs 13%). The fact that far less intrinsic motivation was expressed for English as a school subject overall than for specific achievement standards highlights the fact that examining intrinsic motivation at the subject level (i.e., a global judgement of enjoying English as a school subject) fails to take account of how students’ intrinsic motivation varies across different dimensions of a subject, and therefore does not necessarily provide useful information for teachers. Undertaking an analysis across

different dimensions of a subject is likely to result in a more nuanced understanding of factors influencing students' motivation, as has occurred in this study.

The need to better understand students' motivation across the varied dimensions of a subject domain is also much more critical at senior secondary level, as students' interests become more differentiated with time (Schiefele, 2009), and they are more inclined to build on their academic strengths and interests as they prepare themselves for particular careers (Denissen et al., 2007; Rottinghaus et al., 2003). The diverse range of aspects that students identified as very interesting supports this assertion. With a greater understanding teachers are in a better position to identify more effective approaches to enhance students' enjoyment and interest across the different dimensions of a subject. Most importantly, in enhancing students' intrinsic motivation teachers will be helping to address students' need for competency and helping them accrue the academic benefits that accompany this autonomous form of motivation (e.g., Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Connell, 1989).

7.3.5. Amotivation

Few students (7%) indicated that they were amotivated. This finding is not unexpected, given the implications of failing NCEA, and the fact that the students in this study were in A Stream English. Other studies have also found that relatively few senior secondary school students were amotivated (Gillet et al., 2012; Otis et al., 2005). For all but one amotivated student, failing at least two or three of the achievement standards attempted appears to have been a contributing factor. However, it was not always the only factor (e.g., one student stated that he hated school). It is not clear though whether amotivation led to failure or failure led to amotivation, or whether it was a reciprocal relationship. Nor is it clear whether teachers were aware of these students' amotivation and attempted to find ways to better support them, or alternatively, contributed to their lack of motivation.

There is a need to understand the factors that led students to lack motivation to achieve, as high levels of amotivation have been associated with high school students dropping out (Vallerand et al., 1997). Three of these amotivated students subsequently left school at the end of Year 12 without sufficient literacy credits to gain university entrance. While it is likely that their poor performance in English was not the only factor

influencing that decision, nor necessarily a contributing factor, a motivation has serious consequences at this level for students' life trajectories.

7.4. Role of Significant Others

The focus of this section is on examining the role of parents, peers and teachers as significant factors influencing students' motivation to achieve. Siblings were rarely mentioned by students in this regard. As Martin and Dowson (2009) have stated, "the literature consistently notes the substantial role that relationships play in students' success at school" (p. 327). In particular, there is considerable empirical evidence that supportive relationships enhance students' motivation and achievement (e.g., Guay et al., 2008; Guay & Vallerand, 1997; Hardre & Reeve, 2003; Jang et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 1994).

7.4.1. Teachers

Teachers were perceived by a number of students as playing a significant role in their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English overall. In the Final Questionnaire teachers were the second most frequently identified factor significantly influencing students' motivation. Their role was reported as being more influential by more students than that of parents or peers. These results are not unexpected, given the extensive body of research that highlights the important role teachers play in students' academic motivation (e.g., Brophy, 2010; Hipkins & Hodgen, 2011; Jang et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 1994; Schunk et al., 2014; Stroet et al., 2013; Vallerand et al., 1997; Vansteenkiste et al., 2009; B. Wilson & Corbett, 2007), and in students' academic achievement (Hattie, 2003). Students also identified teachers as being an important influence on their motivation in NCEA in both Meyer, Weir, et al.'s (2009) and Garden's (2012) studies. As in Meyer, Weir, et al.'s (2009) study, a number of students in this study identified their teachers as the most important factor affecting their motivation.

The role teachers played was complex, multi-dimensional, and at times far-reaching. By and large it was positive, but not in all instances. Where students perceived that English teachers had a significantly positive impact on their motivation to achieve they identified teachers as caring, supportive, and encouraging; providing effective feedback and clear explanations; being effective and enthusiastic; preparing them well for an upcoming assessment; conveying to them that they were capable; and willingly going the extra distance for them. Students' responses indicated that teachers supported

their need for competence and their need for relatedness, by caring about them and their progress.

Where students perceived that their English teacher had a significantly negative impact on their motivation to achieve, they identified teachers as providing insufficient support, even when help was requested; offering no encouragement; not giving adequate or timely feedback; devoting insufficient time to preparing them for upcoming assessments; conveying a belief that they were not capable of succeeding; devoting their time to other students in the class; not addressing their individual academic needs; having difficulty managing or engaging the class; and lacking enthusiasm. A few students also perceived that their teacher did not like them or indicated that they did not like their teacher. Where students reported teachers as having a negative impact, students' need for competence and relatedness were clearly thwarted or remained unaddressed.

Those teachers perceived to have a markedly positive impact exhibited a constellation of behaviours valued by students, rather than simply one or two of the behaviours listed above. The reverse was also true of those teachers perceived to have a markedly negative impact. Furthermore, different students' perceptions of the behaviours exhibited by the same teacher were often remarkably similar, regardless of the students' level of academic achievement.

The behaviours exhibited by teachers considered to have had a markedly positive influence were the types of behaviours identified in a range of empirical studies as having a positive influence on students' academic motivation and achievement (e.g., Brophy, 2010; Eggen & Kauchak, 2013; Hattie, 2012; Schunk et al., 2014; Stroet et al., 2013). In particular, these teachers demonstrated a number of the characteristics that have been found to play an important role in secondary school students' perceived competence and autonomy. These include the provision of encouragement, clear instructions and expectations, strong guidance, constructive, informational feedback, and assistance when needed, (e.g., Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Jang et al., 2010; Reeve, Jang, et al., 2004; Sierens et al., 2009; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012).

However, students' responses do not indicate that these teachers necessarily demonstrated all the behaviours associated with autonomy-supportive teachers identified in the literature. This is not entirely surprising given teachers are under

considerable pressure to attain good results and are constrained by numerous requirements, limited resources and time, the curriculum, and heavy workloads (Pelletier et al., 2002).

Some of those key autonomy support behaviours not identified by students include: the provision of choice and optimal challenges; identifying and nurturing their interests and preferences, and helping them appreciate the personal relevance in activities being undertaken (Assor et al., 2002; Deci et al., 1994; Jang, 2008; Reeve, Jang, et al., 2004; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). The absence of the provision of optimal challenges was predictable, given that pre-assigned levels of achievement are an inherent part of NCEA, and thus beyond the teacher's control. Similarly, lack of choice is an inevitable part of the NCEA requirements (e.g., what students are assessed on, and how and when they are assessed). Choice is also somewhat constrained by topics that need to be covered and the limited choice of texts available within secondary school English departments.

In relation to identifying and nurturing students' interests, as discussed previously there is considerable evidence that many aspects of English did not interest students. Although it is not possible for teachers to cater for each student's individual interests within the framework of the NCEA requirements, much more could be done to create situational interest. Moreover, students interviewed in Phase Two advised English teachers to make English more interesting and enjoyable. Lastly, teachers are in a position to promote the relevance of what is being taught, especially in light of research findings which indicate that when students appreciate the relevance of what they are learning, it helps them to become more autonomously motivated and engaged (Assor et al., 2009; Jang, 2008).

In examining the content of students' responses, three aspects of teachers' practices stand out as warranting further discussion: teacher feedback, teacher expectations, and student-teacher relationships.

Sound teacher feedback was highly valued by students. These findings are consistent with findings of other NCEA related studies. Rawlins (2007) found students studying NCEA level 2 Mathematics valued teacher feedback, and Garden (2012) found NCEA level 1 English students valued teacher feedback. The findings are also consistent with Bandura's (1997) assertion that students tend to trust evaluations of their capabilities made by a person who is very knowledgeable about what is required to succeed at a

particular task. In this current study, students especially valued teacher feedback that was timely, task-focused, personalised, detailed, constructive, and included information on how to attain higher grades or avoid failure.

Students' responses indicate that this type of feedback motivated them in several ways. It gave them direction as to where to invest their time and energy, helped them believe they could improve, affirmed their competence, enhanced their sense of self-efficacy, gave them a better understanding of what was being required of them, and gave them a sense that the teacher cared about them and their learning. Such feedback has a positive effect on students' motivation when it helps them to become more competent or to more effectively cope with challenging tasks (Ryan & Brown, 2005). These findings are in keeping with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) conclusion that teacher feedback can be highly effective in promoting students' learning and achievement.

Students were unhappy when they did not receive detailed and timely feedback or advice on how to improve, or when they only received negative feedback. They also resented being misled by teacher feedback, such as being told their trial assessment work was sound but subsequently failing, or being awarded a lower grade than the teacher had led them to believe they would be awarded. In these instances students felt they had been cheated of the opportunity to put in the additional effort needed to attain the grade they wanted to achieve. However, in some instances students' criticism of a lack of teacher feedback in relation to internally assessed achievement standards was perhaps unjustified. In the case of NCEA internal assessments teachers are only permitted to give limited feedback and support to students. In this type of situation teachers are both mentors and assessors, which places them in an invidious position (Crooks, 2011; Harlen, 2005).

With regard to teacher expectations, students reported a variety of ways in which teachers conveyed their academic expectations to them as individuals or to the whole class. Whether these expectations were high or low, conveyed individually or to the class, a number of students appeared to be deeply affected by them. Students' motivation was significantly enhanced when teachers indicated that they were capable of doing well, and that they were competent at English. These positive messages were often conveyed through teacher feedback. In some instances students reported that their teacher's belief in their capabilities and abilities spurred them to try even harder to live up to their teachers' expectations.

On the other hand, a number of students clearly got the message that their teacher did not believe they were capable of succeeding or excelling. These messages varied in the way they were conveyed by teachers. They included teachers making derogatory comments about students' work or abilities, providing only negative feedback, not providing help even when requested, focusing on Achieved or Merit level requirements while ignoring Excellence requirements, not helping students prepare for Merit or Excellence, or suggesting students withdraw from an achievement standard assessment. The finding that a number of students took their teachers' low expectations of them seriously was also reflected in the introjected regulation examples when a number of students wanted to pass to prove their teacher wrong.

These findings highlight that teacher expectations can impact significantly on some students' motivation to achieve, especially a high-stakes assessment context where students' abilities are being regularly assessed. Walkey et al. (2013) found that students who had low or moderate expectations of themselves were at risk of underachieving, failing to achieve NCEA levels 1 and 2, and dropping out. In light of these findings they have argued teachers need to convey high expectations to students. The findings from this study would also support that recommendation, on the proviso that these expectations were accompanied by appropriate support, structure, and guidance. For some students in this study, teacher expectations had a powerful and pervasive effect. Where expectations were high, students were motivated to do their best. Where they were low, they were damaging for those students who were at risk of failing, especially in instances when students believed teachers had given up on them.

The third aspect to be examined is that of student-teacher relationships. A number of students made statements that indicated that they believed they had a positive relationship with their English teacher and that their teacher genuinely cared about them and their academic progress. Teachers were perceived as caring when they gave their time to students, gave them detailed and quality feedback, prepared them well for an upcoming assessment, and encouraged them. Students valued these positive relationships and as a result felt supported in their efforts to achieve. Conversely, some students believed the teacher did not care about them as individuals or did not care about their class. These students did not enjoy English and in some cases this negative relationship detracted from their motivation to achieve.

Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) found a highly significant relationship between students' perceptions of teacher caring, and positive motivation orientations to learning and NCEA. Many other researchers have also found a positive relationship between student-teacher relationships and students' motivation (e.g., Martin & Dowson, 2009; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Rice, Barth, Guadagno, Smith, & McCallum, 2013; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006; Wentzel, 2010). As Reeve (2012) has noted, "to flourish student motivation and student engagement need supportive conditions, especially supportive student-teacher relationships" (p. 152).

7.4.2. Peers

Peers were not perceived by the majority of students as having a significant influence on their motivation to achieve the four specific achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, but they were identified more often than were parents. When peers were perceived to play a significant role, their roles were complex and varied. In some instances peers were used for normative or social comparison purposes, as highlighted in the discussion on introjected regulation. Social status goals appear to have also been influential for some of those students, with students indicating that their desire to excel against friends was to maintain or enhance their academic reputation amongst their peers. Occasionally peers were identified as important because they provided support and encouragement. In a few cases this encouragement was from friends who persuaded students that they were capable of doing well on a particular achievement standard. This verbal persuasion appears to have bolstered students' sense of self-efficacy.

While at times the influence of peers was positive, there was a greater tendency for students to report that peers had a markedly negative influence on their motivation to achieve, particularly in relation to individual achievement standards. Classmates' attitudes and behaviour were sometimes considered problematic. However, it was friends who played an important role in distracting students from learning in class and studying outside class. In some instances these social relationships were not conducive to enhancing students' academic performance. Moreover, students were only too aware that socialising with friends interfered with their academic goals. Such a situation creates motivational conflict for students when they have to decide which goal to pursue when faced with competing goals (Hofer et al., 2007). Most importantly, the findings highlight the fact that for some students the need for relatedness and peer approval appear to be in conflict with their need for competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

For some students, socialising with friends appeared to be a more immediate and desirable goal than concentrating on the academic requirements of the lesson or spending time studying. This situation was more of an issue for those students who found aspects of the Year 12 A Stream English course boring or difficult. These students reported that they tended to socialise in class and/or out of class with others who shared similar attitudes to English or studying. Conversely, those students who were more focused on excelling tended not to identify friends as a significant distraction, suggesting there was a congruence between their academic goal of excelling and their friends' desire to do well academically.

These findings are in line with research that has found that adolescents and their friends tend to have similar attitudes to academic achievement (e.g., Flashman, 2012; Steinberg, 2011; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997). The findings also align with Urdan and Schoenfelder's (2006) review of research findings, which indicated that, "the desire to affiliate with friends and peers can undermine, enhance, or have little effect on motivation and achievement" and that the impact "depends on the academic and motivational orientations of the friends and peers with whom students wish to affiliate" (p. 342).

There are some plausible explanations as to why peers were not perceived by the majority of students as a significant influence on their motivation to achieve. As the findings indicate, the need to pass or the desire to excel and/or avoid failure were perceived as far greater influences in this high-stakes environment because of the significance of these outcomes. Having a standards-based assessment system in place, rather than a norm-referenced system, also may have helped lessen students' focus on competing against their peers for grades.

Another possible explanation arises from the research on resistance to peer pressure. Steinberg and Monahan (2007) found that adolescents' resistance to peer pressure increases linearly between ages 14 and 18, but such growth is not evident between ages 10 and 14, and 18 and 30. Given the age of students in this study, it is possible that many students were able to resist the pressure to spend a great deal of their time socialising. Alternatively, they were more adept at managing multiple goals, and thus did not consider peers to be a significant issue affecting their motivation. As the students in this study were in Year 12 A Stream English, it is also possible that there was a greater concentration of like-minded students in some classes who were focused on passing or excelling. At this age too, many students have internalised the

importance of acting in socially responsible ways and are therefore more willing to comply with behavioural expectations, norms, and values of the classroom (Stipek, 2002; Wentzel, 1989).

Although peers were not perceived by the majority of students as playing an important role in their motivation to achieve the four specific achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, there was considerable evidence across all questionnaires that they did have some influence, and that this was widespread. However, as noted above their influence was not always positive, especially for those who were less engaged in English or found English challenging.

7.4.3. Parents

Beyond wanting to make their parents proud or avoid disappointing them (examples of identified regulation), parents were rarely perceived by most students as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve in English. Where parents were mentioned they were generally considered to be encouraging and supportive. Moreover, parents were not listed as negatively influencing students' motivation for any of the four achievement standards. These results do not suggest that parents had no influence though. Across the various questionnaires large numbers of students indicated that their parents did have some influence on their motivation. For example, a number of students indicated that their parents believed English was an important subject for their future. However, students did not consider their parents to have had a significant influence on their motivation to achieve across the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall.

These results differ from other research findings which indicate that parents play an important role in students' academic motivation at high school, particularly in terms of relatedness and the provision of parental autonomy-support (e.g., Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Gillet et al., 2012; Legault et al., 2006; Niemiec et al., 2006; Ryan et al., 1994; Vallerand et al., 1997). There are a number of possible explanations for why parents were rarely identified as a significant influence by students in this study. One likely explanation is linked to the high-stakes nature of NCEA. Students knew that passing with the necessary literacy credits was a priority and ultimately it was up to them to put in the effort and time. Support for this explanation can be found in the high numbers of students who listed passing or excelling as a very significant motivator.

Another plausible explanation is related to the way parental involvement was assessed. In the studies listed above students were given questionnaires with a series of items focused specifically on parental support. As a questionnaire of that nature was not administered in this study, parental support was not as salient in students' minds. It is also quite possible they took parental support for granted, as it had been present (or absent) throughout their lives, so was not as immediately obvious as other factors.

Another explanation may lie with students' perceptions of the amount of autonomy-support their parents provided. Gillet et al. (2012) found high school students perceived that they received less parental autonomy-support as they grew older. They suggested that there may be a mismatch between students' increased expectations or desire for autonomy-support and the level of support provided by parents. Lastly, it is possible that students had internalised parental values about the importance of English, doing one's best, and succeeding in NCEA. They identified with these values, adopted them as their own and thus no longer saw these as emanating directly from their parents.

7.5. Past Performance, Other Demands, and Gender

In addition to the factors discussed above, *past performance* and *other demands* were also key themes identified in the analysis of students' responses of factors that a number of students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve, particularly across the four achievement standards. Past performance was identified primarily as a positive influence, while other demands were perceived by students to be a negative influence on their motivation. These two themes are discussed in more detail below, along with *gender differences*.

7.5.1. Past Performance

A large number of students identified their *past performance* in trial assessments, mock exams, NCEA level 1 English achievement standards, or English generally, as having a significant influence on their motivation to achieve in English over the four achievement standards. It was the second most frequently identified positive factor across the four achievement standards. Moreover, many students indicated during the year that *getting good or bad marks in English* was very influential in increasing or decreasing their motivation to achieve.

