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**Discovery, a Case Study on the New Zealand  
Lifeskills and Study Skills Programme for Adolescents,  
and its Contribution to Adolescent Development**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Education  
at Massey University, Palmerston North**

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## ABSTRACT

This case study examined Discovery, a lifeskills and study skills programme for adolescents, and its contribution to adolescent development. The Discovery programme was introduced in New Zealand in 1991 through the Global Youth Foundation. Developmental perspectives in adolescence suggest certain tasks and skills need to be achieved in order to reach adulthood. These skills are developed from the maturational demands, and the psychological and social adjustments the teenager needs to make in order to resolve their identity crisis (Erikson, 1968) and achieve their own identity. A review of international educational programmes suggested some of these needs were addressed.

A case study on the Discovery programme probed into the programme's development, content and structure. Responses to Discovery from previous participants were also investigated. This study then focused on the 22nd Discovery programme in New Zealand and its contribution to teenage development. This involved an exploration into Discovery's contribution to lifeskills, study skills, coping with challenges and limiting or preventing depression in the adolescent years. The Lifeskills and Study Skills questionnaire (LASS) was developed to examine these aspects. Parent-Adolescent communication was also measured to understand what changes may have taken place between two weeks prior to Discovery and two months after the last day of the programme. The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale by Barnes and Olson (1982) was used to determine this.

The resulting trends in this research showed Discovery positively influenced the participants' development by providing a number of skills which were consistent with developmental perspectives of adolescence. Sections of Discovery were highlighted as important for an adolescent's growth and development and participant changes were since attributed to Discovery. This study showed that Parent-Adolescent communication

improved for both the majority of teenagers and their parents. Intrafamily communication also enhanced for more than half the families. Sections of Discovery could also be highlighted as beneficial for coping with challenges and the prevention or limitation of depression in the adolescent years.

Overall, Discovery provided the skills and knowledge appropriate for the development of an adolescent. The seven day programme provided the forum for an initiation into adulthood similar to many “rites of passage” formalities. This study highlighted the skills required for adolescents in the New Zealand context and the confirmation of the developmental tasks outlined in Newman and Newman’s (1995) “early adolescence”. Recommendations from this research strongly supports the need for further research into educational programmes for teenagers. It is also recommended that the Discovery programme continues to be made available to New Zealand teenagers.

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# **PART ONE**

**CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION**

**CHAPTER TWO - REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND  
DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES**

**CHAPTER THREE - DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD  
OF THIS CASE STUDY**

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This case study focused on the New Zealand programme Discovery, a lifeskills and study skills programme for adolescents, and its contribution to adolescent development. The programme Discovery has been developed specifically for New Zealand adolescents aged between 13 to 18 years and has grown from the current Lead Facilitator's involvement with teenage programmes in Hawaii and Australia.

The Discovery programme was introduced in New Zealand with the establishment of the Global Youth Foundation in 1991. The Global Youth Foundation is a charitable trust devoted to offering programmes which promote the psychological and social well-being of the participants. Since Discovery was introduced to New Zealand, over 25 programmes have taken place, and continue to take place throughout the secondary school holidays. Discovery was designed to provide selected lifeskills and study skills training to fee-paying adolescents with a view to supporting their development during such an important transition in their life - from childhood to adulthood.

### Background

The writer's prior involvement with the Discovery programme as an adult staff member, allowed her to informally observe changes in the teenage participants over the seven days of the teenage programme. The behavioural and attitudinal changes observed were dramatic for some of the young people. It was therefore the interest in understanding what, and how, Discovery, contributed to these observed changes that led to this research being undertaken. Although the Global Youth Foundation previously gathered information about Discovery through their own questionnaires, these questionnaires were not analysed and therefore no formal evaluation had been made as to how exactly the programme contributed to the lives of its participants. The search for the influence of

Discovery on the lives of the participants, particularly from a developmental perspective, and their responses to the evaluations of the programme, formed the basis of this research. To achieve this, an investigation into the Discovery programme itself was essential.

The focus on skills training in adolescence is an important challenge because of its place in setting the building blocks for individuals to assume personal responsibility and the young people to find their place within society.

The observed enhancement of the teenage participants' personal development prompted a group of parents to bring the Discovery programme from Australia to New Zealand. A group of parents who had experienced Discovery abroad, through their own involvement as staff, and the observed effects it had upon their own teenagers, set up the Global Youth Foundation to establish a foundation through which the Discovery programme could be facilitated in New Zealand. The Discovery programme, was designed to encourage each participant to respond effectively and joyfully to life's challenges and to its developmentally required tasks. The Global Youth Foundation promotes Discovery as a programme which provides the participants with the skills to learn, to communicate effectively and take responsibility for one's own well-being and one's direction in their lives. Through these skills, Discovery aims to increase self-esteem, self-confidence, positive attitudes to life and to encourage the family to work as a supportive co-operative unit (Discovery Core Staff Manual).

### **Overview of the Developmental Perspectives**

The theoretical base contributing to this study stems from the developmental theory of Erik Erikson and his psychosocial perspective of adolescence. According to Erikson, adolescence is the fifth stage, out of eight stages in a person's life span development, called "identity versus role confusion". This period, covering the years from 10 to 21, is when the individual experiences an identity crisis, and the psychological crises and social

development skills interplay with the prospect of role confusion or diffusion (Erikson, 1963). The period of adolescence is the time in a person's life when they are faced with finding out who they are, what is important to them, and where they are going in life.

A successful resolution of this crisis prepares them for the next crisis in early adulthood: Intimacy versus Isolation. James Marcia elaborated and expanded on Erikson's original bipolar stage identifying four identity statuses (identity confused/diffused, foreclosure, moratorium, identity achieved) based on a person's stage of commitment or non-commitment to a vocation (Kroger, 1989). In Jane Kroger's analysis of adolescent development she claims, "fidelity or commitment to a vocation, a set of meaningful values, and a sexual identity are the observable cues indicative of a more or less successful identity resolution during late adolescence" (Kroger, 1989, p.34).

In line with Erikson's psychosocial theory, Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995) identified sets of developmental tasks - a set of skills and competencies that contribute to increased mastery over one's environment, that define what is healthy, normal development at each age in a particular society (Havighurst, 1972). Failure in achieving the tasks at one stage leads to greater difficulty in achieving later tasks which may even make succeeding tasks impossible to master (Newman & Newman, 1995). Each society has tasks and skills set for young people to learn in order to be admitted into adulthood and resolve the crisis at hand. The Discovery programme addresses a selection of developmental tasks which it attempts to cultivate in young people as they participate in the programme.

### **The Rationale of the Study**

The role of the Discovery programme in enhancing the lifeskills and study skills of adolescents involved in the programme needed to be examined in light of the participants' view of its effectiveness in supporting their growth and development. It

was important to get some insight into participants' responses on what they got out of the programme and its influence on their development.

With the introduction of the first Discovery programme in New Zealand in 1991, namely NZ 1, it was important to consider the tracing of its evolution and development, as well as focus on the organisational structure and the specific programme topics and activities of the 22nd Discovery programme held 12th to 18th July, 1998, at Nga Tawa School, Marton, New Zealand. With this knowledge, this study was intended to (1) identify the skills highlighted by the programme for adolescents, skills which were considered relevant to today's society and (2) study the participants' responses to Discovery's effectiveness in introducing selected lifeskills and study skills which support their development and their entry to adulthood. With this study of the Discovery programme in New Zealand, the rationale was to provide information on its role and contribution to the participants' development. In addition, it examined aspects of the programme which can be modified or improved so it could be more adaptable to the New Zealand environment.

### **The Aims of the Research**

The aim of this research was to conduct a case study of the Discovery programme, by tracing its historical development, examining its programme content, organisational procedures, and its contribution to the teenage participants' development.