Past performance information appears to have been used by students to motivate them in four different ways. First, for the bulk of students, doing well on a very similar task in the recent past enhanced their sense of self-efficacy and expectancy for success when faced with the summative NCEA assessment task for a particular achievement standard. Second, past performance also provided some students with information about how much work or effort was required to succeed at the level they wanted to reach. Third, for a small group of students, poor performance on recent tasks (e.g., mock exams) was a motivator to put in more effort so that they could avoid failure. Lastly, for a very small number of students, failure in the past, especially repeated failure, was an indicator that they were not likely to succeed and consequently led some to give up.

There was a marked difference in the large number of students who identified past performance as a significant influence across the four achievement standards, compared with the very small number who identified past performance as a significant influence in the Final Questionnaire. As the focus with each of the pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires was on students' motivation to achieve a particular achievement standard, it is understandable that their past performance on a similar task was particularly salient at that point in time and important to them as an indicator of their future performance on that particular achievement standard.

There was also a marked difference between achievement standards, with many more students identifying past performance as important for achievement standards which involved mock exams. This difference was attributable to mock exams that were held for 2.3/2.4 and 2.6, but were not held for 2.1 and 2.2. While students submitted drafts for feedback for internally assessed achievement standards, teachers were not allowed to give specific feedback. Hence, students may have found that they were unable to derive much useful information about their performance from the very general feedback they received. Once again, these differences in results highlight the importance of examining students' motivation across different aspects of a subject domain, rather than just at the general domain level.

As indicated, mock exam results stood out as being particularly valued by students. It is likely that the reason students placed so much weight on these results is because the mock exams are conducted in exam-like conditions, often using questions from previous NCEA exams. The importance of practice exams was also highlighted by students in Putwain's (2009) study. Students clearly valued the information they gained

from these formative assessment events. They used the information to make judgments about their competencies and capabilities, and to identify what they needed to do when faced with the summative assessment. According to Lodewyk and Winne (2005), such events provide students with the opportunity to generate internal feedback about their learning and achievement and this feedback affects their academic self-efficacy. As Bong and Hocevar (2002) noted, “prior successes and failures in a given domain are the major determinants of people’s self-efficacy perceptions in that very domain” (p. 165).

There was also evidence of a cumulative effect of past performance, especially when students had either been very successful or had struggled. Those who had an extensive history of success were clearly confident in their abilities and capabilities. They had attributed their prior successes to ability and effort and were motivated to do well because they knew they were likely to succeed. Evidence suggests that these beliefs helped to direct students’ efforts and enhance their task engagement.

On the other hand, those students who struggled lacked a history of accumulated success. They all had experienced some success in English in NCEA level 1, as this was crucial for entry into Year 12 A Stream English. However, this success was not sufficiently sustained for them to be confident of achieving success in NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. With less guarantee of success, they appeared to be less willing to invest time and effort into English. Instead, some directed their efforts into other subjects in which they believed they would experience more success, or that were personally more important or more interesting for them. There was a strong tendency for these students to attribute their “poorer” performance in English to a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability or other causes. While it is a concern that some of these students may have underachieved, attributions to a lack of effort are likely to be more beneficial in sustaining students’ motivation in the future, than attributions to a lack of ability, assuming these students want to achieve in English in the future (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg, & Ritter, 1997; Weiner, 1985).

Given that nearly all the students in this study expected to pass most of the achievement standards they attempted, it is clear that having aspirations to succeed were not always sufficient to sustain students’ motivation without a firm foundation of success on similar tasks in the past.

7.5.2. Other Demands

A number of students identified *other demands* as having a marked negative impact on their motivation to achieve across the four English achievement standards. Most of these students appeared to have been particularly stressed during the year by NCEA demands across their various school subjects. Putwain (2009) similarly found that senior students in England felt very pressured by coursework and impending certification examinations. A few students also identified work, sporting and/or cultural commitments as negatively affecting their motivation to achieve.

Students in this study knew that to successfully pass NCEA level 2, gain entry to various Year 13 subjects, and achieve future career aspirations, they needed to be competent across a range of subjects, rather than just competent at English. As a consequence students needed to prioritise the various subject demands and decide where to use their limited time and energy, especially when faced with competing deadlines and upcoming examinations. Brophy (2010) has suggested that people tend to give greatest priority to those aspects that are most urgent; that is they are controlled by extrinsic pressures (external regulation). It is only after they have met these urgent demands that they can afford to focus on what interests them. This issue is especially important in the NCEA context where students are dealing with the demands of NCEA on a daily basis. Brophy (2010) also points out that as a result of multiple demands, the resources students might have used to maximise the quality of their accomplishments are diverted to address other goals or demands.

The issue of other demands was not identified, however, in the factors that students considered most significant overall in the Final Questionnaire. This discrepancy is likely to reflect the timing of the questionnaires. At the time students completed most of the pre- and post-achievement standard questionnaires, they were in the midst of the pressures of the academic year or facing their external NCEA examinations, whereas when they completed the Final Questionnaire it was at a time when those pressures had abated. However, these differences highlight the dynamic and contextual nature of students' motivation and the need to examine motivation over time.

7.5.3. Gender Differences

There were no statistically significant differences between male and female students over a range of measures, except a stronger desire by more females than males to pass one achievement standard. Nor were there any notable gender differences in

students' qualitative responses with regard to the factors they deemed most significant in influencing their motivation to achieve, what interested or bored students about English, their valuing of English as a subject, and the importance they placed on passing NCEA level 2 English. Furthermore, while not explicitly asked, a number of boys and girls indicated they enjoyed reading and/or writing. These findings differ from those of Durik et al. (2006). In their study they found that secondary-aged girls valued reading and English more than did the same aged boys. Garden (2012) also found no notable gender differences in her study of students' motivation in relation to NCEA level 1 English. Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009), however, found a small but statistically significant difference with more boys than girls reporting that they wanted to do just enough and more girls than boys reporting they wanted to do their best to pass. They also identified gender differences in students' attributions.

While there were no obvious gender differences in students' motivation as assessed in this study, there was a noticeable gender difference in the number of boys compared with girls in Year 12 A Stream English in both co-educational schools (37.5% vs 62.5%). Clearly more girls than boys passed NCEA level 1 English. However, this significant gender effect had no ongoing influence in level 2 English with both boys and girls reporting similar overall levels of motivation.

7.6. The Nature of Students' Motivation to Achieve

Three previous sections have discussed the individual factors identified by students as significantly influencing their motivation across the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 overall. This section examines the impact of these factors collectively and the nature of students' motivation to achieve in English at a broader level in an effort to more fully answer research Questions 2 and 3.

Students in this study identified a diverse array of factors that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve across the four achievement standards and in the Final Questionnaire. The factors that were most frequently identified as influencing students' motivation in NCEA level 2 English overall in the Final Questionnaire were external regulation, introjected regulation, and teachers. Those factors which were most frequently identified as having a positive influence across all four achievement standards were external regulation, past performance, and introjected regulation, while those factors most frequently identified as having a negative influence on students'

motivation were difficulties with or dislike of aspects of English, other demands, and peers.

While these factors were more frequently identified than others, the ways in which these factors and other factors were perceived by students as influencing their motivation varied between students and across the duration of the study. Each student's motivation was influenced by more than one factor at any point in time and these factors often changed in significance as a consequence of personal, social, and contextual variables. As Urdan and Schoenfelder (2006) have concluded, "academic motivation is multiply determined and reflects a complex interaction of numerous personal and situational factors" (p. 345). Overall, the findings in this study highlight the dynamic, complex, multi-dimensional, and situated nature of students' motivation to achieve in a high-stakes assessment context, as well as highlighting elements of stability. Others too have drawn similar conclusions when examining university students' motivation in real-life contexts (Hartnett, 2010; Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2006).

The dynamic nature of students' motivation was evident in the different factors individual students identified across the four achievement standards and in NCEA level 2 English overall as significantly influencing their motivation. For example, past performance and other demands were considered important factors by a large number of students across the four achievement standards, but not in students' motivation to achieve overall in the Final Questionnaire. Similarly, intrinsic motivation featured across three of the four achievement standards, but barely featured in relation to the unfamiliar texts achievement standard or overall in the Final Questionnaire. The reverse was true for identified regulation. It was somewhat more prevalent in the Final Questionnaire, but rarely featured as a significant factor across the four achievement standards.

At times these variations were attributable to the saliency of personal and/or situational factors, such as the perceived difficulty of an achievement standard. There were also changes occurring in students' levels of motivation, such as students putting in less effort as a result of doing poorly in the mock exams, or students trying harder as a consequence of a teacher's encouragement or a teacher conveying low expectations.

However, while there was considerable evidence of the dynamic nature of students' motivation, there was also evidence of consistency and stability across time in some factors students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve.

These consistencies occurred at an individual level, particularly in relation to those students wanting to gain Merits, Excellences, or certificate endorsements. This goal was repeatedly identified across the questionnaires by the same small number of high achieving students.

Students' motivation to achieve was also complex. Most were regularly contending simultaneously with negative and positive factors. For example, some students were striving to pass, but were struggling to understand the literacy features they needed to use for the unfamiliar texts achievement standard. Students were also dealing with motivational conflict, as they weighed up the importance of an immediate goal, such as socialising with friends, with their long-term goal of passing. In addition, students were pursuing multiple goals simultaneously, such as preparing for an internal assessment in English while trying to meet other demands in other subjects, and at the same time trying to avoid failing so as not to disappoint their parents. Furthermore, students' motivation was affected by both macro- and micro-level factors. For instance, at the macro-level students were very aware of the need to gain the literacy credits to enable them to gain entry to university courses, but at micro-level they were struggling to stay motivated because they hated the novel they were required to read, or were frustrated by a lack of teacher feedback on their creative writing draft.

The multidimensional nature of students' motivation was also evident. Students regularly endorsed more than one type of motivation at any point in time. For example, some students were simultaneously motivated by external reasons (e.g., attaining Excellences), introjected reasons (e.g., wanting to do better than their best friend), identified reasons (e.g., wanting to gain entry into university) and intrinsic reasons (e.g., enjoying the film they were studying). At times, students were simultaneously extrinsically and intrinsically motivated, highlighting the fact that these two types of motivation do co-exist. Hartnett (2010) and Hwang and Vrongistinos (2006) too found both types of motivation co-existing in their studies.

The situated nature of students' motivation has also been prominent throughout this study. Social and contextual variables played an important role in enhancing or diminishing students' motivation to achieve in English. At the task-specific level, students' motivation was affected by their levels of interest in what they were studying, the varied challenges that were inherent in the different assessment requirements, the need to meet the demands of other subjects, and the time they had for study. Students' motivation was socially influenced by their friends' attitudes to English, their goals, and

their behaviours. It was also socially influenced by teachers' expectations, effectiveness, and the level of support that teachers provided. In addition, students' motivation was affected by personal variables, such as their attributions to success or failure on mock exams and other English achievement standards, their sense of self-efficacy in relation to each assessment task, their personal goals, and their needs.

Beyond the importance of recognising the dynamic, complex, multi-dimensional, and situated nature of students' motivation to achieve, two other observations are noteworthy. The first observation relates to what has been termed in the literature as the *Matthew effect* (Stanovich, 1986; Walberg & Tsai, 1983), in which positive achievement outcomes tend to contribute to enhanced motivation and further positive outcomes, while negative achievement outcomes tend to contribute to diminished motivation and further negative outcomes. The findings in this study suggest such a situation existed in relation to some students' motivation to achieve in NCEA level 2 English, particularly those students at either end of the NCEA achievement continuum.

Those students who had a long history of being successful indicated that they were confident about succeeding on similar tasks in the future; they felt more efficacious because of their past successes. They had more affirmations from teachers and peers that they were capable and competent because they had succeeded, and they received more positive feedback as a consequence of doing well. Their accumulating successes in relation to gaining Merits and Excellences then provided them with potentially a greater number of benefits than those peers who achieved less well, and thus they continued to remain motivated to do well. In addition, they tended to have peers who had similar aspirations and so they faced less motivational conflict inside and outside class in relation to socialising with their peers. They had a greater chance of gaining parental approval and feeling proud of their achievements, and those opportunities for ego-enhancement occurred more frequently. They tended to find English easy, so enjoyed it more. Their proximal and future goals and aspirations were more likely to be realised. In these instances, success fostered and enhanced students' motivation, and in turn this enhanced motivation increased students' likelihood of future success. In other words, there was a bi-directional relationship between motivation and achievement (Schunk et al., 2014). Students' need for competency was being effectively addressed, and with competency comes the potential for greater autonomy in their adult lives (e.g., greater choice in university courses and careers).

Unfortunately for those students who struggled to pass NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, the reverse appears to also be true. Those who failed achievement standards early in the year had experienced less success in the past, and thus felt less confident in their abilities. In turn these students felt less efficacious. As a consequence they were less likely to apply effort and thus increased their risk of future failure. Because they found aspects of English more difficult, they gained less enjoyment from English. Doing poorly both in mock exams and summative assessments resulted in less positive feedback and affirmations from significant others, an increased risk of disappointing themselves and their parents, and fewer rewards. Such a situation resulted in some students redirecting their effort and energies or giving up, both of which increased their risk of further failure.

The second observation relates to external and introjected regulation. According to self-determination theory the frequency with which students identified external regulation and introjected regulation as significantly influencing their motivation would suggest that many students felt controlled and pressured in this high-stakes assessment situation (Ryan & Brown, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In fact controlled types of motivation (i.e., external and introjected regulation) were very prevalent in this study, while more autonomous forms of motivation (i.e., identified and intrinsic regulation) were much more rare. These findings are consistent with Gillet et al.'s (2012) finding that senior secondary students' controlled motivation is higher than their autonomous motivation.

As indicated in Section 7.3, external and introjected regulation have been associated with less than optimal academic behaviours and outcomes. While this is likely to be true for a number of students, there were other students who clearly excelled and in some instances appear to have thrived in these conditions. That some of these students excelled on what were considered challenging assessment tasks (i.e., to be awarded Merit or Excellence generally requires students to demonstrate depth of understanding and higher-level thinking skills) can possibly be explained by the fact that external regulation and introjected regulation were never the only types of motivation students identified as being very influential. It is likely that some of the negative effects associated with these two types of controlling motivation may have been lessened by the concurrent presence of more autonomous types of motivation or by other factors such as autonomy support (Ciani, Middleton, Summers, & Sheldon, 2010; Hartnett, 2010). For example, many students valued studying English for its

perceived instrumentality and had career aspirations that were only attainable if they gained their literacy credits and passed NCEA level 2 (i.e., identified regulation).

Studies undertaken by Ratelle et al. (2007) and Wormington et al. (2012) provide some reasons for the decreased impact of more externally controlled types of extrinsic motivation. Both studies found high school students who were high in both autonomous and controlled types of motivation had positive academic outcomes (e.g., high levels of persistence and achievement, low rates of absenteeism, and high levels of cognitive and affective functioning).

Another possible reason why some students' academic performance was not as adversely affected by external regulation or introjected regulation is that gaining Merits and Excellences may have affirmed these students' competence and thus helped sustain their motivation and enhance their self-efficacy. Having their competence affirmed may have offset some of the negative effects of external regulation and introjected regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000c; Schunk et al., 2014).

It is also possible that external regulation and introjected regulation may have had a positive effect on students' motivation to study. In a study undertaken by Elias et al. (2011), students who had higher levels of controlled motivation (i.e., external or introjected regulation) and lower levels of autonomous motivation (i.e., identified and intrinsic regulation) did better in examinations than students who had the reverse pattern. The authors suggested that controlled forms of motivation may have been an important factor in motivating students to study. It could also be argued that endorsing more controlling types of motivation in the short-term enabled students to gain the credentials that allow them to be more autonomous in the long-term. Passing sufficient NCEA English achievement standards provided students with the currency to achieve future goals.

7.7. Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to answer the three research questions concerning students' motivation-related attitudes, the factors students identified as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve in the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, and the ways in which these factors influenced their motivation.

In examining students' motivation-related attitudes in Section 7.2, the discussion highlighted that most students expected to succeed, valued passing the four specific achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall; wanted to do their best in relation to NCEA English standards; valued English mainly for utility value; and did not rate English as their most interesting subject. Most students found some aspects of English interesting, but equally most found some aspects boring. While some of the findings were in keeping with other research findings in the field, there were anomalies in relation to students' competency beliefs and valuing of English. The findings also highlighted the value of focusing on task-related aspirations and examining students' motivation across aspects of English. This latter point was also emphasised in other parts of the discussion in this chapter.

Section 7.3 focused on students' endorsement of the five types of motivation identified in Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation across the four achievement standards and overall. In doing so it contributed to answering research Questions 2 and 3. While each type was discussed individually, it was emphasised that students' motivation to achieve was simultaneously influenced by more than one type of motivation at any given point in time.

External regulation featured as the most frequently identified positive factor across the four achievement standards and the most significant factor overall. The prevalence of this externally controlling type of extrinsic motivation was predictable in this high-stakes certification assessment environment. Students were either focused on gaining their literacy credits for university entrance and/or passing NCEA level 2, or gaining Merits or Excellences. Certificate endorsement was an incentive that only high-achieving students appeared to aim for. External regulation did not appear to have had a markedly detrimental impact on the students who identified external regulation as a significant factor influencing their motivation. Thus these findings were in contrast to theory and much of the empirical research undertaken on external regulation. Nor did it appear to undermine students' intrinsic motivation, as few students revealed they were intrinsically motivated by what they were learning.

Introjected regulation was the second most prevalent type of motivation identified in students' responses, which was to be expected in this high-stakes assessment context. It manifested itself in a range of ways, such as wanting to avoid failure, outperform friends or siblings, please their parents, make themselves proud, or prove to themselves or their teachers that they could pass the English achievement standards.

Introjected regulation did not seem to be unduly detrimental in relation to students' academic outcomes, despite theory and research findings suggesting this type of motivation is likely to have a markedly negative impact.

Identified regulation was rarely identified as an important positive factor across the four achievement standards, but was somewhat more prominent overall. Students' endorsement of this type of motivation was evident in their desire to do well so that they might gain entry into Year 13 A Stream English and/or achieve their career aspirations.

Very few students indicated that they were amotivated across the four achievement standards or overall. Where it was evident, amotivation was accompanied by failure on at least two or three English achievement standards and tended to be associated with students leaving school at the end of Year 12.