More specifically, this research aimed:

- (i) To study the Discovery programme in New Zealand by examining its development, main purpose and aims, structure and content of the programme, availability of the programme, and the processes involved in staff training;
- (ii) To gain a background understanding of Discovery through an examination of previous participants' (Discovery NZ20 - 1997; NZ21 - 1998) responses to

the programme in relation to skills mastered as well as the participants' views of Discovery in relation to their achievements and their development. The researcher undertook this preliminary investigation as part of this study; and,

- (iii) To focus on a detailed study of Discovery NZ22 held 12th - 18th July 1998. In this section, the focus was on the participants' views regarding the contribution of Discovery to their lifeskills and study skills development, the nature of the communication patterns between the participating adolescents and parents, an overall perception of Discovery's influence in the teenage participants' lives, and, participants' views on challenging issues such as depression and coping and the aspects of Discovery which may have helped address these.

#### **Definition of Terms**

The terms "teenagers", "young people", "teens" and "adolescents" are used interchangeably in this thesis. For the purpose of this thesis, these terms refer to young people aged between 12-22 years. According to Newman and Newman (1995) there is a distinction between early adolescence and late adolescence. "Early adolescence" refers to those aged between 12 and 18 years and "later adolescence" refers to young people aged between 19 and 22 years. Both these definitions are used within this thesis as it applies to Newman and Newman (1995).

"Developmental tasks" are described by Havighurst as a set of skills and competencies that contribute to increased mastery over one's environment, that define what is healthy, normal development at each age in a particular society (Havighurst, 1972). "A developmental task is a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks" (Havighurst, 1972, p. 2). Thus, a developmental task is halfway between and individual need and a societal demand.

The word “lifescills” refers a number of developmental tasks which, according to Nelson-Jones (1991), are chosen sequences in specific psychological and social contexts. These tasks are deemed necessary for the healthy development of an individual. Nelson-Jones (1991) describe lifescills as having two levels. On one level lifescills are the skills which enable a person to make personally responsible choices; they ensure a choice of behaviours. On another level they are motivational skills which enable people to help themselves; they aid in the chosen sequence of behaviours. According to Nelson-Jones (1991) lifescills are aimed to empower rather than disempower people. “People require a repertoire of lifescills according to their developmental tasks and specific problems of living” (Nelson-Jones, 1991, p.13).

The specific types of lifescills addressed in the Discovery NZ22 programme are skills relating to an individual successfully living in the social environment such as communication skills, forming meaningful and satisfying relationships, including parental, peer and boy/girl relationships, teamwork and acceptance of others. Other examples of lifescills addressed at Discovery are focused around the strengthening of the internal structure or framework for living life as a responsible adult. Such skills covered include skills related to taking responsibility and control in one’s life, being reliable and trustworthy, goal setting, coping strategies and the psychological adjustments required when faced with life’s challenges, gaining confidence and motivation, and accepting oneself.

“Study skills” refers to strategies or tips for enhancing learning, particularly within the academic realm (Global Youth Foundation Promotional Brochure). The four specific study skills covered at Discovery are “mindmapping”, “learning styles”, “multiple intelligences”, “memory techniques”, and “speed reading” skills. Firstly, “mindmapping” refers to a technique where material to be learned is organised in a visual manner that is easily stored in long term memory. It is a most useful application of brain theory where the technique of mindmapping combines the skills associated with both the left and right

brain functioning such as logic, words, and symbols combined with left brain skills, and, the use of pattern, colour and shape for the right brain. The most common, versatile and easily learned mindmap has branches coming out from a central title. This technique of displaying material pictorially and conceptually assists in easy learning.

Secondly, “learning styles” refer to three most commonly expressions of how a person learns: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Those who have a visual learning preference would best learn by visual techniques, such as posters, reading or writing things down (Ward & Daley, 1993). Thus, visual communicators or learners tend to capture the concepts in their minds and/or use images. Auditory learners tend to listen and talk. They prefer to learn from lectures, talks or audio-tapes and verbalising material (Ward & Daley, 1993). Kinaesthetic learners use movement and action to learn hence they prefer to write, act, pace and use gestures (Ward & Daley, 1993). In addition to the three learning styles, Discovery participants also get to understand their own preference to learning through the seven multiple intelligences. “Multiple intelligences” provides a more diverse understanding of a way a person learns and is also provided in the study skills section of Discovery. The “multiple intelligences” are the theory of Howard Gardner (1993) and are anchored in the view that “human beings are capable of at least seven different ways of knowing the world” (p. 12). The seven intelligences Gardner (1993) refers to are musical, spatial, mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, physical and linguistic. Each represents a way in which the individual operates depending on the task or individual preferences. An overview of each is listed as follows:

musical - a person who has the capacity to perceive, appreciate and produce rhythms and melodies. They have a good ear, sing in tune and can keep time to music.

spatial - a person who understands their world through pictures and images. He or she has the ability to perceive, transform and recreate. They are sensitive to

visual details and can visualise vividly, draw or sketch ideas graphically, and can orient themselves in 3-D space.

mathematical - a person who prefers numbers and logic, has the ability to reason, and are good at sequencing with a rational outlook on life.

interpersonal - these people understand and work with other people. They are responsive to moods and intentions.

intrapersonal - a person who is connected with the inner self. They access their own feelings, are introspective, deep and soul-searching. They are also fiercely independent, and can work on their own successfully.

physical - these people are good at handling objects and controlling body movements. They like any hands-on activity.

linguistic - a person who is good with words. They have the skills in persuasion, can entertain, argue, or instruct effectively. They are usually trivia experts or masters of literacy. They also read voraciously and write clearly.

(Discovery Study Skills Workbook)

The third main study skill offered at Discovery are techniques for enhancing memory. “Memory techniques” are aimed at enhancing the learning process and include skills consistent with “multiple intelligences” and “learning styles” and involve strategies such as the use of music and colour while studying, peer tutoring, highlighting material when learning, working in a team, visualising and reading aloud.

Fourthly, the skill of “speed reading” is also taught at Discovery. “Speed reading” applies to a number of skills which allows the reader to increase their speed of reading as

well as their comprehension on material (Ward & Daley, 1993). Eye exercises and comprehension practise help the participants to better their understanding of the material and increase their speed of reading. All these skills are taught throughout the study skill sessions of Discovery.

### **Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The focus on studying in detail the Discovery NZ22 programme meant that to understand it fully, one had to take into account the history and development of the Discovery programme. This study therefore examined the overall development of the Discovery programme as it relates to New Zealand, with its historical development, purpose and aims, structure and content and processes involved in staff training. This provided an important background to the overall development of the programme and the context in which it was introduced. It was not intended in this study, to go more deeply into details of the organisation and administration of Discovery and the Global Youth Foundation, as this study was focused mainly on the participants and their views of the programme on their development.

In order to obtain a preliminary indication of participants' views to the programme, it was important to examine past participants' responses to previous questionnaires. In examining past participants' responses to previous questionnaires, only questions relevant to this study, such as skills mastered and their views on achievement, were selected as this section was a preliminary study intended to provide a basic understanding of the programme's accomplishments through the perspective of the participants. A list of responses was made through a clustering of similar remarks and some statistical tabulation was produced to illustrate and highlight some trends. It was the intention to identify parts of the programme which participants showed some degree of response; and thus provide preliminary information and directions for this study. It was not intended to focus on these results nor subject them to detailed statistical analysis.

The lack of literature on programmes for adolescents such as Discovery in New Zealand is not surprising considering it's recent introduction in 1991 and its previous cultural orientation. Two programmes out of the past 21 programmes for study were selected, Discovery NZ20 and NZ21, as preliminary data to the study as discussed above. International studies have therefore provided the basis for the literature review of educational programmes in relation to programmes such as the Discovery programme.

The theoretical link of this study to Eriksons's identity crisis of adolescence (Erikson, 1968) and Marcia's four identity statuses (Kroger, 1989) is acknowledged particularly in the adolescents' balancing between their commitment and confusion about their role in society. The link of the theoretical perspectives with this study lies with the developmental tasks spelled out in the theories by Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995) as their tasks identify skills or roles that needs to be learned by adolescents in order to become soundly adjusted in the adult world. The Discovery programme, which is the focus of this study, addresses certain tasks and skills which contributes to the well-being and development of its participants and are delivered through the lifeskills and study skills components of its programme. Discovery's tasks and skills serve as building blocks to development in a similar way that Havighurst's (1972) and Newman and Newman's (1995) developmental tasks are identified for young people to achieve.