Intrinsic motivation for English barely featured as a factor significantly influencing students' motivation in NCEA level 2 English overall. While more prominent across the four achievements standards, many students did not identify intrinsic motivation as a factor that significantly influenced their motivation. This outcome was predictable given the pressure students were under to pass NCEA level 2 and acquire their literacy credits. It was also predictable given the high number of students who identified difficulties with or a dislike of aspects of English as a significant factor that negatively influenced their motivation to achieve across the four achievement standards and the number identifying this factor in the Final Questionnaire.

Section 7.4 examined the impact of significant others in the process of addressing research Questions 2 and 3. Very few students perceived parents as having a significant impact beyond that associated with introjected regulation. Where they did have an impact it was positive. Peers, especially friends, were identified more frequently as having a significant influence, but this was often negative. For the most part they were a distraction in and out of class, especially for those who struggled or disliked aspects of English.

Teachers were perceived by students to play an important and often pivotal role in their motivation. Teachers were ranked as the second most significant influence in NCEA level 2 English overall in terms of frequency, although they were identified much less across the four achievement standards as having a significantly positive or negative

influence. Their influence was also complex and varied. Students' responses highlighted a range of teacher behaviours that they considered influential.

Where teachers had a positive influence these behaviours were typical of need-supportive teaching behaviours that researchers have found enhance students' sense of competence and autonomy and address their need for relatedness (e.g., teachers providing feedback, support, and clear explanations). Three aspects of teachers' practices identified by students as particularly important were teacher feedback, teacher expectations, and student-teacher relationships. Feedback that provided students with useful information was highly valued and enhanced students' motivation in a variety of positive ways. High and low teacher expectations also had an important and pervasive influence. In terms of student-teacher relationships, students responded positively to teachers who appeared to care about them and their progress. Where these relationships were absent or negative, students did not appear to enjoy English, were less willing to apply effort, disliked their teacher, or believed their teacher disliked them.

In Section 7.5, past performance and other demands were examined because a number of students had identified these two factors as having a marked impact on their motivation to achieve across the four achievement standards. However, neither factor featured prominently in relation to students' motivation in NCEA level 2 English overall. Past performance was considered a positive factor, while other demands was considered a negative factor. Past performance influenced students' self-efficacy and expectations for success. Mock exam results were singled out as playing a crucial role in students' sense of self-efficacy. However, also significant was each student's history of past successes or failures. With regard to other demands, a number of students' motivation to achieve in English was negatively affected by the quantity of work in other subjects and the multiple pressures they faced trying to be competent across all their subjects. A few students' motivation in English was also affected by work, sporting or cultural commitments.

In terms of gender, there were no obvious gender differences evident in the quantitative or qualitative data, except in students' motivation to do well in one achievement standard. However, the numbers of boys compared with girls who were in A Stream English was raised as an issue.

In Section 7.6, four other key points of note were raised in relation to research Questions 2 and 3. The first point relates to the *Matthew effect*, with a bi-directional relationship especially evident in the motivation and achievement of high and low achievers. The second point relates to the issue of the negative impact of external and introjected regulation in relation to students' academic behaviours and outcomes. A large number of students identified one or both of these types of motivation as having a significant influence on their motivation, yet a number of these students' academic outcomes did not seem to be adversely affected by these types of motivation. A variety of possible explanations were provided for this finding.

The third point of note was the importance of examining students' motivation across aspects of English or at the individual achievement standard level, as well as at the more general subject level. Much more nuanced and useful information about students' motivation was found as a consequence. The last and perhaps most important point highlighted in this study is the complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and situated nature of students' motivation to achieve the four achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall.

Chapter 8.

Conclusions

8.1. Introduction

This study arose out of a concern for secondary students' life chances being potentially limited by their performance in high-stakes certification assessment. As outlined in Chapter One, evidence clearly points to the importance of individuals leaving school with school qualifications. The benefits to individuals and society are significant (Ministry of Education, 2012a; OECD, 2013). While a number of factors can affect students' performance in high-stakes certification assessment, motivation has been identified as a key factor (Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009).

To this end, this study sought to examine students' motivation in a high-stakes assessment context. In particular it aimed to identify what factors Year 12 students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve in NCEA level 2 English, and to examine how those factors influenced their motivation.

A person-in-context approach was employed in this study in recognition that personal, social, and contextual factors all played an important role in students' motivation to achieve. Students' motivation was examined primarily through the lens of self-determination theory, although a range of other motivation theories and constructs were drawn on when their explanatory power was considered important. A mixed methods research methodology was employed in the belief that a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was most useful in answering the research questions posed in this study.

This chapter details the conclusions reached from the analysis and synthesis of data from 107 students' questionnaire responses in Phase One and 16 students' interview and questionnaire responses in Phase Two. The ways in which this study has contributed to knowledge are then explained, followed by implications for practice for teachers, schools, and researchers. Finally, the limitations of the study are outlined and suggestions are made for future research.

8.2. Research Conclusions

This study began by examining students' motivation-related attitudes in order to answer research Question 1. This question focused on students' expectations for success in NCEA level 2 English, whether they valued English and passing NCEA level 2 English, and their interest in English.

The research findings indicated that most of the Year 12 students expected to pass the NCEA level 2 English achievement standards they attempted and most possessed moderate to high levels of self-efficacy in relation to specific English achievement standards. Past performance also played an important role in students' judgments about their capabilities to succeed.

Nearly all the students valued passing a number of English achievement standards and wanted to do so for extrinsic reasons. In addition, most students also wanted to do their best rather than just enough to pass. Students also valued English as a subject, primarily because of its perceived usefulness in the achievement of career goals and/or in everyday living. Identified regulation was prevalent in relation to students' valuing of English and there was evidence that many students had adopted a future time perspective.

While English was valued by most students, it was rarely identified as one of their most interesting subjects. However, while many students found some aspects of English interesting, only about a third of students could identify two aspects of English they found very interesting. Large numbers of students also found aspects of English boring. The findings indicate that, although there was not a widespread dislike of or lack of interest in English, there was also not a widespread interest in English. These results help explain why very few students found English intrinsically motivating overall, and why a number indicated that they disliked aspects of English when identifying factors that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards or NCEA level 2 English overall. Gender differences in students' motivation were not apparent in relation to students' motivation-related attitudes.

Of particular importance in this study were the various factors students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve specific NCEA level 2 English

achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, and how these factors influenced their motivation, as encapsulated in research Questions 2 and 3.

The examination of the factors students identified as significant highlighted the dynamic, complex, multidimensional, and situated nature of students' motivation to achieve in this high-stakes certification context. Students identified both positive and negative factors that influenced their motivation to achieve. They often needed to overcome the negative factors to be motivated to achieve. Some factors identified were global or macro-level factors, while others were task-specific or micro-level factors. Students' motivation was simultaneously influenced by more than one factor at any point in time, often reflected in different types of motivation (e.g., introjected regulation and intrinsic motivation). As a result of their motivation being influenced by a variety of factors, some students experienced motivational conflict in deciding where to invest their time and energy. In other instances those factors worked together in an additive manner to enhance or decrease students' motivation, with *Matthew effects* being clearly evident for the high and low achievers' motivation in English.

Students' motivation was particularly influenced by the high-stakes certification assessment environment in which students were operating. Rewards for success, serious repercussions for repeated failure, and multiple assessment demands were an inherent part of this environment. It was an environment in which students were acutely aware of the importance of passing or excelling in NCEA level 2 English, gaining the necessary literacy credits for university entrance, and avoiding failure.

The following three subsections summarise the particular factors which students perceived as playing a significant role in their motivation to achieve specific NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and NCEA level 2 English overall, and the ways in which students perceived these factors as influencing their motivation to achieve. In doing so, they address research Questions 2 and 3.

8.2.1. Different Types of Motivation

Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation, was used to identify five different types of motivation that were evident to a greater or lesser degree in the analysis of students' responses, and to examine the implications of these different types of motivation.

External regulation was the most frequently identified factor evident in students' responses across the four NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and NCEA English overall. This result was predictable, given that pressure, rewards, deadlines, and sanctions are an inevitable part of a high-stakes assessment environment. Students were primarily motivated to pass NCEA level 2 and gain the necessary literacy credits for university entrance. A smaller number were motivated to gain Merits or Excellences, particularly in anticipation of gaining certificate endorsement, which brought with it a number of associated benefits. These students tended to be those who subsequently achieved these higher grades, reflecting their past successes and self-efficacy beliefs.

What was less predictable was the fact that external regulation did not appear to have a markedly detrimental impact on a number of students' achievement, as would have been expected on the basis of self-determination theory and empirical findings (e.g., Crooks, 1988; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Vallerand et al., 1993; Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). A number of these externally regulated students excelled. Possible reasons for the limited negative impact of external regulation on some students' achievement included the coexistence of other, more autonomous forms of motivation (Ratelle et al., 2007; Wormington et al., 2012); holding a future time perspective (Lens et al., 2002); the buffering effects of autonomy support from significant others (Ciani et al., 2010); more controlled forms of motivation helping students engage in study (Elias et al., 2011); and the attainment of Merits and Excellences which addressed students' need for competence.

The issue of extrinsic motivation (i.e., external regulation) undermining intrinsic motivation was not evident (Deci et al., 1999), as few students were intrinsically motivated by what they studied in English. However, in the absence of intrinsic motivation, external regulation may have helped sustain students' motivation when they were required to undertake uninteresting or difficult tasks (Harter, 1981; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). It is possible that this was an adaptive rather than maladaptive response in this context (Ratelle et al., 2007; Wormington et al., 2012).

Introjected regulation was ranked as the third most influential factor across the four achievement standards and for NCEA level 2 English overall (the role of teachers was second for English overall). This finding was not unexpected in light of the high-stakes assessment context and other research findings (Assor et al., 2009; Putwain, 2009; Urdan & Mestas, 2006). Introjected regulation manifested itself in two key ways: some

students were concerned about failing or avoiding failure, while the majority were motivated for ego-enhancement reasons. While self-determination theory and research findings indicate that introjected regulation negatively impacts on students' motivation and achievement (Assor et al., 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Connell, 1989), findings from this study suggest that a number of students' motivation and achievement were not adversely affected by the presence of this type of extrinsic motivation. The possible reasons for the absence of markedly negative effects reflect those outlined above for external regulation.

Identified regulation was rarely highlighted as a significant factor across the four NCEA level 2 English achievement standards, although identified regulation was endorsed by a few more students in English overall. However, when specifically asked most students had indicated they valued English for helping them to achieve their career aspirations and for its everyday usefulness. It is possible that internalising the importance of English may have had some impact on students' motivation overall.

An extremely small number of students identified enjoying English as a factor that significantly influenced their motivation to achieve English overall. However, a slightly larger number of students identified a variety of intrinsic factors that significantly influenced their motivation in relation to the four English achievement standards.

The small number of students who listed identified regulation and intrinsic reasons as significant is noteworthy, given self-determination theory and empirical findings indicate that these more autonomous types of motivation have well documented benefits for students' motivation and achievement (e.g., Assor et al., 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Doron et al., 2011; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Hardre & Reeve, 2003; Koestner & Losier, 2002; Lepper et al., 2005; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). On the other hand, the small numbers endorsing these two more autonomous types of motivation are not surprising given the high-stakes assessment context.

Instances of amotivation were rare, which was in keeping with other research findings (Gillet et al., 2012; Otis et al., 2005). However, three of the five students reporting this type of motivation subsequently left school at the end of Year 12 without their literacy credits.

In sum, only two types of motivation were identified as having a significant influence for most students across the four specific English achievement standards and NCEA level

2 English overall. These were external and introjected regulation, with the former being the most commonly identified factor. Contrary to theory and empirical research, most students' achievement did not appear to be adversely affected by these two controlling types of motivation.

8.2.2. Role of Significant Others

Teachers were identified as the second most influential factor in students' motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English overall, although fewer students identified teachers as a significant influence across the four specific achievement standards. Their influence was perceived as positive by many students and negative by a small number of students.

Those teachers who were perceived as having a positive impact tended to exhibit a number of behaviours that have been classified in the research literature as need-supportive teaching behaviours (i.e., autonomy support, structure, and relatedness) (e.g., Jang et al., 2010; Stroet et al., 2013; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). Evidence from students' responses indicates that where teachers had a positive influence they tended to address students' need for competence, and relatedness, but not necessarily their need for autonomy. Those who had a negative impact were perceived as not exhibiting need-supportive teaching behaviours. In the process these teachers appear to have failed to adequately address students' need for competence and relatedness.

Teachers were identified as having a particularly significant impact through their feedback, expectations, and relationships with students. Teacher feedback was highly valued by many students when it affirmed their abilities, provided direction for the future, and enhanced their sense of self-efficacy. Students resented a lack of feedback, receiving only negative feedback, or being given misleading feedback.

With regard to teacher expectations, the findings indicate that teacher expectations had a powerful and pervasive influence on a number of students' motivation to achieve. Students were much more motivated to achieve when they perceived teachers had high expectations of them. Those who perceived their teacher had low academic expectations of them were motivated either to prove their teacher wrong or to apply less effort in the belief that they were not capable of succeeding.

In terms of relationships with students, the degree to which teachers addressed students' need for relatedness impacted on students' motivation. Positive student-teacher relationships appear to have enhanced students' motivation to achieve, while negative student-teacher relationships were often associated with students not enjoying English and applying less effort.

Peers, especially friends, were not identified by large numbers of students as having a significant role in their motivation to achieve the four specific achievement standards or NCEA level 2 English overall. They clearly had an impact on some students' motivation, however. When peers were identified as a significant factor, their impact was complex and varied. For some students, peers were people to compete against academically, reflecting both introjection and a performance-approach goal orientation. Occasionally peers were identified as supportive and encouraging. However, peers were mainly perceived as having a significantly negative influence on students' motivation to achieve, because they were a distraction both inside and outside class. Students who struggled with English tended to be more adversely affected by their friends, whom they reported as also feeling negative about English. In these instances, the need for relatedness appeared to be in conflict with students' need for competence.

Although parents were often identified as influential in relation to introjected regulation, very few students identified parents as significantly influencing their motivation outside this context, either in the motivation to achieve the four specific achievement standards or NCEA level 2 English overall. References to siblings were very rare.

In summary, of the significant others who were assumed to play a significant role in students' motivation to achieve in NCEA English, only teachers were identified as having a marked influence on many students' motivation to achieve. Where this influence was perceived as positive the teachers appeared to exhibit a number of the behaviours described in the literature as need-supportive. The quantity and quality of teacher feedback, high or low teacher expectations, and positive or negative student-teacher relationships were identified as being particularly influential.

8.2.3. Past Performance, Dislike of or Difficulties with English, and Other Demands

Past performance, dislike of or difficulties with aspects of English, and other demands were three other factors identified by a large number of students as having a significant

influence. However, their influence was primarily confined to students' motivation across the four achievement standards, rather than being perceived as significant by large numbers of students in NCEA level 2 English overall.

Past performance was identified as the second most significant factor positively influencing students' motivation across the four achievement standards, with external regulation being the most influential factor as detailed above. Past performance was especially significant for those students who had a history of success in English, NCEA level 1 English standards, trial assessments, and mock exams. Consistently achieving success appears to have enhanced students' self-efficacy, whereas the reverse appears to be true for those who had a more erratic or limited history of success. Mock exam results were singled out by students as being particularly important. They appear to have had a marked influence on students' levels of self-efficacy and expectations for success. In addition, mock exam results helped students identify where they needed to direct their efforts and how much effort they needed to apply to achieve the results they wanted or expected. In a few cases, a lack of success in the mock exams led students to give up.

Dislike of or difficulties with aspects of English was the factor identified most often by students as having a significantly negative influence on their motivation to achieve across the four English achievement standards. The aspects students identified as causing them difficulties or that they disliked varied markedly. Other demands, especially from other school subjects, were also perceived as having a significantly negative influence on a number of students' motivation to achieve in English. Their need to be competent across a number of subjects resulted in some students indicating they were stressed by the various demands they faced.

8.3. Contribution to Knowledge

In examining students' motivation to achieve in a high-stakes certification assessment, the findings from this study make a number of contributions to knowledge in relation to theory, research, and practice; the details of which are discussed in the following subsections.

8.3.1. Students' Motivation in High-Stakes Certification Assessment

This study sought to contribute to a range of areas in which researchers had identified that there was a dearth of literature, with its focus on authentic academic tasks (Covington, 2002; Schunk et al., 2014), senior secondary students' perceptions of the impact of high-stakes certification assessment on their motivation (Carr et al., 2005; Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2002; B. D. Jones, 2007), students' motivation in standards-based (criterion-referenced) high-stakes assessment (Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009), motivation in English and high-stakes assessment of English (Anagnostopoulos, 2003; Garden, 2012; B. A. Greene et al., 2004; Murphy & Alexander, 2000), and motivation over an extended period of time (Pintrich, 2003).

A particularly important contribution of this study is that it demonstrated that students' motivation in high-stakes certification assessment is complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and situated. Others have reached similar conclusions in other areas of education (e.g., Guay et al., 2008; Hartnett, 2010; Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2006; J. C. Turner & Patrick, 2008). However, the few studies undertaken in high-stakes certification assessment have not captured the varied nature of students' motivation to achieve to the same degree.

The findings of this longitudinal study provide a much more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the factors significantly influencing students' motivation than has been evident in other studies in the area of high-stakes certification assessment. In particular, the findings have revealed the wide range of personal, social, and contextual factors that have impacted on and influenced students' motivation to achieve, and in doing so has highlighted the importance of employing a person-in-context approach when studying students' motivation in real life settings. Furthermore, the study confirms the bi-directional relationship between motivation and achievement (Schunk et al., 2014). The findings also demonstrated that there were *Matthew effects* in relation to high and low achievers' motivation in this study. While *Matthew effects* have been found in other areas of education (Stanovich, 1986; Walberg & Tsai, 1983), they do not appear to have been specifically identified with regard to high-stakes certification assessment.

Findings from this study highlight the significant role that context plays in students' motivation, especially in an environment in which students' attention is primarily focused on extrinsic factors inherent within the high-stakes assessment context (e.g.,

rewards, pressure to pass and to avoid failure). This finding provides further confirmation that students' motivation is shaped by the policies, structures, and practices associated with high-stakes assessment (e.g., Crooks, 1988; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009; Ryan & Brown, 2005; Zepke et al., 2006), while providing evidence of how students' motivation was specifically shaped by the NCEA context.

Another important contribution of this study is that it demonstrated that there is significant value in examining students' academic motivation at both a subject domain level and across aspects of a subject domain; in this instance the more macro-level of English as a subject, and at the more micro-level of individual achievement standards and aspects of the Year 12 A Stream English programme. Examining only one or other would not have captured the significance or variability of some factors, such as the importance students placed on mock exams for two of the four achievement standards, or what particularly interested or bored students across the different achievement standards. The importance of examining students' motivation at a domain level and across aspects of a domain supports Järvelä et al.'s (2010) and J. C. Turner and Patrick's (2008) conclusion that different levels of a context need to be considered when seeking to understand the complexity of the macro- and micro-level influences on students' motivation. Furthermore, this study supports Walkey et al.'s (2013) argument about the importance of focusing on students' motivation in relation to specific tasks, rather than students' motivation in general, in order to gain a more accurate account of students' motivation to achieve.

At a more specific level, this study confirmed that most students were extrinsically motivated in this high-stakes assessment context; in particular, by the two most controlling forms of extrinsic motivation. Although this finding is not surprising given the nature of high-stakes certification assessment, it is not a finding that has been strongly articulated in other studies on this topic, especially in relation to NCEA. However, another significant finding was that a number of students' achievement did not appear to be adversely affected by external or introjected regulation. This finding differed from what would have been predicted on the basis of self-determination theory and much empirical research (e.g., Assor et al., 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Vallerand et al., 1993; Vansteenkiste et al., 2009).

An equally important finding was that most students were not highly motivated by intrinsic factors in NCEA English. This finding is in line with international evidence that older adolescents' intrinsic motivation in academic subjects is low (e.g., Gottfried et al.,

2001; Hidi, 2000; Jacobs et al., 2002; Krapp, 2002; Watt, 2004). The fact that controlling forms of extrinsic motivation (i.e., external and introjected regulation) were much more prevalent in this study than more autonomous forms of motivation (i.e., identified and intrinsic regulation) lends weight to Gillet et al.'s (2012) finding that senior secondary students' controlled motivation is higher than their autonomous motivation.

The study also revealed that most of the students believed they were sufficiently competent in English to pass or excel in NCEA level 2 English achievement standards and that most valued English for extrinsic reasons, in particular its utility value, which is linked to identified regulation and future time perspective. Their competency beliefs and their valuing of English for identified regulation reasons may have acted as a buffer against the more negative effects of external regulation. These findings differed markedly from those of Jacobs et al. (2002) and Watt (2004). Their studies revealed that competency beliefs in English and valuing of English were low amongst Grade 11 and 12 students. However, it is possible that the findings in this study differed because of the academic abilities of the participants and the emphasis placed on the importance of English in NCEA.

Of particular importance was the fact that this study confirmed that teachers play a significant role in students' motivation to achieve. On one hand, this finding adds to the already large body of empirical research that has identified the important role teachers play in relation to students' motivation in academic settings (e.g., Brophy, 2010; Hattie, 2003; Jang et al., 2010; Schunk et al., 2014; Stroet et al., 2013). On the other hand, it makes a worthy contribution to the limited body of empirical research on students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment, by identifying the variety of ways in which teachers positively and negatively impact on students' motivation in this assessment context.

In particular, the findings confirmed that a range of behaviours associated with need-supportive teaching had a significantly positive influence on students' motivation in this high-stakes assessment context. These findings highlighted the importance students placed on teacher feedback, teacher expectations, and the role of student-teacher relationships in their motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment. Moreover, the study identified the variety of ways these three key teacher behaviours or their absence influenced students' motivation in this context. These findings add to the growing body of empirical research into the benefits of need-supportive teaching (Jang et al., 2010; Stroet et al., 2013; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004), teacher feedback

(e.g., Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Rawlins, 2007), and student-teacher relationships (e.g., Martin & Dowson, 2009; Reeve, 2012; Rice et al., 2013), while adding to the limited body of empirical research on the impact of teacher expectations on older adolescents.

While this study confirmed that teachers were perceived as playing an important role in students' motivation to achieve, it also confirmed that parents were not perceived as playing a significant role by many students. This finding differs from those of a number of international studies in which parents were perceived to be as influential or more influential than teachers, especially in terms of providing autonomy support (e.g., Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Gillet et al., 2012; Legault et al., 2006; Vallerand et al., 1997). A range of plausible explanations have been suggested for this divergent finding.

8.3.2. Students' Motivation in NCEA Level 2 English

This study has made a particularly important contribution in relation to NCEA by providing detailed insights into students' motivation to achieve in this high-stakes assessment context. The findings have added to and further fleshed out the knowledge generated by the small number of studies undertaken to date on students' motivation in NCEA (e.g., Garden, 2012; Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). This study makes a unique contribution in this area, given that no other studies appear to have specifically examined students' motivation in NCEA level 2 English and examined students' motivation in NCEA within and across a subject domain over an extended period of time.

In addition to the contributions outlined in the previous subsection (e.g., the complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and situated nature of students' motivation, and the impact of the high-stakes assessment context on students' motivation), the findings reveal that there were a wide variety of factors that students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation to achieve in NCEA, especially in level 2 English. While a number of these factors were identified in the other studies on students' motivation in NCEA (e.g., teacher effectiveness and the importance of career goals), their impact and their relative significance were not previously examined. This study also identified additional factors that had not been found in earlier studies, such as the importance of introjected regulation and the range of introjected regulation reasons students listed as impacting on their motivation to achieve in NCEA.

This study supports Meyer, Weir, et al.'s (2009) finding that students are motivated by certificate endorsements, while identifying in more detail why students were motivated to gain certificate endorsements. However, it also highlighted that only the students who believed that they are very capable tended to strive to excel or gain certificate endorsements. This finding endorses the widely held belief that incentivising NCEA enhances the motivation of able students (Hipkins, 2010, 2013; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2007). The finding that many students did not believe they were capable of achieving at the highest levels in NCEA level 2 English also adds to Garden's (2012) finding that many students did not believe they were capable of attaining Excellence in NCEA level 1 English.

While Meyer, Weir, et al. (2009) found that *doing my best* or *doing just enough* at a general level were strong predictors of students' NCEA outcomes, this study found that *doing my best* or *doing just enough* were not particularly sound predictors of students' academic achievements on individual achievement standards. Of note though, *doing my best* and *doing just enough* were assessed using different measures in each of these studies.

In detailing a range of factors influencing students' interest in or enjoyment of English, this study confirms and expands on Garden's (2012) finding that English was not students' favourite subject and that students often did not enjoy English. This study identified aspects of English that students did or did not enjoy, or find interesting, thus providing useful insights for English teachers.

8.3.3. Self-Determination Theory as a Theoretical Framework

This study demonstrated that self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000a) is a useful framework for examining the complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and situated nature of students' motivation in high-stakes certification assessment. This is an important finding, as no other studies located in the area of high-stakes certification assessment have employed self-determination theory as an overarching theoretical framework. Furthermore, this study confirmed that self-determination theory can be effectively employed to analyse students' open-ended responses.

In particular, this study has demonstrated and further confirmed the explanatory power of Ryan and Deci's (2000a) taxonomy of human motivation to differentiate between the

three different types of extrinsic motivation: external, introjected, and identified regulation. The ability to differentiate between these three types of extrinsic motivation provided a more nuanced and richer understanding of the factors influencing students' motivation to achieve. The distinction between external regulation and introjected regulation was particularly important in revealing the fact that many students were externally controlled by their perceived need or desire to pass NCEA English, while a number of others were motivated for ego-enhancement reasons, to gain others' approval, or to avoid failure.

However, using the construct of *integrated regulation* as a classification category for extrinsic motivation was not appropriate in this study, because of the difficulty in differentiating between identified and integrated regulation, especially when undertaking research with adolescent participants. This is an issue that has been encountered by other researchers (de Bilde et al., 2011; Lavigne & Vallerand, 2010; Ratelle et al., 2007; Reeve et al., 2002). A number of other researchers using self-determination theory as a theoretical framework to examine different types of motivation also appear to have elected not to focus on integrated regulation *per se*, despite often discussing this type of extrinsic motivation in their review of the literature (e.g., Boiché, Sarrazin, Grouzet, Pelletier, & Chanal, 2008; Otis et al., 2005; Sénécal, Julien, & Guay, 2003; Shih, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). Their decision not to use integrated regulation was not articulated, but it is possible that these researchers recognised difficulties in differentiating between identified and integrated regulation and/or recognised that integrated regulation may be less applicable to the population being studied.

Drawing on the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000a) also added an important dimension to the examination of students' motivation, particularly the need for competence and for relatedness. Furthermore, self-determination theory proved useful in explaining how significant others often influenced students' motivation to achieve in this high-stakes assessment context. The concepts of autonomy support, structure, and relatedness were especially useful lenses for examining and explaining the impact of teachers on students' motivation.

8.4. Implications for Practice

As indicated in Chapter Three, this study is underpinned by pragmatist beliefs. As a consequence, finding workable solutions to practical real-world problems is of critical importance (Cohen et al., 2011). This study's findings have highlighted a number of issues that in turn have implications for teachers, schools, and researchers.

8.4.1. Implications for Teachers and Schools

The findings from this study suggest that there are many things that teachers and schools can do to enhance students' motivation. The following suggestions are aimed at addressing students' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in order that students will feel more self-determined and thus motivated to achieve. However, these suggestions are made fully cognisant of the fact that teachers and schools are constrained and controlled by many factors that they are not in a position to change (Pelletier et al., 2002), and an awareness that teachers and schools cannot be held accountable for all aspects of students' motivation (Hufton, Elliott, & Illushin, 2002).

While students valued English for identified regulation reasons (e.g., for their future career aspirations), identified regulation and a future time perspective were not perceived by many students to have a significant influence on their motivation to achieve in NCEA level 2 English. Given both have been found to play an important role in enhancing students' sense of autonomy, academic behaviours, and academic outcomes (e.g., Assor et al., 2009; de Bilde et al., 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Simons et al., 2004), teachers and schools are advised to find ways to increase students' identified regulation and future time perspective. This is not a new recommendation. Brophy (2008) has argued strongly for teachers to help students appreciate the relevance and value of what they are being taught. In studies undertaken by Meyer et al. (2007) and Wylie (2011), New Zealand secondary students and ex-students stressed the need for more information about how their secondary study linked to career goals.

In particular, it is suggested that more is done to ensure students are provided with timely and suitable career guidance, and are fully conversant how their school subjects and NCEA achievements will enable them to achieve their career aspirations. In addition, it is recommended that schools ensure students are fully aware of the

opportunities that are available to them as a consequence of gaining high numbers of Merits and Excellences. In helping students appreciate the potential benefits of doing well in NCEA, schools will be helping to promote identified regulation, which in turn has been found to have positive benefits for students' academic performance. It is also recommended that English teachers take more time to highlight the relevance of what is being studied in class and how current activities are instrumental in achieving future career goals and/or how what is being studied might be useful in their future lives.

Also highlighted in this study were the low levels of interest and intrinsic motivation experienced by students in relation to a number of aspects of English, which affected their engagement and enjoyment. As previously stated there is no assumption that all students will be interested in or enjoy every aspect of English. However, interest and intrinsic motivation have a number of well documented academic benefits, and can result in an increased sense of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hidi & Ainley, 2008; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Schunk et al., 2014). There is clearly much more teachers could do to make more aspects of English interesting and enjoyable for more students. This was also a recommendation from a number of students interviewed in Phase Two.

Some of the issues pertaining to lack of enjoyment or interest identified by students related to the resources used, such as "old" or boring novels and uninteresting short stories. No film or text will be perceived as interesting or engaging by all students, but texts could be identified that engage more rather than fewer students. Students could be surveyed on whether they enjoyed particular texts. This information could be used at a department level to inform the decisions made about the texts selected for classes the following year. A student consultancy group could also be set up to help select new texts that might be purchased when departmental funds permit.

Furthermore, teachers might consider alternative ways that they can engage students' interest in texts selected for close examination. By fostering situational interest there is a chance students may develop sustained interest (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Students cited some examples in their responses of teachers doing precisely that (e.g., making links between a film and historical events). As would be expected, advice and ideas on how to make texts more engaging can come from colleagues, research articles (e.g., Ainley, Hillman, et al., 2002; Ash, 1992; Comer, 2011) and websites, such as English online (<http://englishonline.tki.org.nz>). However, feedback from students

would also be a valuable source of information on the effectiveness of the strategies employed to foster engagement and interest.

Another issue raised by students was the way certain texts were taught. Forcing avid readers to listen to texts being read slowly and badly in class could be avoided with some care and thought. Students could be surveyed to establish how they wished to undertake the study of a novel or a play (e.g., reading aloud, reading silently, reading assigned segments at home), thus providing students with a sense of autonomy. A decision could be made on the basis of the results of the survey. Alternatively, teachers might consider reading the material aloud themselves or selecting competent readers to read the material aloud.

Some students also complained of endlessly going over the same things and losing interest in the process. Again a simple survey to establish students' levels of confidence with content and assessment procedures, coupled with students' trial assessment results, should provide direction on the degree to which repetition or further teaching are needed.

As noted, teachers played a pivotal role in a number of students' motivation to achieve in this study. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on specific teaching behaviours students identified as positively influencing their motivation. These include: being enthusiastic, providing clear notes and explanations, preparing students well for an upcoming assessment, addressing individual needs, managing the class effectively so that teaching and learning can occur, giving constructive feedback, holding high expectations, affirming students' capabilities, and caring about the student and his or her achievement. As noted in the previous chapter, researchers have consistently found these particular teacher behaviours promote student motivation and achievement, particularly their sense of competency, autonomy, and relatedness (e.g., Brophy, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eggen & Kauchak, 2013; Hattie, 2012; Reeve, Jang, et al., 2004; Schunk et al., 2014; Sierens et al., 2009; Stroet et al., 2013; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012).

Of particular concern were teacher behaviours that students identified as negatively impacting on their motivation to achieve. Soundly constructed surveys that enable students to evaluate the quality of teaching they receive could be undertaken to identify those teachers who have a markedly negative impact on a number of students. While studies have found that the student evaluations at tertiary level can provide very

reliable and useful information, such evaluations are rarely used in secondary schools (Brown, Irving, & Keegan, 2008). However, in this study there was clear and consistent evidence that students were able to identify a range of teacher behaviours that they considered effective and ineffective, and articulate these appropriately. Where teachers are found to have a consistently negative impact on a number of students, professional support could then be provided to increase teachers' effectiveness. This support would need to be constructive and non-punitive if it was to result in ineffective teaching behaviours being addressed. On the other hand, positive feedback could help identify those teaching behaviours that students believed positively impacted on their motivation and learning, thereby encouraging teachers to continue to engage in those behaviours which were valued by students.

Also emphasised in the previous chapter were three key areas in which teachers appeared to have had a very marked impact on students' motivation: teacher expectations, teacher feedback and student-teacher relationships. Each of these has implications for teachers. They are also interconnected. For example, in this study teacher expectations were often conveyed through teacher feedback and student-teacher interactions. Students also perceived teachers who took the time to give detailed and constructive feedback to be caring.

In relation to teacher expectations, a number of students in this study were clearly affected by what they perceived to be high or low teacher expectations. While a number of students strove to meet what they perceived to be high teacher expectations and valued teacher feedback that confirmed that their teachers believed that they were capable of achieving well in English, a number were also deeply affected by what they perceived to be low teacher expectations. These latter students were particularly affected by teachers' derisive laughter at their work, derogatory comments about their capabilities or their work, statements made by teachers that they or the class were incapable of succeeding, negative feedback on their work, a lack of help, and teachers only focusing on Achieved and Merit criteria and exemplars for NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. In instances where teachers only focused on Achieved or Merit exemplars students believed that teachers did not think that they were capable of achieving an Excellence grade. Furthermore, in not focusing on Excellence exemplars students were being denied the opportunity to be appropriately prepared to excel.

It is recommended that teachers consider their own behaviours in light of these findings, and findings from Good and Brophy's (2008) research. Good and Brophy

found that teachers primarily conveyed their differential expectations in four ways: the emotional support they provided, the nature of their interactions with students (e.g., being more enthusiastic and thorough when working with students for whom they held high expectations), the way they questioned students, and the quality and quantity of feedback provided.

It is important teachers scrutinise their behaviours so that they might appreciate how they might convey higher expectations, as positive teacher expectations have been consistently linked to improvements in academic outcomes (Brophy, 2006; Stipek, 2002). This is not to suggest that teachers should embark on transmitting artificially high or unrealistic expectations. Instead it is recommended that they transmit positive, but attainable expectations (Martin & Dowson, 2009), and hold an incremental (malleable) view of students' abilities, rather than an entity (fixed) view (Rattan, Good, & Dweck, 2012). Challenging students academically and encouraging them to strive for higher grades conveys a message that the teacher believes that they are capable of achieving at a higher level. However, appropriate support needs to accompany these expectations if they are to be realised, such as modelling the use of effective strategies, scaffolding learning, and providing quality feedback (e.g., Brophy, 2010; Eggen & Kauchak, 2013).

In relation to the matter of teacher feedback, as noted in the previous chapter the quality of the teacher feedback provided was identified by students as an important factor influencing their motivation in NCEA level 2 English. Students in this study valued teacher feedback that was timely, task-focused, personalised, detailed, constructive, and provided direction on how to improve; all factors considered by empirical research to be important in promoting motivation and learning (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1998). They disliked feedback that was too general, was solely negative, or misleading. Teachers are advised to consider ways in which they might improve their feedback to students. There is a considerable body of research literature on what constitutes effective feedback that could also be drawn on for further advice (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Pollack, 2012; Sadler, 1998; Schunk et al., 2014; Shute, 2008). Teachers also need to familiarise themselves with how teacher feedback can affect students' attributions (Schunk, 2008). Teachers are advised to encourage students who believe they have not performed well, to attribute their poor performance to ineffective strategies and the need for more targeted effort, rather than to a lack of ability (Schunk, 2008).

It is also recommended that there is a greater shared understanding between students and teachers around teacher feedback, given the high value students placed on teacher feedback in this study, and the fact that Rawlins (2007) found teachers in his study did not believe their Year 12 students read their written feedback. Once again surveying students as to the quality of the feedback provided is likely to be helpful in gauging the useful and appropriate students perceive the feedback that they receive. Furthermore, it would appear there is a need for English teachers to explain to students the constraints under which they operate in relation to providing feedback on draft work for internal NCEA English achievement standards.