### **Summary**

The focus of this case study was on the Discovery programme, which was introduced in New Zealand in 1991, and the contribution it makes towards the teenage participants' development. The observations made by the writer as participant observer during a previous Discovery programme in New Zealand prompted a formal study into the programme and the influence it had on the participants.

Erik Eriksons's psychosocial developmental theory, particularly the stage of adolescence, provides the developmental perspective of this study. Erikson refers to adolescence as a stage where the young person experiences the fifth crisis of "Identity versus Role Confusion", where identity is viewed as a balance between commitment and confusion about one's role in society (Kroger, 1989). Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995) identified developmental tasks which related to these roles and these relate to lifeskills and study skills, which are addressed, directly and indirectly, by the Discovery programme.

The rationale of this study was to obtain a clear picture of the role of the Discovery New Zealand programme in contributing to the adolescent participants' development within the New Zealand environment.

The aims of the study were therefore constructed around the above mentioned rationale such that a case study of the Discovery programme was undertaken and highlighted its historical development, content, procedures and overall contribution to the teenage participants development was highlighted. This involved a preliminary examination of the Discovery programme itself and a sampling of previous participants' responses to the programme. A specific investigation into Discovery NZ22 was also undertaken and the participants' views on the contribution to their lives involving lifeskills, study skills, communication patterns with parents, overall perceptions, and adolescent issues.

The terminology referring to young people aged between 12 - 22 years were defined according to Newman and Newman's (1995) characterisation of "early adolescence" (12 - 18 years) and "later adolescence" (19 - 22 years). Interchangeable terms for adolescence were also discussed.

Lifeskills and study skills forms the basis of skill-training for Discovery's teenage participants. In simple terms, lifeskills was defined as processes in which chosen

sequences in specific psychological and social contexts are conducive to a person's well-being. Study skills refer to strategies or tips for enhancing learning. Both the lifeskills and study skills components of Discovery incorporate psychological, social, and academic learning skills.

The investigation into selected aspects of the Discovery programme, previous participants views of Discovery, and specifically NZ22 participants' responses to its contribution in the lives of young people, emphasised a case study approach to research.

The following chapter comprises a review of the literature and developmental perspectives in adolescence.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES**

This chapter introduces the literature on other programmes and developmental perspectives related to this study. The sections are designed to provide information of other studies related to lifeskills and study skills training. The literature pertaining to teenage issues is also reviewed including challenges in adolescence, coping, depression and parent-adolescent communication. A review of developmental perspectives in adolescence is also provided.

The sections in this chapter are arranged in the following order: Lifeskills Training Programmes for Adolescents; Study Skills; Challenges in Adolescence and Adolescent Coping Ability; Depression in Adolescence; Parent-Adolescent Communication; Developmental Perspectives in Adolescence; Cognitive Learning and the Social Environment; The Period of Adolescence and the “Rites of Passage”; Societal Changes Influencing Adolescence; Conclusion. The combination of sections provided an overview of the literature relevant to the present study.

#### **Lifeskills Training Programmes for Adolescents**

Educational programmes for teenagers have fallen into a number of categories which either address specific groups or the general population, and either address certain topics or a generic based curriculum either in the school settings, private institutions or community based initiatives. The following two sections discuss the programmes available in New Zealand for teenagers and then the lifeskills programmes available internationally.

### An Overview of Programmes Available for New Zealand Teenagers

Teenage self development programmes have been in existence for decades in New Zealand. Examples such as Outward Bound, Outdoor Pursuits, Spirit of Adventure and the new Spirit of Youth Trust provide programmes for the teenage population to enhance self esteem and confidence. Sport, adventure and physical challenges have generally been vehicles for self development programmes for teenagers on these programmes.

A variety of clubs such as Scouts and Guides, youth church groups and other community groups have also created programmes which support the teens of New Zealand society by encouraging their personal growth. However, formal evaluations and the understanding of the impact they have on their participants is scarce.

Within secondary schools, the programmes provided in the curriculum have predominantly been focused around a problem-based curriculum. Alcohol, drug and teenage pregnancy programmes have been developed in response to the recent problems in teenage years. In 1997, the Ministry of Education released a draft document of the Health and Physical Education curriculum for all New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education, 1997). A trial of the curriculum took place during 1999 in various schools throughout New Zealand and has been implemented in the national curriculum over the following two years. Although it is still early days before the impact of the Health and Physical Education curriculum for teenagers is implemented and evaluated, it is a curriculum which appears to have addressed adolescent development by focusing on a number of adolescent challenges by promoting healthy living, mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. This is done through a generic curriculum of social and intrapersonal skills as well as an integration of specific topics pertinent to adolescents such as sexuality, relationships and drug abuse. The spiral curriculum also allows for the accumulation of knowledge through age-appropriate learning.

School-based initiatives are one way of reaching the general population of teenagers. Initiatives which enhance teenagers' psychological and social health have featured increasingly within the school environment (Taylor, 1992; Ministry of Health, 1995-1996; Hamburg, 1997). The development of public health prevention programmes for youth are ideally implemented in the school environment as they reach a large youth population. Various booklets and pamphlets about lifeskills in education have been disseminated throughout New Zealand schools to promote the successful application of these to school students (Ministry of Health, 1995-1996).

Community-Based youth initiatives are somewhat more intense and usually engage the participants over shorter periods of time than schools. For some, it is better for students to learn skills outside of the school environment as school is often perceived as a negative place and inhibits rather than promotes mental health. For example, one quarter of the youth sampled in the Gordon and Grant's (1997) research on the psychological health of adolescents in Glasgow named "school" as a place when asked to indicate "things that make me feel bad". Although not all reports about school were negative, a large number of them were. On reflection of their findings, it is unfortunate that such feelings are conjured up about an institution which plays a prominent role in teenagers' lives.

Whether lifeskills training is promoted through schools or through alternative means, the programmes essentially provide a context in which the skills, necessary for the healthy development of adolescents, are being taught. However understanding the idiosyncrasies and benefits of each programmes is the next step in the formula of addressing the educational programmes available to adolescents.

#### A Review of Lifeskills Training Programmes - International

There are a number of programmes which have involved lifeskills training and have either been the total focus of programmes or existed as portion of the curriculum. Some

programmes have focused upon more generic skills such as communication or problem solving skills, whereas others have focused upon a curriculum associated with specific teenage problems such as suicide, teenage pregnancy or the rate of young people smoking. The following review of literature presents a combination of programmes which have been either developed within schools or through community initiatives and which have, to varying degrees, the elements of lifeskills training. An explanation of each programme is first given and then the respective studies of each programme is explained.

The community based programme named Summer Training Education Programme (STEP) was developed in America to address school age pregnancy (Walker & Vilella-Velez, 1992). STEP's long term goals were to reduce teenage pregnancy, decrease school drop-outs, improve academic skills and the chance of employment. The programme is implemented during a fifteen month period and includes two full-time Summer vacations. STEP was aimed at 14 to 15 year old disadvantaged teenagers and was designed to enhance their options for life by providing meaningful and attainable alternatives to pregnancy. In the STEP programme "disadvantaged teenagers" referred to those who were from low income families, who came from a wide ethnic and racial group, and whom had a high percentage who were already sexually active.

There are four integrated components to the STEP programme of which one part, consisting of 18 hours, is devoted specifically to lifeskills training. The remaining three components consisted of work experience during the two Summers (90 hours), remediation in reading and maths (90 hours), and regular support from mentors during the school year (80 -100 hours) over the fifteen month period of the programme.

The Lifeskills and Opportunity component (LSO) of STEP is designed to help young people raise their expectations for the future so they will be motivated to delay parenthood until they have achieved those goals. The combination of skills associated to

the preparation of employment and planning future families, addresses the heart of future prospects for adolescents. The Lifeskills and Opportunity component builds upon generic skills such as assertiveness, decision-making, communication, goal setting, and a recognition and rejection of stereotypes.

Research into the effects of STEP for their participants has involved 4800 young people from five different cities who were part of either the treatment group or the control group. The research investigated whether the programmes goals, stated earlier, were upheld (Walker & Vilella-Velez, 1992). The findings showed that the effects were positive. By the end of the first Summer reading and maths scores had improved by an average of half a grade for STEP youth as compared with the control group who received only Summer jobs and no training. The STEP participants also showed more responsible sexual and social behaviour, had higher attendance rates, and attrition rates for the next Summer were high (75%). Overall, the participants became more knowledgeable of birth control and the consequences of teenage parenting, and as a consequence there was no increase in sexual activity. These findings demonstrate that the goals of the programme were in fact upheld.

The Summer Training Educational Programme (STEP), especially the Lifeskills and Opportunity component, has similarities to the Discovery programme such that the mode of address allows for experiential learning since the teenagers themselves find the answers to their own questions or problems. This of course is helped by the guidance and support of trained staff members and the facilitators. Furthermore, Discovery is similar in the content of generic skills it provides as problem solving, decision making, communication, recognition and control over stereotypes and goal setting are also part of the Discovery programme. However, the difference between Discovery and the STEP programme emerges when the number of hours spent in lifeskills training is compared. Discovery is predominantly a lifeskills training programme whereas the STEP programme attributes a much smaller component of such training in its curriculum.

Another teenage programme, which is based upon a problem curriculum, is that of Orbach and Bar-Joseph (1993). This suicide prevention programme incorporated lifeskills training with the skills appropriate for an adolescent to deal with feelings of hopelessness, the development of ego identity, coping and suicide tendencies. The mode of implementation is introspective such that each of the seven weekly, 2 hourly sessions was constructed in such a way to elicit discussion about the participants' own emotional experiences. These shared and guided experiences were designed to emphasise the similarities of their experience, find alternative ways to solve problems and encourage a self-help and peer-help approach. The 393 participants were from six classes in six high school throughout Israel and were categorised as non-at-risk individuals except for one class which consisted of conduct disordered teens. All participants were randomly assigned to either the treatment group or the control group.

The topics of the seven sessions were concentrated around depression and happiness, adolescent and the family, feelings of helplessness, coping with failure, personal perspective on coping with stress and problem solving, coping with suicidal urges, with the last session providing a summary and feedback. The impact of this programme was conducted in a pretest-posttest design using instruments which measured suicidal tendencies, ego identity, hopelessness, and coping ability. The participants' evaluation of the programme also provided further information. The posttest was given within a three week time span after the last session. The results showed the experimental group showed a significant reduction in suicidal tendencies, had an increase in ego identity cohesion and their ability to cope, and had a decrease in feelings of hopelessness (Orbach & Bar-Joseph, 1993). Also, the evaluations of the programme overall were mostly positive.

One limitation of the previous study is that the programme was conducted through each school's counsellors and variance between their styles and interactions, both during and out of the session times, may have emerged. The significance of the findings showed

that an introspective programme effected the participants' ability to cope and shielded against self-destructive behaviours. This is significant especially in the area of suicide prevention as other programmes which were aimed toward the prevention of suicide have shown reverse results (Shaffer, Vieland, Garland, Rojas, Underwood & Busner, 1990). Orbach and Bar-Joseph (1993) have placed great importance on the type of programme and the difference it made to suicide prevention. It involves the process of exploring inner feelings and actions helps to guide and encourage the teenage participants to focus on alternative ways of doing things which are both positive and health promoting. Discovery is similar to Orbach and Bar-Joseph's programme through its introspective elements.

A generic educational programme for early adolescents named Bridging the Gap was developed and implemented through the Salvation Army in eight Eastern states in America. The aims of the programme were to help young people to take charge of their own lives through self respect, to provide information about their physical and emotional needs and to have the knowledge and skills in community rights and utilising community services. These three broad curriculum areas were divided into twelve units of 90 minutes each and conducted as a community project for those who used the services of the Salvation Army. Support from parents was gained and their inclusion of parents in final ceremonies helped to open communication channels.

The effect Bridging the Gap had on its participants was explored by the Salvation Army and Dr. Petersen (Hamburg, B., 1990). Information was gathered through the first and last sessions of the programme which involved the completion of a questionnaire measuring self concept, knowledge and coping skills. A control group was used to understand the effects of the programmes on its participants. The findings showed that the youth in the Bridging the Gap program made substantial gains in knowledge about themselves, the community and its resources (Hamburg, B., 1990). The majority of participants felt they had become more self confident and had a more positive image of

themselves. Overall, the participants showed positive gains in the skills area the programme provided.

In a review of literature on lifeskills programmes for early adolescents, Moote and Wodarski (1997) found that adventure based lifeskills programmes impacted positively on the adolescents' self-concept and self-esteem. Combined with a counselling type programme, these programmes serve to benefit most of the participants in the studies reviewed. An increase in co-operative behaviours, the generalisation of adventure skills to their life areas, and positive gains on psychological, social and intellectual growth were also acknowledged.

### **Study Skills**

Study skills are offered as part of the Discovery programme in recognition of the skills required by a young person in today's society. These days, it is not only important for young people to receive an education but also to succeed at school so that it increases the prospects for employment and their future. According to Crockett and Petersen (1993), study skills are essential in helping a student through schooling and exams, especially those exams which contribute toward nationally recognised qualifications. Therefore, employment opportunities are reduced for those who do not have a minimum qualification and the probability of earning a satisfactory income is somewhat lessened (Crockett & Petersen, 1993).

New Zealand statistics support this as in the 1998 statistical analysis of school leavers, the highest group unemployed are those with no qualification with the next highest group being those who have only School Certificate (Statistics New Zealand, 1998).

In New Zealand the percentage of school leavers who obtained at least Sixth Form Certificate or higher has slightly decreased. In 1993, 66% of all school leavers obtained Sixth Form Certificate or higher (Ministry of Education, 1995) as compared with 64% in

1995 (Ministry of Education, 1997). By calculation, the remaining 9744 have School Certificate or no such formal qualifications (Ministry of Education, 1997). The majority of leavers withdraw from school when their age no longer permits them to remain there.

School was one source of stress for the fifteen year old Canadians investigated in a study by Mates and Allison (1992). The reasons for school as a contributor to stress in adolescence showed that there was considerable pressure put upon students to succeed at school which comes mainly from parent who want their child to succeed, not only at school, but in life as well.

Exams are also a stressful time for teenagers and are often an instigator of negative feelings (Gordon & Grant, 1997). In a snapshot view of feelings, fifteen year olds from nearly all the high schools in Glasgow, on a designated day, were invited to write about "how it is to be you today". Many students chose to reflect on school. The feelings related to school were mostly negative referring to boredom, doing badly in school, stressful place to be, tests/exams, teachers, homework and peers.

Increasing the prospects of the future in regard to employment opportunities undoubtedly promotes the positive development of an adolescent. Supplementary programmes which provide additional skills for learning and increasing the prospects of the future have already been discussed. One such intervention was the STEP programme which provided literacy and numeracy skills to the participants of the programmes (Walker & Vilella-Velez, 1992). These skills, along with the mentoring assistance and opportunity to work, helped the teenagers gain better grades in reading and writing and all had higher attendance rates at school.

The interest for the present study is in finding out whether the study skills taught at Discovery were useful or not and whether the perception of their study skills had, in their

view, improved. It was presumed that good study skills lead towards better academic results in the future.

### **Challenges in Adolescence and Adolescent Coping Ability**

The period of adolescence provides the opportunity for young people to explore their world and discover their role in society as it fits for them. In doing so the adolescent may be faced with many challenges and sources of stress as they move through the tasks associated with adolescence.