The third key teacher related behaviour identified in this study as having a significant impact on students' motivation to achieve was that of student-teacher relationships. As noted in the previous chapter research has also clearly demonstrated that student-teacher relationships have a marked effect on students' motivation (e.g., Martin & Dowson, 2009; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Wentzel, 2010). Students perceived teachers cared about them and their achievement when teachers gave them constructive and detailed feedback, encouraged them, addressed their individual needs, and took time to prepare them well for an upcoming assessment. While teachers may not like all students they teach, they do have a professional responsibility to do their best to promote student achievement. Where there are identifiable issues with an individual student, teachers need to seek professional help (e.g., the school guidance counsellor) in order that they might establish a more effective and respectful working relationship with the student concerned. Once again a well-constructed student survey would highlight aspects that teachers might need to work on to improve their student-teacher relationships. There is also a wealth of information on ways in which teachers can improve their relationships with students (Brophy, 2010).

Another recommendation stemming from the findings in this study is that teachers and schools give due consideration to the importance of past performance in students' motivation. There needs to be an appreciation that success or failure in the junior high school years can affect senior students' sense of self-efficacy and application of effort. Consideration needs to be given to the assessment tasks and feedback provided both in Years 9 and 10 and additional support provided for those struggling. Students' performance in NCEA level 1 also appeared to have a marked influence on a number of students' beliefs about their capabilities in NCEA level 2 and thus the effort they were willing to expend.

In relation to NCEA teachers are encouraged to find effective ways to better support students who experience failure early in the school year, as evidence from this study suggests some of those students are more at risk of applying less effort when there was less guarantee of success as they proceed through the year. Surveying students around the time of trial assessments on how easy or difficult they believe the assessment task will be for them, and whether they think they have enough skills (see Questions 1a and 1b of Appendix B2), could provide an opportunity for discussion and intervention if a student's responses raise concerns. In addition to listening to students' analysis of their understanding of the topic being studied and their concerns, cognitive modelling of appropriate strategies, scaffolding of learning, use of exemplars, and use of cooperative learning could make a marked difference to students who are struggling (Brophy, 2010; Eggen & Kauchak, 2013; Killen, 2013; Krause, Bochner, Duchesne, & McMaugh, 2010).

A final recommendation is that schools recognise the important role mock exams play in a number of students' motivation to achieve in NCEA. While anecdotal evidence suggests a number of schools have questioned the usefulness of mock exams, in this study these were highly valued by students. Mock exams allowed students to assess their competence, which in turn increased a number of students' sense of self-efficacy and confidence that they could pass or achieve higher grades. The results of these exams also indicated to students the degree of effort that they needed to apply when preparing for the summative assessment, and what aspects they needed to work on. It is recommended schools give this matter due consideration in light of this finding.

Throughout this list of recommendations there has been a common theme; to listen to students' views. Valuable insights can be gained from listening to students (Cook-Sather, 2006). Furthermore, acknowledging and acting on learners' perspectives and feelings has been recognised as important autonomy-supportive teacher behaviour and one that helps enhance student-teacher relationships (Hardre & Reeve, 2003; Jang et al., 2010; Martin & Dowson, 2009).

8.4.2. Implications for Researchers

There are six notable implications for researchers that arise from this study. The first is that if the aim is to gain an enhanced and more nuanced understanding of students' motivation in a subject area, it is recommended that different aspects within that subject need to be examined, as these can vary in their nature, skill requirements, and

perceived relevance. Limiting the examination of students' motivation to the broader subject level does not enable the complexity of students' domain-specific motivation to be captured and understood.

The second implication arises from the finding in this study that students' motivation was complex, multidimensional, dynamic, and situated. It is recommended that researchers take note of this finding when considering how they might examine students' motivation in future studies, so that a richer and fuller understanding of students' motivation is captured and documented.

The third implication is that researchers are advised to carefully consider and document contextual factors when examining students' motivation. In this study students' motivation was clearly influenced by the nature of the NCEA assessment system. It is recommended that researchers make the context in which motivation is being examined explicit. Without a clear understanding of the context in a number of studies examined it became difficult to discuss similarities and/or differences between the findings in this study and the findings in these other studies that also focused on senior secondary students' motivation.

The fourth implication is that self-determination theory is a useful analytical tool for examining students' open-ended responses around motivation. While no single motivation theory adequately explains all facets of academic motivation, self-determination theory has the capacity to capture much of the complexity and the multidimensional nature of students' motivation and to take account of a number of social and contextual factors. However, as noted in the previous section there were difficulties associated with using Ryan and Deci's (2000a) construct of integrated regulation from their taxonomy of human motivation. As a consequence it was not utilised because of the difficulty of differentiating between integrated and identified regulation in the self-report measures employed in this study, and the fact that full integration appears to rarely occur in adolescence. Given that other researchers examining self-determination have also found difficulties in identifying integrated regulation, especially as there appears to be a developmental component to this construct (e.g., de Bilde et al., 2011; Lavigne & Vallerand, 2010; Ratelle et al., 2007; Reeve et al., 2002), its usefulness in research undertaken on adolescents and children needs careful consideration.

The fifth implication is that researchers should actively seek students' views and insights into a range of educational matters that directly affect students. This point is elaborated on in the last section of this chapter.

The sixth implication relates to the ranking of open-ended responses. In this study, a critical and central question asked students to identify up to four factors that they perceived as being most influential in their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards in the Final Questionnaire. The order in which they were listed did not necessarily correspond to their ranked importance. These results indicate that participants should be provided with the opportunity to give more than one response for important open-ended questions. When only one response is required it is quite possible the most significant issue/reason/idea may not be the one that is listed by participants. These results also negate any assumption that whatever participants list first is always the most important. Finally, these results highlight the need to give participants the opportunity to generate responses in the first instance and to then rank their answers. Given the limited capacity of working memory (Sweller, van Merriënboer, & Paas, 1998) and the demands of the different cognitive processes required to complete such a task, asking participants to undertake these cognitive processes simultaneously is likely to result in less meaningful and accurate data.

8.5. Limitations

As with all research projects there are limitations that need to be identified and acknowledged. The main limitations in this study involved the following:

- In identifying or recalling factors students perceived as significantly influencing their motivation, some students may have underestimated significant factors and overestimated other factors that were less significant. What was most salient may not have been what was most influential.
- Students were asked in the Final Questionnaire (Questions 11a and 11b) and in the four post-achievement standard questionnaires (Questions 8a and 8b) to retrospectively identify the most significant factors influencing their motivation to achieve. It is likely that their NCEA level 2 English results may have affected what factors they recalled.

- NCEA assessment policies, structure, and processes have shaped students' and teachers' beliefs and behaviours in a variety of different and unique ways (Meyer, Weir, et al., 2009). Consequently, there are limitations on the transferability of the findings of this study to other high-stakes certification assessment contexts that differ markedly from the NCEA system.
- The fact that random sampling was not employed in this study, limits the generalisability of the quantitative findings.
- As signalled in Chapter Three, some students provided limited explanations as to why a factor was considered significant. Consequently, there is a risk some responses may have been wrongly coded or interpreted because of a lack of detailed information.

8.6. Future Research

An important part of any research project is to seek answers to important questions. However, in the process other questions and possibilities arise that warrant closer examination or other possibilities emerge that may lead to worthwhile research projects. The following provides some suggestions for future research:

- This study focused on Year 12 students in A Stream English who had experienced a reasonable degree of success in NCEA level 1 English. As such it was a more homogeneous group than would be found in Year 11 English (NCEA level 1). It would be useful to examine the factors that influence students' motivation in NCEA level 1 English, as this would encompass a broader range of students and thus potentially highlight differing patterns of motivation for those who achieve very poorly. Such information may help identify where interventions may best occur to support students to achieve in this context. Furthermore, such a study would possibly capture the effects on students' motivation when they encounter NCEA assessments for the first time (e.g., possibly higher levels of introjected regulation, as more students may be fearful of failure) and lead to timely interventions to lessen any identified detrimental effects.
- External and introjected regulation appeared not to have had the detrimental effects on the academic achievements of a number of students that would have

been expected on the basis of self-determination theory and much empirical evidence. Research needs to be undertaken to establish if these detrimental effects do exist, or whether other factors can account for the limited negative impact of these two controlling types of motivation.

- High achieving students in this study were very motivated to have their NCEA level 2 certificates endorsed with Merit or Excellence. The year after the data for this study were gathered, course endorsements were introduced to encourage students to excel in specific subjects. Undertaking research into whether these course endorsements have a marked impact on students' motivation would be informative. It is possible that certificate endorsement may still feature more strongly as a motivator. Alternatively, there may be an additive effect with two reward systems in place with a consequential increase in external regulation.
- This study focused on students' perceptions of factors that significantly influenced their motivation. However, it was clear that other factors also had some impact (e.g., parents, peers, and valuing of English), despite not being identified as significant by the students. An exploration of the perceived influence of a wider range of factors may shed further light on the complexity and dynamic nature of students' motivation to achieve in high-stakes certification assessment.
- While this study focused on students' perceptions of factors significantly influencing their motivation, there would be considerable merit in examining teachers' perceptions of the factors they believe have influenced students' motivation at the same time as investigating students' perceptions. The juxtaposition of these two sets of perceptions may provide interesting and valuable insights.
- A longitudinal examination of students' motivation in depth across two different subjects would enable intra-individual patterns of motivation to be explored within the framework of a high-stakes assessment context. Such an examination would help in establishing whether there were more global and stable patterns evident across time and across subjects, while highlighting specific contextual factors that students perceive as influencing their motivation.

- Given the importance students placed on the results from mock exam and trial assessments in NCEA English, there is a need for a closer examination of what information students glean from these formative assessment events and how they make use of this information when preparing for their summative assessments in English.
- Undertaking a similar study on a larger scale with a wider cross-section of students would help to address the issue of generalisability of the quantitative findings.
- The difference in the number of boys compared with girls in Year 12 A Stream English is concerning, and warrants further investigation.
- Another potentially useful avenue of research would be for English teachers to undertake action research into their own practices in relation to increasing students' interest and intrinsic motivation. Such research could potentially enhance students' enjoyment and interest in English and the teacher's effectiveness. Action research could also be undertaken into teacher feedback. In both instances, students might be encouraged to act as co-researchers, given they have valuable insights to share.

8.7. Final Thoughts

Two key points come to mind when concluding this study. The first is the importance of seeking students' views. The students in this study repeatedly demonstrated that they possessed valuable insights into their own motivation and into the various factors that affected it. They clearly recognised their own role in their motivation, such as acknowledging they were willingly distracted by their friends, that they lacked motivation to study for English, or that they wanted to do better than their friends for self-esteem reasons. On the other hand, they readily identified such things as teacher behaviours that enhanced or detracted from their motivation, or how task-related factors impacted on their motivation. Their honesty and perceptiveness were both commendable and noteworthy. As key stakeholders in our education system, their views need to be sought and given due consideration. We have so much to learn from them. Their insights are crucial to finding ways to better support them and their learning (Rudduck, 2007; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000).

The second point is that we must remain committed to finding ways to enhance students' learning and their achievements, in order that they can reap the lifelong benefits that accompany academic success. As educators and researchers we have the power and the responsibility to make a positive difference to students' lives.

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Appendix A1: Letter to the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Date

The Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Name of school

Address of school

City

Dear (name of principal) and (name of chairperson)

I would like to invite Year 12 students from your school to participate in my PhD study which is entitled *Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards*. This study has been approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Southern B, Application 09/57).

This study will use a series of questionnaires answered by students and interviews with a small number of the participants to explore students' motivation as they undertake two internal and two external NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. Questionnaires would be completed and interviews would be conducted during school lunch breaks within the school grounds.

It is anticipated the results of this study will provide valuable insights for teachers that may enable them to better support students to achieve their best in NCEA English. At the conclusion of my research the school will receive a summary report of my findings and I would be happy to talk to staff about the research and implications for teaching. Participating students would also receive a brief summary.

Please read the enclosed Information Sheet outlining the proposed study. I am happy to meet with you to discuss this further. I would also be happy to talk to the Board of Trustees to outline the study and answer any questions.

If you are satisfied that you have sufficient information about my proposed research and you are willing to give me permission to undertake this research under the conditions outlined in the Information Sheet, could you please sign the attached consent form and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Signatures of both the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are required on the consent form.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and your willingness to consider allowing me access to students for this study.

Yours sincerely

Jan Chapman

Appendix A2: Information Sheet for the Principal and Board of Trustees

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Jan Chapman. I am a Senior Lecturer in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy at Massey University College of Education. I am writing to ask permission to recruit student volunteers from your school to participate in a study for my PhD. The topic of my research is "Year 12 students' perceptions of factors that influence their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards". I am very keen to pursue this topic, as I believe the findings will be useful, both in terms of teacher professional development on enhancing student motivation in NCEA English and in my teaching in the Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) programme.

I am focusing on NCEA level 2 English, because it is through this subject that most students gain the eight literacy credits required for University Entrance. While not all students wish to pursue a tertiary qualification, as you would be aware the skills and knowledge embodied in these English achievement standards are still important in order for students to enter a number of other occupations and to participate fully in society.

A number of concerns have been identified with students' motivation and underachievement in NCEA.

- One issue is the significant number of students who choose not to turn up for their external exams. In 2008 approximately 55,000 exams were not sat, despite students enrolling for these external achievement standards. These figures are in line with the three previous years' numbers.
- Another issue is the large number of students who choose to only do the bare minimum to try to pass, and by doing so put themselves at risk of failing.
- Gender differences in NCEA achievement is another issue. Boys tend to achieve more poorly than girls in NCEA English at all three levels and more boys leave school without University Entrance.

Through my research I hope to gain insights into these issues by examining students' perceptions about their motivation in NCEA English, so these issues can be addressed. This study also has the potential to contribute to professional literature in the fields of motivation, assessment and English. To date internationally there has been very little research into students' motivation in English at high school level and in high-stakes assessment situations (e.g., NCEA). There has also been little research into students' motivation over time and on authentic tasks at secondary level.

What would be the involvement of your school and your students?

- I wish to begin my study in March 2010 by recruiting participants from Traditional A NCEA level 2 English classes. For consent reasons these students must be at least sixteen years old. I will also be seeking participants from another co-educational high school, as this will assist me to gain a more

representative sample and ensure my findings cannot be attributed to a particular school.

- To recruit participants I would like to be granted permission to speak briefly to teachers in the English department who teach NCEA level 2 English. I am happy to meet with them as a group or individually. During that meeting I would briefly explain what my research is about and give the teachers an information sheet and a consent form.
- If the teachers and you are willing to give me permission, I would like to go into individual Year 12 English classrooms in March for the last **ten minutes** of an English period just before a morning or lunch break. In that time I would:
 - (a) Outline to students what my research is about;
 - (b) Ask if they would be willing to consider participating in my study;
 - (c) Allow them to ask me any questions at that point;
 - (d) Provide information sheets and consent forms to those interested. They can take these sheets home to discuss with their parents.
- Students willing to participate would place the consent form in a sealed envelope (supplied by me) in a labelled drop box at the school office. I would collect these from the school. Those students who are willing to participate in the study, would also be asked for their written permission to have their NCEA levels 1 and 2 English results released by NZQA and sent to me. To do this I will have signed an ethics form for NZQA.
- If the principal and BOT agree, I would appreciate a notice being placed in the school newsletter and/or on the school website to advise caregivers of my research and my contact details if they have any queries. While students are able to freely give consent to participate in this research as they are 16 years or older, and students will be encouraged to share the information sheet with their caregivers, it is possible some may not do this. A notice would assist in informing caregivers.
- If I gain approval from the school I would like to ask students to fill out questionnaires (three types) during school lunch hours in a classroom. This will involve eight lunch hours over an eleven month period. The first questionnaires will take around 30 minutes, the last questionnaire will take about 40 minutes, while the remainder will take around 20 minutes to complete. Students will be able to eat lunch while they fill in the forms, have time to go to the toilet and arrive on time to their next class. However, those students who would prefer to complete the questionnaires in their own time will be offered the option of being sent a hard copy and returning this by mail in a prepaid envelope.
- If you agree, I would also like to interview a small number of students individually for about 30 minutes in October 2010, again during a school lunch hour in a room at the school.
- As I am a registered teacher (Registration No. 125276), there should be no need for staff assistance in supervising students during the time they are filling in questionnaires.

What is required of participants?

- Students would be expected to spend about **four to five hours in total** completing questionnaires from April 2010 to February 2011 during their school lunch hours or outside school hours.
- Students would complete three different types of questionnaires; a general questionnaire, a pre-achievement standard questionnaire and a post-achievement standard questionnaire. These questionnaires have been piloted with Year 12 students to ensure they are appropriately worded and manageable.

- Students would complete a general questionnaire in April 2010 and another in February or March 2011.
- They would complete two pre-achievement standard questionnaires, just prior to undertaking the assessments for two designated internal achievement standards between May and September. They would also be asked to fill in two more pre-achievement standard questionnaires just prior to the exams for two specified external achievement standards.
- Students would complete four post-achievement standard questionnaires; one each time they receive their results for each of the two internal and two external achievement standards for which they completed a pre-achievement standard questionnaires.

The reason for asking students to fill in several questionnaires is to examine their motivation for NCEA English at different points in time in order to ascertain how it varies across time and with different achievement standards. Each type of questionnaire is also aimed at tapping into different aspects of motivation. From the group of participants from your school, I will be seeking about six – eight students willing to be individually interviewed for **30 minutes** later in 2010. Each student would only be interviewed once. I would like to have a cross section of students (i.e., boys and girls, students achieving at different levels) so that I can ask them more in-depth questions about their responses to a number of questions on their questionnaires.

If you agree, this interview would be conducted at school, during a lunch hour and each interview would be audio taped and transcribed. If the name of any teacher is mentioned in an interview this will be deleted from the transcript.

What are the rights of students who choose to participate?

Students who initially agree to participate are:

- Free to withdraw at any time without the need for explanation;
- Free to decline to answer any questions on the questionnaires or any asked in an interview without needing to justify their decision;
- Free to ask for any information they have given me to be returned to them and request that that information not be used in my study.
- Entitled to a brief written summary of my findings at the conclusion of my research.