A number of challenges and stresses can be identified within adolescence as the following review of literature shows. Peers, teachers, and especially parents were found to be major stresses in a number of studies (Moore, 1997; Morris, 1985; Patten, 1988), as so was finding a job (Silva, 1989; Morris, 1985). The threat of war especially nuclear war was particularly disturbing for teenagers in the study by Silva (1989) which focused on Otago teenagers. Other challenges that created stresses in young peoples lives were school achievement (Moore, 1997; Morris, 1985; Silva, 1989), coping with their own physical development (Morris, 1985; Maskill, 1991), body size, especially for girls (Moore, 1997), sexual orientation (Moore, 1997), moving house or places (Morris, 1985). Such stresses may be either prolonged or intermittent (Nicol, 1987).

Mortality issues are a major stress for young people as a number of studies have shown. In a large sample of Wellington secondary school students, Patten (1988) reported the teenage participants rated highly the fear of their own death. In the same study the death of a family member or friend was also rated highly in their fears (Patten, 1988). Death was the concern of a large number of adolescents in another study (Nicol, 1987). Other studies have shown similar findings with the addition of the feeling of stress about their own health (Morris, 1985; Moore, 1997; Nicol, 1987).

A number of major sources of stress were reported in Mates & Allison's (1992) study of 15 year old participants. The teenage participants, who were from three Toronto high schools, were asked a number of questions through focus group interviews and identified major stresses such as relationships with parents and family, work and lack of money. Other responses given by some of the 15 year olds as stresses were friends, school, gangs or strangers, addictions/drugs and the pressure to drink, smoke or use drugs. When the 23 participants were asked how someone their age would deal with or cope with a number of problems, their responses showed that their coping mechanisms involved substance use (drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and using drugs) and diversionary tactics such as relaxing, playing sports, listening to music, or playing an instrument. Rebellious responses were also given for coping with challenges such as being reckless or telling lies. Mates and Allison's (1992) study is particularly important as it provides a guideline for the responses to challenges in adolescence given by the teenage participants at Discovery.

Different reports of concerns emerge when the age of the young person is studied. For example, Violato and Holden (1992) found those in younger adolescence (11 - 14 years) were more concerned about smoking whereas older adolescents referred to challenges with drugs and other substances. The same study showed that during the middle ages of early adolescence, 14 to 15 years, there was an increase in concerns about peer acceptance and relationships with friends (Violato & Holden, 1988). Self esteem issues were also raised at this age (Levenson, Morrow, Johnson & Pfefferbaum, 1983). For older adolescents, the focus of concerns was upon school and academic performance, which in developmental terms, impinges upon vocational security and career plans (Violota & Holden, 1988).

Gender differences were analysed in a study by Plancheral and Bolognini (1995) which examined the responses to coping with challenges in early adolescence. It was reported that young females invest in social activities, express more negative feelings, and adopt

consumption habits such as shopping or eating as coping strategies. Young males on the other hand, invest in hobbies or sport and use a sense of humour to cope.

One study relevant to the present research investigated a psycho-educational intervention for the effects on teenage coping abilities. Rice, Herman and Petersen (1993) theories in coping with challenges in early adolescence were examined through a psycho-educational programme. The purpose of the programme was to intervene in the developmental process by helping young adolescents learn effective coping responses to the challenges that arise. Feelings of being depressed were also investigated in Rice, Herman and Petersen's study.

The intervention programme introduced by Rice, Herman and Petersen (1993) to the teenage participants, takes the interpersonal approach to teaching adaptive emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses to stresses and challenges. This programme involved 16 sessions conducted for 40 minutes over a period of eight weeks. Each of the 16 sessions focused on a particular social skill, coping method or challenge. The teaching of skills begins through a group discussion, followed by the formal teaching of a skill and modelling of the skill, then ends with the adolescents themselves practising and integrating the skill into their lives experientially. This programme was implemented through the school environment and conducted during school hours with small groups (8-12 members). A parent-training component is also part of this intervention and is run concurrently with the teen programme.

Participants of the programme by Rice, Herman and Petersen (1993) were recruited from two communities with approximately equal number of boys and girls. The participants consisted of 151 adolescent, 121 mothers and 93 fathers. Less than one third of the adolescents were identified as high-risk for developing depression from a self report measure completed prior to the programme's start. Preliminary findings showed the programme helped to increase the quality of family relations and decrease negative life

events. The adolescent control group reported the opposite on both accounts. Also participants of the programme indicated significant increases in perceived coping abilities and control over challenges at school and interpersonal situations whereas the control group had no such effects. A positive effect of the intervention was reported as a significant decrease in negative life events from pretest to post-test as compared to the increase of such events for the control group.

Miller, Meyer, Grund and Herman (1992) assessed the short term proximal effects of on coping and social abilities on the same psycho-educational intervention as above, and with the same groups of teenagers. Participants in the intervention reported significant increases in perceived coping abilities and perceived control over challenging school and interpersonal events, and relationships with peers and family improved. This is different to the control group who showed no such effects and even declined in the quality of their family relationships.

The challenges which face young people were investigated in the present study as so was their ability to cope with such challenges. An exploration of Discovery's influence on such situations was explored through the teenagers views. In no way was this exploration intended to address the treatment of coping in adolescence. Instead the issue of coping with challenges was explored in regard to the overall development of the adolescent.

### **Depression in Adolescence**

Depression is prevalent during adolescence and can potentially develop into a health problem during the teenage years (Andrews & Merry, 1998; Rutter, 1986; Reynolds, 1992; Shaffer, 1986; Kosky, Silburn & Zubrick, 1986; Marcotte, 1996). In an overview of the prevalence of depression in adolescence, on studies carried out on broad samples of New Zealand, US and UK teenagers, Andrews & Merry (1998) reported that at any one time between 0.7% and 3.4% of teenagers are depressed. In a "community study of

Christchurch teenagers found that 3.1% of 15 year olds displayed depression whereas 16.7% of 18 year olds had depression” (Andrews & Merry, 1998, p. 21). More specifically, if depressive symptoms are analysed for teenagers over the last 12 months, the rate of depression becomes much higher. Andrews and Merry (1998) noted that between 2.7% and 16.7% of the adolescent population in New Zealand recorded enough symptoms for a diagnosis of depression (Andrews & Merry, 1998). With the knowledge about the prevalence of depression in the adolescent years, this study examined the participants’ views about the influence Discovery may have on depression.

Bird and Drewery (2000) briefly addressed the issue of depression in the teenage population in New Zealand. The number of young people affected varies considerably with symptoms including low moods, diminished interest in going out, significant weight loss or gain and sleeping problems including too much or too little. They stress that depression does not necessarily lasts forever although once you have had one episode it is more likely that you will have another.

According to Silva (1988), the psychological health of adolescence is the most common, and the most debilitating, health problem for people in this age group. The most common health disorders found by Silva (1988) in New Zealand adolescents were depression, conduct disorder and substance abuse. School was also a source of stress reported by the teenagers of the same study. It was found that 10% of adolescents in the general population of New Zealand had a definable mental health disorder at any one time.

In a study by Schichor, Bernstein and King (1994), 595 of the 966 (approximately 60%) who responded to a questionnaire indicated that they had been depressed or felt down to some degree, with females twice as likely to report such states. This group of teenagers, with a mean age of 15.5 years, were given a screening questionnaire soliciting information about their general health, home, school, reproductive health, mental health,

and exposure to drugs and alcohol during their routine visit to a medical centre. All teens were asked if they had ever felt down or depressed, and if so, the frequency of such feelings. The teenage participants were also asked to report if they could relate to any of the problems that were listed in the questionnaire. Those who identified as having felt down or depressed at some stage clearly identified more problems than those who never felt down or depressed. Although some symptoms identified were physical such as “pain in your legs” or “skin or complexion problems” the most significant correlation of problems identified by those who indicated they have felt down or depressed were psychosocial in nature. The six problem types reported were “trouble with your parent understanding you”, “worried about the future”, “worried about sex or pregnancy”, “trouble making or keeping friends”, “worried about parents” and “worried about a place to live”. In addition to the profile of those who have felt depressed or down, these teenagers were also the group who were three times more likely to have experienced suicide ideation, and seven times as likely to have reported a suicide attempt. The psychosocial nature of the problems identified by the teenagers in Schichor, Bernstein and King’s (1994) study help to explain the situations in which teenage depression comes about. The reasons for a teenager being depressed are investigated in the present study through a teenage perspective as well as the skills and strategies Discovery may provide for young people to prevent or limit depression.

Gordon and Grant’s (1997) study of secondary students aged between 13 and 14 years, mentioned previously, responded to questions about how they felt on the day designated for the questionnaire to be completed. Nineteen percent of students said they felt depressed giving explanations of “feeling low”, “feeling down”, “bad attitude”, and being “sad”. The importance of the questionnaire given by Gordon and Grant (1997) was that it elicited the teenagers own responses and feelings through the series of questions asked about their mental health.

The researcher's intention to explore issues of adolescent depression in the present study was to find out the participants views of depression with no intention of addressing the treatment. A number of research questions were designed merely to become aware of the participants' views as it relates to their developmental tasks and development.

### **Parent-Adolescent Communication**

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a potentially stressful time not only for adolescents but also for parents. As the adolescent finds their own identity, the family requires a realignment in family relationships. In order for this to happen successfully there must be effective communication. Noller and Callan (1991) are convinced that effective communication is the medium to good relationships within a family. The ideal family environment for adolescents, suggested by Noller and Callan (1991), is one where communication is positive and effective, where adolescents receive strong support from their parents, feel free to express their feelings and opinions appropriately, and to discuss issues, raise conflicts, negotiate about plans and make decisions.

Positive, effective communication in the family, especially between parents and their children, is crucial in the functioning of the family and the well-being of adolescents. Communication affects the quality of the relationship between the parents and the healthy functioning of the family, both as a whole, and individually. Open communication between adolescents and between them and their adult caregivers is imperative as Nelson, Farberow and Litman (1988) discovered in their study of prevention of youth suicide. Their research focused on a combined group of 12 - 20 year olds, parents of suicide victims, and profiles of the suicide victims prior to their suicide. The study showed all groups within the study indicated communication problems as a factor possibly contributing toward suicide. Furthermore, "having someone to talk to" was identified by the young people as a preventative measure for suicide.

Barnes and Olson (1985) tested 426 families, consisting of at least one adolescent and one parent, for their communication patterns between parent and adolescent. These families were classified as intact, meaning the vast majority of parents were not divorced (96%) and were without any serious problems. The adolescents consisted of equal male and females and with an average age of 16.4 years. The instrument used for exploring communication levels in the family was the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale. The results showed mothers reported better communication with their child than fathers due to the higher levels of openness reported between mother and child. As a group, teenagers reported difficulty communicating with their parents. Both parents reported significantly more openness and fewer problems in communication with their child. In contrast to the parents views, the teenagers viewed their intrafamily communication with much greater negativism.

Parent-Adolescent Communication was also investigated in a study by Noller and Bagi (1985). Frequency, initiation, recognition, self-disclosure, domination and satisfaction were dimensions of communication investigated in 58 families with at least one adolescent who ranged in age from 16 to 20 years and who lived at home with their parents and who attended university. The results showed that the teens tended to communicate more with mothers than fathers over a wide range of topics. One exception to this was the topic of politics in which teens engaged in communication with fathers on this topic. More self-disclosure was related to mothers than to fathers, with daughter disclosing more to mothers than did sons.

Parental control was examined in a study by Smetana (1988). Both the adolescents and parents views were sought in regard to control over certain issues relating to moral, conventional and personal issues. As expected, parent perceived issues as more under their authority than their children. Moral and conventional issues were in parental control however parents also wanted to take control over personal issues as well caused some conflict with their adolescent.

The present study examined communication between the participating teenagers of Discovery and their parents. A diagnostic tool for communication was used to investigate the changes in communication patterns. Comparisons of communication before and after Discovery revealed any changes that took place and highlighted the effects of Discovery.

### **Developmental Perspectives of Adolescence**

The Discovery programme is directed at adolescents from ages 13 -18 years. It addresses lifeskills and study skills which aim to contribute to the young person's well-being and psychosocial development. One well known theorist in human development is Erik Erikson who has defined 8 developmental stages in a lifespan (Erikson, 1963). In each stage the individual is required to resolve conflicts in order to adjust to the psychological demands placed upon them by society. In Erikson's theory of development, societal expectations guide the individual into behaving in certain ways.

According to Erikson (1963) "adolescence", the fifth stage of his theory, is a crucial time for identity development where the young person wants to establish and know himself or herself as a specific individual, to maintain some connection with the meaningful elements of the past, and to accept the values of a group. It is in this period of life that the adolescent is faced with resolving the conflict of forming their own identity or risk identity confusion. The process of identity formation is marked with a variety of changes such as experimentation with various roles, sorting out the likes and dislikes of the role, making important decisions pertaining to their career, making political commitments and an increased interest in world affairs. All these developmental changes helps the adolescent make a commitment towards their own identity and a resolution of the conflict.

An adolescent who achieves an identity for themselves, has a new and refreshing sense of self; one which is acceptable within their social environment. On the other hand, the

adolescent who unsuccessfully resolves the identity crisis, suffers from the confusion of who they really are with regard to their own beliefs, values, thoughts and possible future. Such adolescents are likely to either withdraw and isolate themselves from their family and peers or totally lose their identity within their social environment.

Erikson's emphasis on identity development during the years of adolescence has been the basis of studies by James Marcia. Marcia (1967) expanded Erikson's concept of an identity crisis by categorising adolescent development into four identity statuses: identity confused/diffused, foreclosure, moratorium and identity achieved. All of these involve both a crisis and commitment on the part of the individual.

The first category which describes the young person as identity confused, is one who has not yet experienced a crisis or made any commitment to a vocation or set of beliefs. In other words, the adolescent has not developed a commitment to anything, instead they continue in their childlike activities, thinking and status. The second facet of adolescent development, foreclosure, discusses the adolescent in a situation upon which an identity has not been explored or formed by the adolescent themselves. Instead, the adolescent has taken upon an identity which has been handed to them, usually by their parents. The adolescent in this state has experienced commitment, but has not experienced a "crisis" and therefore takes upon the values, beliefs and vocation that they have known all their lives or what has been decided for them. If the adolescent does not sufficiently challenge their environments then foreclosure may become permanent and they will remain dependent on others (Kroger, 1989).

In contrast to the foreclosure adolescent, the third identity status identified by Marcia, named moratorium, allows the adolescent to explore and actively search for alternates to what they have already experienced and know. Therefore, the adolescent is in an acute state of crisis, struggling to find their identity. They are usually rebellious and less co-operative with authority, they challenge most things, and they try out different roles

to ascertain what they like or dislike in order to make a final commitment to their identity. In accordance with Erikson's developmental perspective also, this stage is important for the identity development of an individual such that the person is able to experiment with alternative identities without trying to settle on any one (Erikson, 1968). However, this becomes destructive when the person reaches the age maturity of adulthood without having made adult commitments such as choosing a lifestyle, a vocation, an ideology or even a partner.

A final commitment to a identity is not part of the moratorium process. However, moratorium is a pre-requisite to the fourth and final concept of Marcia's theory, the identity achieved adolescent. The adolescent in this category is one who has made a commitment to an identity which has developed from the moratorium stage as well as past experiences. Therefore, identity achievement is a synthesis of the past and the projected future. It is from this anchor of self acceptance and a stable self definition that the adolescent has made a sound commitment toward a role in society with adult status, and hence, found their own identity.

Marcia's identity statuses of adolescent development are transient in nature such that an individual may involve alternating the statuses at different times before perhaps achieving a status of identity achieved (Kroger, 1989). Not all theories follow this pattern.

The present study acknowledges the importance of Erikson's theory of an identity crisis and Marcia's expansion by identifying identity statuses in as much as the Discovery programme contributes to the young person's learning of skills related to one's role and identity.