If, during my research any students seemed to be distressed by anything, I would naturally encourage them to seek help through one of the school's guidance counsellors and/or encourage them to withdraw from the study. If I became unduly concerned about a student I would speak to either the school counsellor or to the principal to ensure the student received appropriate help.

What are your rights as a school?

If your school is willing to allow me the opportunity to recruit participants, supervise students filling in questionnaires during lunch hours and conduct interviews, you have the following rights:

- To withdraw permission for me to access students and stop me from meeting with students during school lunch breaks;
- To ask any questions at any time while I am conducting my research;
- To allow participating students to provide information on the clear understanding that at no time would your school, students or teachers be identified in my thesis or any other presentations or publications;
- To be provided with a written report of my findings at the conclusion of my research.

To summarise, my research would involve me using ten minutes of class time to speak to students in NCEA level 2 English classes in March 2010 in order to recruit volunteers. For students willing to participate it would involve around four to five hours of their lunch breaks or time outside school over an eleven month period. I would also require classroom space during the lunch breaks in order for students to complete questionnaires and be interviewed.

If you wish to ask any questions then you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor. I am also happy to talk to the Board of Trustees and senior management about any aspects of the research. Copies of any of the forms for teachers and students and the questionnaires can also be provided if you wish to view these.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and your willingness to consider allowing me access to students for this study. If you are willing to give me permission to speak to English teachers, access students and interview a small number of participants in school lunch breaks at school, could you please sign the attached consent form and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Signatures of both the principal and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are required on the consent form.

Yours sincerely

Jan Chapman

Contact Details

Researcher

Jan Chapman
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Supervisor

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/57. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix A3: Consent form for the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

SCHOOL CONSENT FORM

We have read the Information Sheet explaining the purpose of the study and details about how it will be undertaken. Any questions have been answered to our satisfaction, and we understand that we may ask further questions at any time.

We understand we have the right to withdraw permission to access students and Year 12 English teachers.

We understand we have the right to withdraw permission for students to fill in questionnaires or be interviewed during school lunch breaks at school.

We understand that the names of the school, students and teachers will not be used in any reports, presentations or publications arising from this study.

We agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature of the
Principal:**

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

**Signature of the
Board Chairperson:**

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

Appendix A4: Information Sheet for Teachers

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

TEACHERS' INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Jan Chapman. I am a senior lecturer at Massey University at the College of Education. An important part of my work involves helping to teach students to become secondary teachers. I used to teach English in a large co-educational secondary school before taking up this position at Massey. I am very interested in motivation, assessment, and English. I am always keen to learn more so that I can help teacher trainees to be more effective teachers and to help current teachers to better understand how they can enhance their students' learning and achievement.

I am undertaking a study for my PhD of Year 12 students' perceptions that influence their motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. I am focusing on NCEA level 2 English, because it is through this subject students are able to gain the eight literacy credits required for University Entrance. While not all students wish to pursue a tertiary qualification, as you would be aware the skills and knowledge embodied in these English achievement standards are still important in order for students to enter a number of other occupations and to participate fully in society.

A number of concerns have been identified with students' motivation and underachievement in NCEA. One is that a significant number of students choose not to turn up for their external exams. In 2008 approximately 55,000 exams were not sat, despite students enrolling for these external achievement standards. These figures are in line with the three previous years' numbers. Another issue identified by researchers is the large number of students who choose to only do the bare minimum to try to pass, and by doing so put themselves at risk of failing. Furthermore, boys achieve on average more poorly than girls in NCEA English at all three levels and more boys leave school without University Entrance. Through my research I hope to gain insights into these issues by examining students' perceptions about their motivation in NCEA English, so these issues can be addressed.

This study also has the potential to contribute to professional literature in the fields of motivation, assessment and English. To date internationally there has been very little research into students' motivation in English at high school level and on high-stakes assessment (e.g., NCEA). There has also been little research into students' motivation over time and on authentic tasks at secondary level.

I have gained permission from your Board of Trustees and your principal to approach you and other English teachers to ask if you will give me permission to speak to your Year 12 English class in the last ten minutes of a period in March 2010. I would like to recruit around a hundred student volunteers to participate in my study; fifty from this school and fifty volunteers from another co-educational high school.

If you are willing to give me permission, I would like to come into your Year 12 English classroom in the last **ten minutes** of an English period just before a morning or lunch break. In that ten minutes I would like to outline to students what my research is about and ask if they would be willing to consider participating in my study. They are free to ask me any questions at that point. If they are interested I would give them an information sheet and a consent form to take away for consideration. For those students willing to participate I would ask them to place their consent form in a sealed envelope (supplied by me) in a labelled drop box at the school office. I will collect the consent forms from the school. Those students who are willing to participate in the study, would also be asked for their written consent to have their NCEA levels 1 and 2 English results released by NZQA and sent to me.

Students willing to participate will be asked to initially complete a general questionnaire, then further questionnaires before and after completing two internal and two external Year 12 NCEA achievement standards, and finally another general questionnaire. This will help me to examine students' motivation for NCEA English at different points in time in order to ascertain how it varies across time and with different achievement standards.

From the original group of around fifty volunteers from your school, I will also be seeking six to eight students willing to volunteer to be individually interviewed for 30 minutes later in 2010, during their lunch time. This is so that I can ask them more in-depth questions about their questionnaire responses. They would be specifically asked not to identify their English teacher in any comments they make.

Please note that any students who initially agree to participate are free to withdraw from the study at any time. They may decline to answer any questions on the questionnaires or any asked in an interview without justifying their decision. If any students seemed to be distressed by anything, I would naturally encourage them to seek help through one of the school's guidance counsellors and/or encourage them to withdraw from the study.

Please also be assured that at no time would the school, students, or any teachers be identified in my thesis or any other presentations or publications. I am also more than happy to share my findings in person or in writing with you and any other interested staff. Students who participate in this study will also have the right to receive a written summary of my findings.

To summarise, my research would involve me using ten minutes of class time to speak to students in Year 12 NCEA level 2 English classes in March 2010 in order to recruit volunteers. For students willing to participate it would involve around four to five hours of their time in total over an eleven month period. They would be asked to fill in questionnaires during their lunch hour at school.

If you wish to ask any questions then you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and your willingness to consider allowing me access to students for this study.

Yours sincerely

Jan Chapman

Contact Details

Researcher

Jan Chapman
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
College of Education
Massey University

Tel: 06 350 5799 (ext 8710)

Email: j.e.chapman@massey.ac.nz

Supervisor

Dr. Alison St George
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
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Tel: 06 350 5799 (ext 8627)

Email: A.M.StGeorge@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/57. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix A5: Consent Form for Teachers

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

TEACHER'S CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet explaining the details of the study. Any questions I have had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I give permission for Jan Chapman to speak to my Year 12 English class about her research in the last ten minutes of a lesson in February or March 2010.

Signature: **Date:**

Full Name - printed

Email Address to finalise the time for the class visit

Suggested Dates and Times to Speak to My Year 12 English Class

Date	Time: Please give the time for the period (e.g. 11.30-12.20).

Appendix A6: Information Sheet for Students Completing Questionnaires

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET - QUESTIONNAIRES

My name is Jan Chapman. I work as a Senior Lecturer at Massey University at the College of Education. One of my main jobs is to help teach students to become secondary teachers. I used to teach English in a large co-educational secondary school before taking up this job at Massey. I am very interested in motivation, assessment, and English. I am always keen to learn more, so that I can help teacher trainees to be more effective teachers and to help current teachers to better understand how they can help their students to learn and achieve their best.

An Invitation to Be Part of This Study

I would like to invite you to participate in this research that I am doing for my doctorate at Massey University. I want to know what **you** think are important factors that influence **your** motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. Your views are critical, because as teachers we need to understand students' views if we are to be able to teach them effectively. I also need to find out if motivation changes over the school year or for different achievement standards.

You have been asked to consider participating in this research because you are doing NCEA level 2 English this year and you are over the age of 16. It is your choice if you want to be part of this study. You are under no obligation to be part of the study.

What Will Be Required Of You If You Decide To Participate?

If you decide you want to be part of this study you will need to:

- fill in and sign the consent form that I will give you to indicate that you understand what you are being asked to do and that you have an assurance that you will not be identified in any way in any reports or publications that arise from this study.

You will be asked to fill in three types of questionnaires during lunch times at school over an 11 month period.

- The first type of questionnaire (General Questionnaire - Initial) will take you around 30 minutes to complete. It will ask you about how well you did in NCEA English in Year 11, what does or does not interest you about English, how important it is for you to pass NCEA level 2 English and why it's important or not important.

At the end of the study you will fill in another General Questionnaire (Final) that asks you many of the same questions as the first questionnaire, but this one focuses on Year 12 rather than Year 11. It will take about 30 minutes. You will be asked to fill out the last questionnaire in late February or early March in 2011.

- The second type of questionnaire (Pre-achievement Standard Questionnaire) will take around 20 minutes to complete. You will be asked to complete this questionnaire four times; just before you are about to be assessed on two different internal achievement standards and just before you sit two external achievement standards in your end of year exams (four achievement standards in total).
- These questionnaires will ask you about how well you think you will do on each particular achievement standard, whether you think it is important to pass this particular achievement standard and what things have helped you want to do well or made it difficult for you to do well.
- The third type of questionnaire (Post-achievement Standard Questionnaire) will be completed after you have received results from four achievement standards (two internal and two external achievement standards). Three of these questionnaires will take about 20 minutes to complete, while the last of these questionnaires will contain some additional questions which will take about another 20 minutes of your time. You will complete one each time you get your results from the two internal achievement standards that I have questioned you about in the Pre-achievement Questionnaire and two just after you get your external exam results (early next year). This Post- achievement Standard Questionnaire will ask you about how you feel about your achievement standard result, why you think you were successful or unsuccessful and whether this result might affect your motivation in the future and how.

In total over the whole year you will be asked to spend about **four to five hours in total** filling in these questionnaires. The reason for getting you to fill in questionnaires at different times during the year is to see if there are changes in yours and other students' motivation. Times will be arranged during lunch breaks for you to fill in the questionnaires, so that this does not interfere with your regular classes.

If you agree to be part of this study, I would ask you sign another form that I will send to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to ask them to send me your NCEA level 1 English results and your NCEA level 2 English results. I would like to get these official results so that I can more accurately analyse the information I get from you.

If you are willing to participate, I would also like you to indicate on the consent form if you are willing to consider taking part in a 30 minute interview later in the year. I would like to individually talk with a number of students to gain more detailed information about the reasons you feel more or less motivated. The interview would be held during a school lunch hour at school. If you tick the box, please understand you are not committed to being interviewed. All you are agreeing to do is to allow me to send you some information about the interview process and a consent form for you to sign if you agree to be interviewed.

How the Information You Give Me Will Be Kept Confidential?

- You will be asked to put your name on each of the questionnaires, but only I will ever see that information.
- The questionnaires will be locked in a filing cabinet for safe storage.

- Your consent form will be stored separately in another locked filing cabinet.
- I will keep this information you give me for 5 years, before it is destroyed through proper procedures.
- I will be asking for students at another school to give me the same type of information. No one will be able to identify which school I got what information from.
- I will keep the information NZQA sends me locked in a filing cabinet. No one will see this information except me.
- Your name, your teacher's name and your school's name will not be used in any reports I write about this research. No one will be able to identify you, your school or teachers.

What I Will Do With The Information You Give Me?

The information you give me in the questionnaires you fill out will be analysed along with information I get from some interviews with students. From this analysis I will write my PhD thesis and publish my findings. In my writing I will be focusing on the things you and other students tell me that motivate them to achieve in NCEA English, the things that makes it difficult to feel motivated and if students' motivation changes over time. I will be making some recommendations about what teachers might do to improve student motivation based on the information I get from you and other students. Having your views will help ensure the research results are an accurate reflection of what students believe, and most importantly make the research more meaningful and useful for teachers and schools.

What Are Your Rights?

Please remember you do not have to accept this invitation to be part of this study. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw from the study at any time until the completion of the study and you do not have to give me any explanation as to why you have changed your mind.
- Request that any information you give me is removed from the study and returned to you prior to writing my thesis.
- Ask any questions about the study at any time before or during participation;
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless I ask for your permission and you agree in writing;
- Access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

If you do agree to participate I would recommend that you show your parents this information sheet so that they are aware of what you are agreeing to do, what this study is about and why your views are important.

If you or your parents wish to ask any questions then you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research and your willingness to consider participating in this study.

Yours sincerely

Jan Chapman

Contact Details

Researcher

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Supervisor

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Email: A.M.StGeorge@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/57. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix A7: Consent Form for Questionnaire Completion

[Massey University College of education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

STUDENT CONSENT FORM - QUESTIONNAIRES

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Please circle: I have/ have not had my 16th birthday.

Signature: **Date:**

Full Name - printed

My date of birth is:

Please list your postal address, email address, cell phone number and home phone number so I can contact you if I need to (e.g., If I had to change a date for meeting with you to administer a questionnaire).

Postal address:
.....

Email address:

Cell phone:

Home phone:

Name of Year 12 English Teacher: _____

I understand that volunteers willing to be interviewed for 30 minutes will be sought later in the year.

Please tick one of the following:

Yes I agree to receive information about being interviewed, and I understand this does **not** commit me to being interviewed.

I do not wish to be sent any information about being interviewed.

All participants will be sent information on where to download a summary of the research findings.

Appendix A8: Consent Form for Parents

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM - QUESTIONNAIRES

We/I have read the information sheet provided. We/I understand that we/I may ask further questions at any time.

We/I give parental consent for (name of son/daughter)

to participate in this study conducted by Jan Chapman under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Date:

Signature:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

**Appendix A9: Consent Form for NZQA to Release Students
NCEA English Results**

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

***Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their
Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement
Standards***

**STUDENT CONSENT FORM ALLOWING NZQA TO RELEASE THEIR NCEA
LEVELS 1 AND 2 ENGLISH RESULTS**

- I have read the Information Sheet for participation in Jan Chapman's research.
- Included in this sheet is information asking if I would be willing to sign a form agreeing for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to release my NCEA level 1 English results and my NCEA level 2 English results to Jan.
- I have had the details of the study explained to me and the reason for why Jan needs these results. I understand these results will be used for research purposes and I will not be identified in any presentation or publication. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to have my NCEA levels 1 and 2 English results released by NZQA and sent to Jan Chapman.

Signature: **Date:**

Full Name - printed

Appendix A10: Consent Form for Data Release from NZQA



Ethical Procedure of Data Release

Individuals requesting data from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority must use the data for statistical or research purposes. The storage and retention of the data, and the dissemination of the statistical or research results must comply with The Privacy Act 1993 (<http://www.privacy.org.nz/a-thumbnail-sketch-of-the-privacy-principles/>), in particular:

Privacy Principle 5 (<http://www.privacy.org.nz/privacy-principle-five/>)

The agency that holds personal information shall ensure –

- (a) that the information is protected, by such security safeguards as it is reasonable in the circumstances to take, against (i) loss; and (ii) access, use, modification, or disclosure, except with the authority of the agency that holds the information; and (iii) other misuse; and
- (b) that if it is necessary for the information to be given to a person in connection with the provision of a service to the agency, everything reasonably within the power of the agency is done to prevent unauthorised use of unauthorised disclosure of the information.

Privacy Principle 9 (<http://www.privacy.org.nz/privacy-principle-nine/>):

“...personal information shall not keep that information for longer than is required for the purposes for which the information may lawfully be used.”

Privacy Principle 11 (<http://www.privacy.org.nz/privacy-principle-eleven/>), in particular (h)(i) and (h)(ii):

(h) that the information (i) is to be used in a form in which the individual concerned is not identified; or (ii) is to be used for statistical or research purposes and will not be published in a form that could reasonably be expected to identify the individual concerned.

In order to obtain data from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, I,
_____ (*print name*), agree to

- I confirm that I intend to use the data for statistical or research purposes, and
- I confirm that all data will be protected to ensure against loss, use or misuse by others (c.f. Privacy Principle 5), and
- I will send confirmation to NZQA that the data has been destroyed and/or deleted upon completion of my research project, or return the data to NZQA (c.f. Privacy Principle 9), and
- I will not present or publish data in any form without the express permission of the NZQA, and
- I will not present or publish analyses of data in any form, which make it possible to identify individuals.

_____ *signature*

Appendix A11: Letter to Students about Organisational Matters

Massey University
College of education
Private Bag 11222
Palmerston North

Date

Dear (name)

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in my research project on Year 12 students' perceptions of factors that influence their motivation. I am really delighted that you have offered your help with this project.

I would like to meet with you on **(Day/date)** at the beginning of the lunch break in **(room)** so you can fill in the first questionnaire. This is the longest questionnaire and should take around 30 minutes. Please text me on 021 131 4538 if this does not suit you. If you do text me I would appreciate you putting your first name and last name in the text, so I will know who it is from. I can then arrange another time for you to do the questionnaire. Please text me on this number if you can't make it for other questionnaires too.

I will put a notice in the daily school notices in future for other questionnaires. You will be in **Massey Research Group B**.

Please remember if you decide you do not want to participate you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and I can assure you I will not pressure you to continue.

I look forward to seeing you on (day/date).

Kind regards

Jan Chapman

Appendix A12: Information Sheet for Students on Interviews

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET - INTERVIEWS

You are one of sixteen students I would like to interview to follow up information you have provided me on the questionnaires you have kindly filled in as part of the research that I am doing for my doctorate at Massey University. I want to gain a greater and more in-depth understanding of how and why particular factors **you** have identified influence **your** motivation to achieve NCEA level 2 English achievement standards. By listening to your explanations I will learn more information that is not easy to find out on a questionnaire. Your views are critical, because as teachers we need to understand students' views if we are to be able to teach them effectively.

An Invitation to Be Interviewed

I am inviting you to consider being interviewed, because you are already helping me by filling out questionnaires for my research. It is your choice if you want to be interviewed.

What Will Be Required Of You If You Decide To Participate?

If you decide you are willing to be interviewed:

- **You will need to fill in and sign the consent form** that accompanies this information sheet to indicate that you understand what you are being asked to do and that you have my assurance that you will not be identified in any way in any reports or publications that arise from this study. You will need to post the consent form back to me in the freepost envelope provided.
- You will need to be willing to meet with me for **30 minutes** at a time and place that suit you. This might be in a lunch hour or in a study period at school.
- I would like to record the interview on a digital voice recorder to ensure I accurately capture your views.