Within the same psychosocial perspective of adolescence, Havighurst (1955) specified a set of development tasks to be achieved. According to Havighurst, a developmental

task, as previously defined in Chapter One, is a combination of “an individual need and a societal demand” (Havighurst, 1948, p.vi). Within Havighurst’s theory of adolescence there are eight stages necessary for the healthy development of an adolescent. Each stage is thought to be brought about by certain elements such as biological maturation, one’s own motivation or through societal requirements. When each one of the elements are “ripe”, then it is the appropriate time for the task to be learned, or what Havighurst coins as “the teachable moment” (Havighurst, 1948, p.7). Any effort to move the individual to the next developmental stage prior to the “teachable moment” would prove fruitless (Havighurst, 1948). The purpose of education therefore is to act as a medium in which the individual can be helped to achieve certain developmental tasks.

The eight tasks of adolescent development and those acquired through infancy and childhood, help the individual to form their identity. Each of the eight developmental tasks in adolescence are designed from specific goals deemed by Havighurst as necessary in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Each goal is explained after each developmental task. The eight tasks and their goals involve the following developmental elements:

**1. Achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes**

*Goal:* To learn to look upon girls as women and boys as men; to become an adult among adults

**2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role**

*Goal:* To accept and to learn a socially approved adults masculine or feminine social roles

**3. Accepting one’s physique and using the body effectively**

*Goal:* To become proud, or at least tolerant, of one’s body

**4. Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults**

*Goal:* To become free from childish dependence on one’s parents; to develop affection for one’s parents without remaining dependent upon them

**5. Preparing for marriage and family life**

*Goal:* To develop a positive attitude toward family life and having children

**6. Preparing for an economic future**

*Goal:* To organise one's plans and energies in such a way as to begin an orderly career; to feel able to make a living

**7. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour - developing an ideology**

*Goal:* To form a socio-politico-ethical ideology

**8. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour**

*Goal:* To develop a social ideology; to participate as responsible adult in the life of the community; to take account of the values of society in one's personal behaviour

(Havighurst, 1972)

Like Havighurst, Newman and Newman (1995) also developed the concept of developmental tasks and divided the concept of Erikson's identity development into two stages reflecting "early adolescence" and "later adolescence". The first conflict, identity versus alienation, refers to early adolescence (12 - 18 years) and is a stage which is strongly influenced by the peer group. The psychological crisis within this first stage requires the adolescent to identify with a specific peer group or risk being alienated altogether. According to Newman and Newman (1995) the psychological crisis has developed from the pressure within the family, school and age peers to conform to the peer group in order to prevent alienation.

Newman and Newman (1995) outline a number of developmental tasks that occur during "early adolescence": physical maturation, formal operations, emotional development, experiencing membership in a peer group, sexual relationships.

“Physical maturation” is the first developmental task which impacts upon the self image of the teenager as well as the nature of peer relationships. For example, girls mature earlier than boys and therefore the young female shows physical size differences amongst her male and female peers causing the likelihood of alienation. “Formal operations” is the second development task which invites more complex thinking. This gives way to the shift of thinking about the complexity of the new, more mature environment and what it offers. It is also a time when the child reminisces about childhood activities that no longer exist. “Emotional development” refers to the psychological adjustment required to master the new tasks. It is also time when the young person becomes more aware of their emotions and the variety of such emotions. As the mastery of new tasks is being met, so is the need to acquire skills relating to new feelings and emotions brought about in adolescence.

The next developmental stage within early adolescence is the need for “membership in a peer group”. This involves learning various social skills in which the peer group provides the shaping of appropriate behaviours through negative and positive reinforcement. Newman and Newman (1995) give the example of drug use as a behaviour motivated by a need for peer acceptance and a desire to conform to peer group norms. The last developmental stage within the 12 - 18 year age group, and coincides with the beginning of the next stage, “later adolescence”, refers to “sexual relationships”. As the teenager matures an interest in the opposite sex increases. This may be a time where the adolescent begins dating which enhances sex role identity and reflects upon their social status and membership in the peer group. The progress of an adolescent through the past five stages allows the adolescent to become more socially acceptable in an adult society. However, before this happens, further developmental stages are required throughout “later adolescence”.

Newman and Newman’s (1995) second stage of adolescent development occurs in the later teen years at which the psychological crisis of identity versus role diffusion emerges.

Four developmental tasks exist in this stage of development: autonomy from parents, gender identity, internalised morality, and career choice.

At first, establishing “autonomy from parents” is important as the child moves away from their adult caregivers and learns independence in various ways such as money handling, cooking, buying and/or driving a car. Often during this time the young person has little contact with their parents showing the sign of their growing independence. The second developmental task in “later adolescence” is “gender identity”. This is where the adolescent is socialised into appropriate sex roles through a usually sex-appropriate career and holding a steady job giving the skills of providing for others such as a family in the future. “Internalised morality” meaning the formation of one’s own morals follows the second developmental task in “later adolescence”. This stage conceptualises Kohlberg (1964) theory in which there are three stages of moral development. The pre-conventional stage (approximately 4 -10 years) is where the child accepts adults morals much like the foreclosure stage of Marcia’s. The second stage of moral development named the conventional stage, usually occurring around the ages of 10 - 16 years, relates to the more conscious maintenance of their existing structure and respect for authority and morals. The third stage, post conventional (16 - 25 years), activates the awareness of their own values which helps to generate a commitment to either a universal or newly-developed personal set of values and morals. In some cases this may be a reorientation and reconciliation of their previous values and morals yet incorporating their individual integrity combined with social necessity. The three stages of Kohlberg’s (1964) moral development are integrated into Newman and Newman’s (1995) third stage of development in the adolescent’s later years. Although it is likely that the older adolescent may have passed through at least one earlier stage of moral development as described by Kohlberg, the progression to the third stage of post-conventional moral development requires the synthesis of the two earlier stages for moral development to be finalised.

The last of Newman and Newman's (1995) developmental tasks is "career choice". This involves a long term decision in a career choice and is compounded by decisions about the effort needed for their career which involves whether they opt for direct entry into the workforce earning immediate rewards or delay entry by studying toward a long term career goal. Decisions of salary expectations, job satisfaction, lifestyle, rewards and routines all need to be taken into account in career choice or planning. It is only after this stage of adolescent development that Newman and Newman (1995) considers the individual to have formed an identity, providing the conflicts have been resolved and the adolescent has successfully progressed through each stage, that they are ready and equipped for an adult place in society and that society will accept them as such.

The theories and concepts presented in the present study all have certain features in common. All approaches have been organised around the concept of identity development in adolescence and have a psychosocial perspective. Forming a new "sense of self" has been crucial in the theories presented and have been the underlying challenge of adolescents. Another commonality has been the theories of adolescence are developmental. This requires an incremental perspective of a person and not a static or predisposed view of what constitutes a person. Therefore, the forming of an identity is a developmental process involving the reorganisation of past experiences and associated developmental tasks in order to equip the individual with the psychological and social growth necessary for the present as well as their future.

### **Cognitive Learning and the Social Environment**

The readiness to learn certain developmental tasks is dependent upon the individual's zone of learning. Similar to Havighurst's notion of the "teachable moment", the Vygotskian theory of learning involves a more cognitive approach to attaining skills. According to Vygotsky, cognitive development moves forward largely because the individual is in a world that provides assistance when the child needs it and can benefit from it. The responsive social world lets the adolescent solve for themselves the

problems that they can handle. Critical development occurs with tasks that are not too easy but one that the adolescent can do with assistance. The responsive social world provides the assistance on these tasks that are within the child's "zone of proximal development" according to Vygotskian theory (Miller, 1993). This "zone" is defined as behaviours beyond a child's level of autonomous functioning, but within reach with the assistance of others. People learn how to perform tasks within their "zone" by interacting with more competent and responsive others who provide them with cues, hints, prompts and assistance on an as-needed basis. Such assistance leads to autonomous functioning and competency of the task, however without the stimulation of the supportive interactions with others autonomous functioning is impossible.

The type of instruction used in the supportive social environment is one which uses a scaffolding approach (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding, as the name suggests, is used when a building is being erected and is gradually removed as the building becomes self-supportive. This is the type of approach used in learning also when an adult provides hints and prompts for the young person to learn a task. Scaffolding, is seen by Rosenshine and Meister (1992) as an effective tool for teaching higher level cognitive strategies. In their review of numerous studies of students who had successfully been taught cognitive strategies, it was apparent that scaffolding was used frequently by these teachers. "Scaffolds are forms of support provided by the teacher (or another student) to help students bridge the gap between their current abilities and the intended goal" (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992, p. 26).