How the Information You Give Me Will Be Kept Confidential?

- A professional transcriber will transcribe the digital recording of your interview from the audio file downloaded from a digital voice recorder. This person will not know your full name or the school you come from.
- The transcriber signs a confidentiality agreement to ensure that they will not tell anyone anything that they hear from your interview.
- The electronic files the transcriber gives me will be stored on my computer in password protected files.
- Any paper copies of your transcribed interview will be locked in a filing cabinet for safe storage. They will not have your full name on the interview information. I will keep this information for 5 years, before it is destroyed through proper procedures.

- Once your audio file has been successfully downloaded on to my computer I will erase your file from the digital recorder. The transcriber will be required to delete your file once the file has been transcribed.
- The downloaded file from the digital voice recorder will be saved on my computer in a password protected file and will be deleted after 5 years.
- You, your teacher and your school will not be identified in any reports or publications I write.

What I Will Do With The Information You Give Me?

The information you give me in the interviews will be analysed, along with information I get from the questionnaires that you and other students have completed. From this analysis I will write my PhD thesis and publish my findings. In my writing I will be focusing on the things you and other students tell me that motivate them to achieve in NCEA English, the things that make it difficult to feel motivated and if students' motivation changes over time. I will be making some recommendations about what teachers might do to improve student motivation based on the information I get from you and other students. Having your views will help ensure the research results are an accurate reflection of what students believe and most importantly make the research more meaningful.

What Are Your Rights?

Please remember you do not have to accept this invitation to be interviewed. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question I ask you;
- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- Check the transcript of your interview to ensure it is correct;
- Withdraw from the study at any time until the completion of the study and you do not have to give me any explanation as to why you have changed your mind.
- Request that any information you give me is removed from the study and returned to you prior to writing my thesis.
- Ask any questions about the study at any time before or during participation;
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless I ask for your permission and you agree in writing;
- Access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

If you do agree to be interviewed I would recommend that you show your parents this information sheet so that they are aware of what you are agreeing to do, what this study is about and why your views are important. If you or your parents wish to ask any questions then you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor.

If you agree to being interviewed please return the signed consent form in the freepost envelope. I will then contact you to arrange a time to interview you. If you choose not to be interviewed please note that on the consent form.

Thank you for taking the time to consider being interviewed for this study.

Yours sincerely

Jan Chapman

Contact Details

Researcher

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/57. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix A13: Consent Form for Student Interview

[Massey University College of education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

I have read the Information Sheet and I am aware of the details of this study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

Please cross out the statement that does **not** apply:

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

OR

I do not agree to participate in this study.

If you agree to be interviewed please cross out the part that does **not** apply in the following statement:

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

Signature: **Date:**

Full Name - printed

My date of birth is:

Appendix A14: Student Authority for the Release of Transcripts

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and change any information I think is incorrect in the transcript of the interview conducted with me by Jan Chapman.

I agree, that the once the transcript has been read by me and I have made any corrections I think need to be made, that this interview information may be used in reports and publications arising from the research. I agree to this on the understanding I will not be personally identified in any reports or publications.

Signature: **Date:**

Full Name - printed

Appendix A15: Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement

[Massey University College of Education Letterhead]

Year 12 Students' Perceptions of Factors that Influence their Motivation to Achieve NCEA Level 2 English Achievement Standards

TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I (Full Name - printed) agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: **Date:**

Appendix B1: Initial Questionnaire

Initial Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to complete the following questionnaire. Please remember that the information you give in the questionnaire will not be used in any way that will allow anyone other than me to identify you personally. This means you can be very honest in your answers.

There are no right or wrong answers, so please give answers that really reflect your views. What is important is that the information you give reflects how you feel or what you think, because the purpose of this study is to find out students' beliefs and experiences.

First Name.....**Surname**.....

Date/...../2010

School.....

Are you?

Male

OR

Female

Ethnicity:

Tick up to **two** boxes that apply best to you

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pākehā/New Zealand European | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Māori | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Samoaan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cook Island Māori | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tongan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Niuean | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Japanese | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please state).....

1. How well did you do on **NCEA level 1** English achievement standards last year?

Please tick **one** box for each achievement standard

NA = Not Achieved

A = Achieved

M = Merit

E = Excellence.

ND = Not Done (if you did not do the achievement standard tick this option)

DNR = Do Not Remember (if you do not remember tick this option)

	NA	A	M	E	ND	DNR
1.1 Creative writing	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.2 Formal writing	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.3 Understanding of extended written text(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.4 Understanding of short written texts	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.5 Understanding of visual or oral text	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.6 Reading unfamiliar text	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.7 Delivering a speech	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.8 Producing a media or dramatic presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>					
1.9 Research	<input type="checkbox"/>					

2. (a) Did you also do any unit standards in Year 11 English?

Yes

No

(b) If you answered yes, please **tick the box that applies to you**

NA = Not Achieved

A = Achieved

ND = Not Done

DNR = Do Not Remember

	NA	A	ND	DNR
US 2977 Read text for practical purposes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 8808 Read a range of written texts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 8809 Reading oral texts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 8810 Read a range of visual texts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 8812 Produce transactional writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 8817 Listen and discuss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 10792 Write formal correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 12411 Explore language and think about transactional written text	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
US 12412 Explore language and think critically about poetic written text	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

Overall, in NCEA level 1 English did you do:

- A lot better than you expected?
Better than you expected?
About what you expected?
A little worse than you expected?
Much worse than you expected?

<input type="checkbox"/>

- (b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

4. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

How happy were you with your NCEA level 1 English results?

- Very happy
Happy
Neither happy nor unhappy
Unhappy
Very unhappy

<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

5. Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

How happy were your parents/guardian with your NCEA level 1 English results?

Very happy

Happy

Neither happy nor unhappy

Unhappy

Very unhappy

6. (a) How much did your parents/guardian influence your motivation in NCEA level 1 English? The influence could be positive or negative or both.

A lot

A bit

Not at all

(b) If you ticked '**A lot**', list up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- My mother hassled me all the time about studying and that made me really anti studying.
- My father was very proud of how well I had been doing in NCEA during the year and I didn't want to disappoint him.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

7. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

Overall, in NCEA level 1 English do you think your **Year 11 English** teacher would have thought that you did:

A lot better than she/he expected?

Better than she/he expected?

About what she/he expected?

A little worse than she/he expected?

Much worse than she/he expected?

<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) How much did your Year 11 English teacher influence your **motivation** in NCEA level 1 English? The influence could be positive or negative or both.

A lot

A bit

Not at all

(c) If you ticked '**A lot**', list up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible. Do not name your teacher.**

For example:

- My English teacher explained really clearly to the class what was required for every achievement standard. This made me feel more confident that I knew what I needed to do.
- My teacher gave me really detailed feedback so I knew what was required for me to pass each standard.
- My English teacher told me that she didn't think I would get enough literacy credits in NCEA level 1 English and that made me try even harder.
- My English teacher always criticised my work, so I just gave up trying.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

8. (a) How much did your friends influence your **motivation** in NCEA level 1 English? The influence could be positive or negative or both.

A lot

A bit

Not at all

- (b) If you ticked '**A lot**', list up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

For example,

- My friends always want me to do things with them, so I didn't spend as much time studying as I should have done.
- A lot of my friends are really good at English and I wanted to do as well as them, so I studied harder for English.

	Reasons and Explanations
1	
2	

9. In addition to the things you have already listed, how have the things listed below influenced your **motivation in NCEA level 1 English overall**. These influences could be positive, negative or both

Tick **one** box per item that best applies:

- VI = Very influential
 SI = Some influence
 MI = Minimal or no influence
 NA = Not applicable

For example,

- If you got poor marks during the year you might tick 'VI' (Very Influential) because it had a big influence on your motivation. It may have made you feel very motivated or very unmotivated.
- If you had a part-time job and you found that sometimes you didn't feel very motivated to study because you were too tired, then you might tick 'SI' (Some Influence).
- However, if you had a part-time job and it didn't really affect your motivation in any way then you would tick 'MI' (Minimal or no Influence).
- Alternatively if you had no part-time job you would tick 'NA' (Not Applicable).

	VI	SI	MI	NA
• Part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sports, music, or drama commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activities outside school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Classmates' behaviour and/or attitudes to English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Extra tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Brothers and/or sisters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Home commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Getting good or bad marks in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mock assessments/exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Amount of study or practice you did	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) If you ticked any of the **VI (Very Influential)** boxes above, list up to **three** things that you think **most** strongly influenced your motivation and **explain these as fully as possible.**

Very Influential Things	
1	
2	
3	

10. List up to **two really important** things you believe helped you to **succeed** in NCEA level 1 English last year and **explain these as fully as possible.**

For example:

- I studied hard because I wanted to try to get my level 1 certificate endorsed with excellence.
- Doing mock exams, because this helped me know what I needed to do to improve.
- I didn't want to fail, because my parents would be very disappointed with me.
- My teacher really drilled into us what we had to do. That made me feel more confident when I came to the external exams.

Really important things that helped me succeed	
1	
2	

11. (a) Are there things that you think stopped you from doing better in NCEA English last year?

Yes

No

(b) If you answered yes, list up to **two really important** things that made it more **difficult** for you to do better in NCEA level 1 English last year and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- Not studying hard enough, because I thought I would do okay without studying.
- Spending more time on other subjects, because I was worried about failing them.
- Not spending enough time studying, because I wanted to spend time with my friends instead.

Really important things that made it difficult for me to do better	
1	
2	

12. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

My motivation to pass NCEA level 1 English achievement standards:

Went up as the year progressed

Went down as the year progressed

Went up and down over the year

Stayed the same all year

(b) List up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain as fully as possible.**

For example:

- My motivation went up over the year, because my English results continued to improve as the year went on.
- It has gone up and down depending on what we were studying. I hated formal writing, but enjoyed the film we studied.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

13. (a) Based on what you did when you were working on NCEA level 1 English, are there any things you think you would like to have done differently if you had your time over again (e.g., study harder)?

Yes

No

- (b) If you answered yes, list up to **two** key things you would do differently and **explain these as fully as possible.**

For example:

- Study harder, because I realise I need to be better prepared for the exams
- Concentrate more in class, so that I am clear about what is required.
- Read questions in the exam more carefully, so that I don't answer the question wrongly and realise when it's too late to change anything.

Key Things I Would Do Differently	
1	
2	

14. (a) Thinking back on last year and the things you have been asked about in this questionnaire, list up to **four** things that you think have had the **most important** influence on your **motivation** on NCEA level 1 English. These can be positive or negative influences.

For example:

- My English teacher last year was a big influence, as he explained things really clearly, so I felt confident that I could do what was required.
- I really wanted enough credits to pass NCEA level 1 and get the literacy credits I needed to get.
- I became really unmotivated in English, because I worked hard at the beginning of the year but kept getting 'Not Achieved'. I just gave up.
- I worked really hard, because I was really worried about failing. I didn't want to be disappointed in myself.
- My friends have been a negative influence because they always wanted me to do things with them, when I should have been studying.

List up to **four** important things and **explain these as fully as possible**.

1	
2	
3	
4	

- (b) Look at the previous question and what you wrote. Each response has a number (1-4) beside it in the left hand column. Now think about which of the four responses was the most influential thing (e.g., you might decide it was number 3). Put that number in the box beside “The most influential thing”. Repeat the process with the other responses.

The most influential thing	<input type="text"/>
The second most influential thing	<input type="text"/>
The third most influential thing	<input type="text"/>
The fourth most influential thing	<input type="text"/>

15. (a) How well do you think you will do in each of your **level 2 English achievement standards** this year? Tick **one** box for each achievement standard

- NA = Not Achieved
 A = Achieved
 M = Merit
 E = Excellence
 ND = Not Doing (if you are not doing the achievement standard)

	NA	A	M	E	ND
2.1 Creative writing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.2 Formal writing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.3 Analysing extended written text(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.4 Analysing short written texts	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.5 Analysing visual or oral text	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.6 Reading unfamiliar text	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.7 Delivering an oral presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.8 Research a language or literature topic	<input type="checkbox"/>				

- (b) List up to **two** key reasons why you think you will get these results and **explain these as fully as possible**.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

16. (a) Tick **one** box. How important is it for you to pass a number of NCEA level 2 English achievement standards?

Very important	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quite important	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not important	<input type="checkbox"/>

- (b) List up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- I really need to get enough literacy credits to get University Entrance.
- I am afraid of failing, because it is really important for me to pass every English achievement standard.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

17. List your Year 12 subjects in order from the **most interesting** (number 1) to the **least interesting** (number 5 or 6 depending on the numbers of subjects you took in Year 11).

Note: **interesting** can mean something you enjoy, but it also may be something that is not always enjoyable (e.g., dissecting a sheep's heart in biology). Instead it might be something you find fascinating, something you want to know more about, or is possibly challenging enough to hold your attention in a positive way.

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

18. (a) Do you find any aspects of English interesting?

Yes

No

- (b) If you answered yes, what aspects of English do you find **most interesting**?

List up to **two** aspects and **explain these as fully as possible.**

What is most interesting and why	
1	
2	

19. (a) Do you find any aspects of English boring?

Yes
No

(b) If you answered yes, what aspects of English do you find **most boring**? List up to **two** aspects and **explain these as fully as possible**.

What is most boring and why	
1	
2	

20. (a) English is a compulsory subject in Year 12. If you had had a choice would you have selected English as a subject this year?

Yes
No

(b) Why?

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix B2: Pre-Achievement Standard Questionnaire 2.1

Pre-Achievement Standard Questionnaire 2.1

Thank you for agreeing to complete the following questionnaire. Please remember that the information you give in the questionnaire will not be used in any way that will allow anyone other than me to identify you personally. This means you can be very honest in your answers.

There are no right or wrong answers, so please give answers that really reflect your views. What is important is that the information you give reflects how you feel or what you think, because the purpose of this study is to find out students' beliefs and experiences.

Name.....	Date.....
-----------	-----------

You are about to be assessed for **achievement standard 2.1 – Creative Writing**. The following questions all relate to **this** achievement standard.

1. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you. Think of what skills are needed to pass **achievement standard 2.1** to answer this question (e.g., writing skills).

When I think about the sorts of skills needed to pass this achievement standard I have:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A good range of skills to pass | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Just enough skills to probably pass | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not got enough skills yet to pass | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- (b) Tick **one** box that best applies to you. Think of what is required overall to pass **achievement standard 2.1** to answer this question.

I think passing this achievement standard will be:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very easy for me | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quite easy for me | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Just manageable for me | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quite difficult for me | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Far too difficult for me | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(c) List up to **two** key reasons and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- It should be very easy, as I did well on formal writing in Level 1 English.
- When I look at the assessment criteria I think I can do it, because it is all things we have covered in class before.
- It should be quite easy, because I passed the practice assessment with no problems.
- It will be quite difficult for me, because I find it hard to express my ideas in writing. My English teacher has told me that I really need to improve in this area.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

2. Are you intending to complete the assessment for **achievement standard 2.1**?

Yes
No

3. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

How important is it for you to **pass** this achievement standard?

Very important for me
Quite important for me
Not particularly important for me
Not important at all for me

- (b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

For example:

- It's very important because I need these credits to pass NCEA Level 2. I have failed some other achievement standards, so I can't afford to fail any more.
- It's important for me to pass because I don't like failing anything.
- It's quite important for me to pass because I have worked really hard to improve my formal writing.
- I don't care if I pass because I don't like formal writing.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

4. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

For **achievement standard 2.1:**

I want to do my best

I just want to do enough to get a pass

I don't care what result I get

I expect to fail this because I do not intend to complete it.

- (b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- I want to do my best because I enjoy English.
- I just want to do enough to pass, as I don't have enough time to study properly for this achievement standard. I have too much work to do to finish my art portfolio.
- I don't care what I get because I have enough credits to pass NCEA level 2 already.
- I will fail this because I am not going to sit the exam. The teacher keeps telling me that my formal writing isn't good, so what's the point of doing the exam?

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

5. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you. What result do you think you will get for **achievement standard 2.1**?

I believe I will get:

Excellence

Merit

Achieved

Not Achieved

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

- (b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

6. (a) How much has your Year 12 English teacher influenced your **motivation** on **this** achievement standard? The influence could be positive or negative or both.

- A lot
- A bit
- Not at all

(b) If you ticked '**A lot**', list up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible. Do not name your teacher.**

For example:

- My English teacher explained really clearly to the class what was required for this achievement standard. This made me feel more confident that I knew what I needed to do.
- My teacher gave me really detailed feedback so I knew what was required for me to pass this standard.
- My English teacher told me that she didn't think I would pass this achievement standard, because I did so poorly on the practice assessment and that has made me want to give up.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

7. In addition to the things you have already listed, how have the things listed below **currently** influenced your **motivation** on **achievement standard 2.1**:

Tick **one** box per item that best applies.

- VI = Very influential
- SI = Some influence
- MI = Minimal or no influence
- NA = Not applicable

For example

- If your parents keep hassling you about studying for this achievement standard you might tick 'VI' (Very Influential), because it has a big influence on your motivation. It may have a positive or a negative influence but it was very influential.
- If you have a part-time job and you have found lately that you don't feel motivated to study for this achievement standard because you are too tired then you might tick 'SI' (Some Influence).
- However, if you have a part-time job and it hasn't affected your motivation on this achievement standard then you would tick 'MI' (Minimal or no Influence).
- Alternatively if you have no part-time job you tick 'NA' (Not Applicable).

	VI	SI	MI	NA
• Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sports, music, or drama commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activities outside school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Classmates' behaviour and/or attitudes to English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Extra tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Brothers and/or sisters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Home commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Getting good or bad marks in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mock assessments/exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Amount of study or practice you have done for this achievement standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) If you ticked any of the **VI (very influential)** boxes above, list up to **four** things that you think **most** strongly influenced your motivation and **explain these as fully as possible**.

Very Influential Things	
1	
2	
3	
4	

8. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you. How **interested** have you been in working towards **this** achievement standard compared with working towards other level 1 or 2 English achievement standards?

Note: **interesting** can mean something you enjoy, but it also may be something that is not always enjoyable (e.g., dissecting a sheep's heart in biology). Instead it might be something you find fascinating, something you want to know more about, or is possibly challenging enough to hold your attention in a positive way.

I have been:

Very interested

Quite interested

Not particularly interested

Not interested at all

- (b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- I haven't been interested in working towards this achievement standard, as I don't like the novel we have been reading for it. It's science fiction stuff and I can't stand science fiction.
- I have been interested in working towards this achievement standard because I found I quite enjoyed the war poetry that we were studying in class. I don't normally like poetry, but this was really different because I could understand it.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

9. (a) List up to **two** things that you think have been **most influential** in helping you feel **more motivated** to pass **this** achievement standard and **explain your reasons as fully as possible**. These may be things you have already listed or some other things you haven't listed.

For example:

- Doing well on the mock exam made me realise I could probably pass this achievement standard.
- I need the credits on this achievement standard to get all my literacy credits.
- I really enjoyed the novel that we studied, so I wanted to do really well on this achievement standard.
- Wanting to prove to my English teacher I could pass this achievement standard, because she told me she didn't think I would pass it.

Most influential things that help you feel <u>more</u> motivated and why they are influential	
1	
2	

- (b) List up to **two** things that you think have been **most influential** in making you feel **less motivated** to pass **this** achievement standard and **explain your reasons as fully as possible**. These may be things you have already listed or some other things you haven't listed.

For example:

- I can't spend enough time on this achievement standard because I have so much to do for all my other subjects.
- I can't understand what I need to do for this achievement standard because we have had a relieving teacher teaching us and she/he hasn't explained things well.
- I don't need the credits for this achievement standard, because I am going to do a building apprenticeship next year.
- My friends keep distracting me in class, so I think I have missed some important things I should have known about.

	Most influential things that help you feel <u>less</u> motivated and why they are influential
1	
2	

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire.

Appendix B3: Post-Achievement Standard Questionnaire 2.1

Post-Achievement Standard Questionnaire 2.1

Thank you for agreeing to complete the following questionnaire. Please remember that the information you give in the questionnaire will not be used in any way that will allow anyone other than me to identify you personally. This means you can be very honest in your answers.

There are no right or wrong answers, so please give answers that really reflect your views. What is important is that the information you give reflects how you feel or what you think, because the purpose of this study is to find out students' beliefs and experiences.

Name..... Date.....

You have been assessed and received your result for achievement standard 2.1 – creative writing. The following questions all relate to this achievement standard.

1. (a) Tick **one** box. Did you complete the assessment for achievement standard 2.1?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered yes, go to Question 2 and continue to answer the questions on the questionnaire. Do not do part (b) below.

If you answered no, please answer (b) just below this and then go to Question 6 and continue to answer the remaining questions from Question 6 onwards.

- (b) If you answered **no**, what was the main reason(s) for not completing the assessment task or sitting the exam?

2. Tick **one** box. What result did you get for achievement standard **2.1**?

Excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Merit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Achieved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Achieved	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Tick **one** box that best applies to you. Was your result:

A lot better than you expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better than you expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
About what you expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
A little worse than you expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
A lot worse than you expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you. How happy were you with your result on this achievement standard?

Very happy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Happy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonably happy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) List up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

For example:

- Very happy because I hadn't put in much work, so I figured I might fail.
- Very unhappy because I had studied really hard for this and just don't understand why I only got an achieved.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

5. What things do you think **most** affected your performance on **this** achievement standard? List up to **two** important things and **explain how they affected your performance**.

For example:

- I read the questions carefully and made a lot of notes before starting the exam questions.
- I didn't study hard enough, because I thought this achievement standard would be easy based on what we had done in class.
- I had to work a lot of extra hours in my part-time job so I didn't have enough time to study.
- I woke up with a terrible headache, so I couldn't concentrate.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

6. (a) How much did your Year 12 English teacher influence your **motivation** on **this** achievement standard? The influence could be positive or negative or both.

A lot

A bit

Not at all

(b) If you answered **'A lot'**, list up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible. Do not name your teacher.**

For example:

- My English teacher explained really clearly to the class what was required for this achievement standard. This helped me know exactly what I needed to do.
- My English teacher told me that he didn't think I would pass this achievement standard because I did so poorly on the practice assessment. That made me give up bothering to try hard to pass.

	Reasons and Explanations
1	
2	

7. (a) In addition to the things you have already listed, how have the things listed below influenced your motivation on this achievement standard that you have just completed:

Tick one box per item that best applies.

- VI = Very influential
 SI = Some influence
 MI = Minimal or no influence
 NA = Not applicable

For example,

- If your parents kept hassling you about studying for this achievement standard you might tick 'VI' (Very Influential) because it had a big influence on your motivation. It could be a positive or a negative influence.
- If you had a part-time job and you found that sometimes you didn't feel motivated to study for this achievement standard because you were too tired then you might tick 'SI' (Some Influence).
- However, if you had a part-time job and it didn't affect your motivation then you would tick 'MI' (Minimal or no Influence).
- Alternatively if you had no part-time job you would tick 'NA' (Not Applicable).

	VI	SI	MI	NA
• Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sports, music, or drama commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activities outside school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Classmates' behaviour and/or attitudes to English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Extra tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Brothers and/or sisters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Home commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Getting good or bad marks in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mock assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Amount of study or practice you did for this achievement standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- (b) If you ticked any of the **VI (very influential)** boxes above, list up to **four** things that you think **most** strongly influenced your motivation and **explain these as fully as possible**.

Very Influential Things	
1	
2	
3	
4	

8. (a) List up to **two** things that you think were **most influential** in helping you feel **more motivated** to pass **this** achievement standard and **explain your reasons as fully as possible**. These may be things you have already listed or some other things you haven't listed.

For example:

- Doing well on the mock exam made me realise I could probably pass this achievement standard.
- I needed the credits on this achievement standard to get all my literacy credits.
- I really enjoyed the novel that we studied so I tried really hard to pass this achievement standard because I wanted to do well for my own satisfaction.
- I tried really hard because I wanted to prove to my English teacher I could pass this achievement standard. She told me I wouldn't pass it.
- The exemplars that the teacher showed us just before we did this achievement standard really helped me with my study.

Key things that made me feel more motivated and why they did	
1	
2	

- (b) List up to **two** things that you think were **most influential** in helping you feel **less motivated** to pass **this** achievement standard and **explain your reasons as fully as possible**. These may be things you have already listed or some other things you haven't listed.

For example:

- I couldn't spend enough time on this achievement standard because I had so much to do for all my other subjects.
- I couldn't understand what I need to do for this achievement standard because we had a relieving teacher teaching us and he/she didn't explain things well.
- I didn't need the credits for this achievement standard, because I am going to do a building apprenticeship next year.
- My friends kept distracting me in class when I was trying to listen to the teacher explain things.

Key things that made me feel less motivated and why they did	
1	
2	

9. (a) Do you think your performance on **this** achievement standard will affect what you do for other English achievement standards you attempt this year?

Yes

No

(b) If you answered **yes**, list up to **two** ways you think your performance on this achievement standard will affect what you do for other English achievement standards you attempt this year.

For example:

- Put more time into studying, because I want to do better next time.
- Concentrate on analysing what is required more carefully.
- Put less time into studying because I now have enough credits to pass NCEA level 2.

Ways my performance on this achievement standard will affect what I do for other achievement standards	
1	
2	

If you answered **no**, briefly explain why you don't think your performance on this achievement standard will affect what you do for other English achievement standards you attempt this year.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Appendix B4: Outside Class Activities Questionnaire

Outside Class Activities Questionnaire

This brief questionnaire is focused on finding out background information on activities that you have regularly engaged in **outside class this year** that may have directly or indirectly affected your motivation and achievement in English this year. For example, if you were in a sports team or the kapa haka group you may have spent a lot of time practising and felt too tired to complete homework or study for an English NCEA assessment.

Name..... **Date**.....

1. Have you played sport (e.g., tennis, netball) or undergone physical training (e.g., swimming, dance, cycling) on a **regular** basis?

Yes

No

2. If you answered **yes**, please identify **the sport(s) or physical training** you have been regularly involved with (e.g., rugby, netball, swimming, cricket, dance) and list the approximate **number of hours** this has involved in a normal week, including practices/training time and playing/ competition time. Do note any extra details you think might be important, such as whether you played in a national competition or represented this region.

Sport or Physical Training	Hours Per Week

3. Have you been involved with cultural activities (e.g., kapa haka, drama productions, band, choir, wearable arts) on a **regular** basis?

Yes

No

4. If you answered **yes**, please identify **the cultural activity(ies)** you have been regularly involved with and list the approximate **number of hours** this has involved in a normal week, including practice time. Do note any extra details you think might be important such as whether you competed in a national or regional competition.

Cultural Activities	Hours Per Week

5. List any other **organised activities** you have **regularly** been involved with this year, such as leading a church youth group or fund raising for a school trip overseas that have involved quite a lot of time.

Other Activities

6. Do you have a **regular part-time job**?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If you answered **yes** please identify the type of work you do (e.g., work in a fast food restaurant, babysitting, work in retail) and the number of hours you normally work during a school week.

Part-time Work	Hours Per Week

8. What **other sorts of things** do you **regularly do in your free time** (e.g., playing computer games, phoning friends, shopping, fixing a motor bike, watching TV, chores at home) that involve **5 or more hours a week** of your time.

Free time activities involving 5 or more hours a week.

Thanks for filling in this questionnaire.

Appendix B5: Final Questionnaire

Final Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to complete the following questionnaire. Please remember that the information you give in the questionnaire will not be used in any way that will allow anyone other than me to identify you personally. This means you can be very honest in your answers.

There are no right or wrong answers, so please give answers that really reflect your views. What is important is that the information you give reflects how you feel or what you think, because the purpose of this study is to find out students' beliefs and experiences.

Name.....

Date.....

1. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

Overall in NCEA level 2 English did you do:

A lot better than you expected?

Better than you expected?

About what you expected?

A little worse than you expected?

Much worse than you expected?

- (b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

2. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

How happy were you with your level 2 English results?

Very happy

Happy

Neither happy nor unhappy

Unhappy

Very unhappy

<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) List up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

3 (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

How happy were your parents/guardian with your NCEA level 2 English results?

Very happy

Happy

Neither happy nor unhappy

Unhappy

Very unhappy

<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) How much did your parents/guardian influence your motivation in NCEA level 2 English? The influence could be **positive** or **negative** or both.

A lot

A bit

Not at all

(c) If you ticked '**A lot**', list up to **two** key reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- My mother hassled me all the time about studying and that made me really anti studying.
- My father was very proud of how well I had been doing in NCEA during the year and I didn't want to disappoint him.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

4. (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

Overall, in NCEA level 2 English do you think your **Year 12 English** teacher would have thought that you did:

A lot better than she/he expected?

Better than she/he expected?

About what she/he expected?

A little worse than she/he expected?

Much worse than she/he expected?

(b) How much did your Year 12 English teacher influence your **motivation** in NCEA level 2 English? The influence could be positive or negative or both.

A lot	<input type="checkbox"/>
A bit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>

(c) If you ticked '**A lot**', list up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible. Do not name your teacher.**

For example:

- My English teacher explained really clearly to the class what was required for every achievement standard. This made me feel more confident that I knew what I needed to do.
- My teacher gave me really detailed feedback so I knew what was required for me to pass each standard.
- My English teacher told me that she didn't think I would get enough literacy credits in NCEA level 2 English and that made me try even harder.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

- 5 (a) How much did your friends influence your **motivation** in NCEA level 2 English? The influence could be positive or negative or both.

A lot

A bit

Not at all

- (b) If you ticked '**A lot**', list up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible.**

For example,

- My friends always want me to do things with them, so I didn't spend as much time studying as I should have done.
- A lot of my friends are really good at English and I wanted to do as well as them, so I studied harder for English.

	Reasons and Explanations
1	
2	

6. In addition to the things you have already listed, how have the things listed below influenced your **motivation in NCEA level 2 English overall.**

Tick **one** box per item that best applies.

- VI = Very influential
- SI = Some influence
- MI = Minimal or no influence
- NA = Not applicable

For example,

- If you got poor marks during the year you might tick 'VI' (Very Influential), because it had a big influence on your motivation. It may have made you feel very motivated or very unmotivated.
- If you had a part-time job and you found that sometimes you didn't feel very motivated to study because you were too tired, then you might tick 'SI' (Some Influence).
- However, if you had a part-time job and it didn't really affect your motivation in any way then you would tick 'MI' (Minimal or no Influence).
- Alternatively if you had no part-time job you would tick 'NA' (Not Applicable).

	VI	SI	MI	NA
• Part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sports, music, or drama commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activities outside school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Classmates' behaviour and/or attitudes to English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Extra tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Brothers and/or sisters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Home commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Getting good or bad marks in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mock assessments/exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Amount of study or practice you did	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- (b) If you ticked any of the **VI (Very Influential)** boxes above, list up to **three** things that you think **most** strongly influenced your motivation and **explain these as fully as possible**.

	Very Influential things
1	
2	
3	

7. (a) Did you gain enough credits to get the literacy credits needed for University Entrance?

Yes

No

(b) If you ticked **Yes**, list up to **two** really **important** things you believe helped you to **succeed** in NCEA level 2 English last year and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- I studied hard because I wanted to try to get my level 2 certificate endorsed with excellence.
- Doing mock exams, because this helped me know what I needed to do to improve.
- I didn't want to fail because my parents would be very disappointed with me.
- My teacher really drilled into us what we had to do. That made me feel more confident when I came to the external exams.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

8 (a) Are there things that you think stopped you from doing better in NCEA level 2 English last year?

Yes

No

- (b) If you answered yes, list up to **two** really **important** things that made it more difficult for you to do better in NCEA level 2 English last year and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- Not studying hard enough because I thought I would do okay without studying.
- Spending more time on other subjects because I was worried about failing them.
- Not spending enough time studying because I wanted to spend time with my friends instead.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

- 9 (a) Tick **one** box that best applies to you.

My motivation to pass NCEA level 2 English achievement standards:

- Went up as the year progressed
 Went down as the year progressed
 Went up and down over the year
 Stayed the same all year

(c) List up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain as fully as possible.**

For example:

- My motivation went up over the year because my English results continued to improve as the year went on.
- It has gone up and down depending on what we were studying. I hated formal writing, but enjoyed the film we studied.

Reasons and Explanations	
1	
2	

10 (a) Based on what you did when you were working on NCEA level 2 English, are there any things you think you would have liked to have done differently if you had your time over again (e.g., study harder)?

Yes

No

(b) If you answered yes, list up to **two** key things you would do differently and **explain these as fully as possible.**

For example:

- Study harder, because I realise I need to be better prepared for the exams
- Concentrate more in class, so that I am clear about what is required.
- Read questions in the exam more carefully, so that I don't answer the question wrongly and realise when it's too late to change anything.

Key Things I Would Do Differently	
1	
2	

11 (a) Thinking back on last year and the things you have been asked about in this questionnaire, list up to **four** things that you think have had the **most important** influence on your **motivation** on NCEA level 2 English. These can be **positive** or **negative** influences. For example:

- My English teacher was a big influence, as he explained things really clearly, so I felt confident that I could do what was required.
- I really wanted enough credits to pass NCEA level 2 so I could get the literacy credits for University Entrance.
- I became really unmotivated in English, because I worked hard at the beginning of the year but kept getting 'Not Achieved'. I just gave up.
- I worked really hard, because I was really worried about failing. I didn't want to be disappointed in myself.
- My friends have been a negative influence because they always wanted me to do things with them, when I should have been studying.

List up to **four** important things and **explain these as fully as possible**.

1	
2	
3	
4	

- (b) Look at the previous question and what you wrote. Each response has a number (1-4) beside it in the left hand column. Now think about which of the four responses was the most influential thing (e.g., you might decide it was number 3). Put that number in the box beside “The most influential thing”. Repeat the process with the other responses.

The most influential thing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The second most influential thing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The third most influential thing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The fourth most influential thing	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Thinking back to last year list your **Year 12** subjects in order from the **most interesting** (number 1) to the **least interesting**.

Note: **interesting** can mean something you enjoy, but it also may be something that is not always enjoyable (e.g., dissecting a sheep’s heart in biology). Instead it might be something you find fascinating, something you want to know more about, or is possibly challenging enough to hold your attention in a positive way.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....

13. (a) Did you find any aspects of Year 12 English interesting?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) If you answered yes, to 'What aspects of Year 12 English did you find **most interesting?**' list up to **two** aspects and **explain these as fully as possible.**

What is most interesting and why	
1	
2	

14 (a) Did you find any aspects of Year 12 English boring?

Yes
No

(b) If you answered yes, to "What aspects of Year 12 English did you find **most boring?**" list up to **two** aspects and **explain these as fully as possible.**

What is most boring and why	
1	
2	

15 (a) Have you enrolled in Year 13 English?

Yes
No

(b) List up to **two** reasons for your answer and **explain these as fully as possible**.

For example:

- I need to do Level 3 English to become a lawyer.
- I really enjoy English, because I love reading and watching movies.
- I don't need level 3 English, because I am going to do a Diploma in Catering next year.
- My Year 12 English teacher told my parents I should focus on other subjects, because I struggle with English.
- My parents have insisted I do it because they tell me I will need it when I leave school.

	Reasons and Explanations
1	
2	

16. (a) Have you any career paths that you intend to take when you leave school (e.g., going to university to become a lawyer, taking up a building apprenticeship)?

Yes
No

(b) If you answered yes, list up to **two** career paths that you have in mind and why you are interested in these.

For example:

- I intend to go to university to become a geologist, as I am really fascinated by earthquakes.
- I intend to do a building apprenticeship, as I know that builders will be in high demand in the future.
- I am keen to become an early childhood teacher, as everyone keeps telling me I'm good with little children.

	Reasons and Explanations
1	
2	

Finally:

As I indicated on the original permission form I will be contacting a few of you in April to see if you are willing to be interviewed for about 30 minutes. If I do contact you, please understand you are under no obligation to be interviewed if you do not wish to be interviewed.

Thank you so much for giving up so many lunch hours to fill in these questionnaires for me. I am very grateful that you have been so willing to share your thoughts and views with me. The information you have provided will be immensely helpful for English teachers in the future.

Wishing you all the best for this year.

Jan