Scaffolds are effective because they provide support for the student, but they do not specify each and every step to be taken, thus allowing for the student to adjust and formulate their own effective strategies that they will be motivated to use.

### **Societal Changes Influencing Adolescence**

Physical, social and emotional changes throughout adolescence can be a stressful and extremely challenging time for many New Zealand teenagers. In a fast changing society, such as today's society, these issues are heightened. Different pressures, stresses and an uncertainty of a future bear upon today's teenagers whereas perhaps in their grandparents' or even their parents' time these pressures did not exist, or certainly not to the extent they are today (Hamburg, B., 1990). From Hamburg's perspective, these pressures are described in the following paragraphs.

The function of the family and the role of adolescence has changed strikingly over the last century. Traditionally, family relationships provided powerful organising principles. Families were once the focus of education, social and economic activity. Through the gradual process of parental guidance and teachings, children grew up learning the tasks and roles that would be required of them and knowing what their opportunities would be as adults, both in economic and emotional terms. Nowadays, the family has been made to forfeit some of these roles due to the pressures and demands our rapidly changing society exerts upon the family unit.

As the family's role has changed, so too has the role of adolescence. As the industrial revolution developed, the opportunity for work no longer resided within the family and so the growing child lost the opportunity to observe, imitate and learn important factors related to future opportunities. As machine-related productivity and the need for human labour diminished, adolescents could not readily be absorbed into the job market and therefore were forced to gaining a formal education. Education became compulsory and took the role of educating the young person so that they could cope with the tasks of the industrialised world. Thus adolescence was a time for formal education and when the necessary skills and knowledge for a sound vocation were obtained.

In the past, a clear future pathway was built into childhood experiences. The child and adolescent would continuously, yet gradually, observe and imitate the adults in their environment learning the skills necessary for survival in an adult world. Then, the skills were learned in relation to an environment that changed only very slowly and could be understood as well as circumstances would permit. Children and adolescents could build a solid foundation on which they could make a contribution, earn respect and find satisfaction as adults.

Now, with the rapidity of change, the prolongation of education, and the scale and complexity of society, the future is less clear (Hamburg, B., 1990). Opportunities for young person to gain the social, psychological and moral skills required for adulthood no longer comes entirely from the family. Likewise, the traditional formal education system did not meet the holistic skills required for the healthy development of an adolescent. The lifeskills training and social support systems that were built into the teachings of the family over the years can no longer be taken for granted. There is now a requirement to teach the skills that are missing.

In the last few decades, the skills necessary for the healthy development of the adolescent have been the focus of extra-curricula or tailored programmes. The new and immediate demands for appropriate education and socialisation of youth to prepare them for productive and satisfying roles in the future have begun to be met. Educational programmes, both within and outside the traditional school setting, have taken the role to provide, or at least supplement, the life skills and social skills training that once was the role of the family.

This present research focused on one such educational programme which provides lifeskills training (including social skills training) and study skills training for teenagers. Therefore an understanding of Discovery and the role it plays in skill-training for

adolescents is important as the changing role of society and the role of educational programmes promotes such programmes.

### **The Period of Adolescence and the “Rites of Passage”**

As our society has changed, the period of adolescence has become less defined and there is no clear cut passage from childhood to adulthood. Instead, there is a period which is prolonged with activities that simulate adult status yet without a distinctive point of arrival of an adult.

In Western society there is a gradual recognition of a person’s competencies which introduces a child into adulthood. For example, intellectual competencies are marked with the acceptance into intermediate school, high school, and for some, tertiary education. There are also events which signify the transition into adulthood such as the permission to leave school, the attainment of a driver’s license and to get married without parental consent at 16 years, to be able to vote at 18 years (Statistics New Zealand, 1999) and to be allowed to buy or drink liquor at 18 years of age also (New Zealand Statutes, 1999). However, the fact that these events are stretched out over a period of time makes the change in status less clearly defined than it is for other cultures.

Arnold Van Gennep, an anthropologist, was the first person to report the phenomenon he named the “rites of passage”. Van Gennep (1960) describes the “rites of passage” as ritual celebrations of a new life role, that it is designed to smooth the transition from one status or role to another. Simply put, to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood.

In tribal cultures such as Africa, the “rites of passage” is inaugurated by puberty changes and initiation ceremonies undertaken to mark the “coming” of maturity. This period is a distinct, discontinuous event in a young persons life. When the young person returns home to the village and family after the ceremony, they immediately assume adult status

in the community. Although puberty may initiate such ceremonies, Van Gennep (1960) argues such festivities also function for social and psychological adjustment.

In Western culture the transition from childhood to adulthood has been a more gradual and continuous transition than the discontinuous and distinct period of coming into adulthood as in tribal cultures. Many argue this period in Western cultures has become increasingly prolonged (Muus, 1970; Newman & Newman, 1979; Hamburg, B., 1990; Hamburg & Takanishi, 1989).

Whether the “rites of passage” is discontinuous as in tribal cultures or continuous as in Western culture, it is the education that takes place in this period that is important. The educational component of a “rites of passage” represents society’s way of acknowledging the timely characteristics of human development. The “rites of passage” has the function of transmitting knowledge about sexuality, providing training in adult skills, functions and tasks, and a passing of “lore of the tribe” including the socialisation of the young person into adult status. The “rites of passage” not only teaches behavioural skills but also provides a role in the social, psychological and moral adjustment of a young person (Van Gennep, 1960).

For the young person, it is less clear to them how they can be useful, earn respect and be a productive part of society without the education process. The skills associated to the “rites of passage” training is imperative for the healthy and holistic development of the young person. The less uncertain or ambiguous the transition from childhood into adulthood, the more positive opportunity the adolescent has in making assumptions about themselves, their future and their social environment.

### **Conclusion**

The present study offers the perspective of teenage development, from an educational point of view, by examining a lifeskills and study skills community based programme for

New Zealand teenagers. Lifeskills training offers the individual an invitation to accept responsibility in their lives as well as tools to help themselves at their stage of development. Little research within New Zealand and around the world has been formally conducted on programmes offered to teenagers. This research endeavours to remedy this and seeks to understand the contribution Discovery makes in the participating teenagers' lives.

Lifeskills, study skills, communication with parents and views on adolescent issues including depression and coping strategies, were the areas chosen to be investigated in this study. These areas of skill are important in adolescence and contribute to the healthy development of young people.

How an adult functions and fits into the requests of society is a consequence of adolescent development. The healthy psychological and social development of an adolescent is therefore important. Through the teenage years the challenges and stresses facing an adolescent can often be the cause of an adolescent engaging in inappropriate behaviours which are unacceptable in society's standards. Teenagers' feelings towards stresses and challenges in their lives often determine the level of such behaviours.

The developmental perspectives presented in this chapter stemmed mainly from the Eriksonian tradition which included Marcia's extension of identity statuses and Havighurst's (1972) and Newman and Newman's (1995) developmental tasks. The process of adolescence involved the learning of a number of skills which the young person needs to master before moving onto the next area of skill, and, true to developmental theory, the tasks impact upon the following stages of development whether positively or negatively, depending if these skills have, or have not, been mastered. So what becomes important, from a developmental perspective, is that these skills are mastered at the optimal time of normal development.

Due to the changing role of the family, the skills necessary for the development of a young person into adulthood are not being taught. What would have been taught within in the family boundaries in a once slow changing society, is now being taught through educational programmes which address the deficiencies our teenage population possesses. Such programmes focus around teaching skills which enhance the transition into adulthood by encouraging the psychological and social development of a young person. In other words, they endeavour to teach the young person the skills for life. Lifeskills training programmes provide the rituals and skills associated with the “rites of passage” and enables the young person to eventually arrive at adulthood. Discovery is one such programme which promotes skills-training for teenagers.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD OF THIS CASE STUDY**

#### **Rationale for the Research Design**

The main aim of this research was to conduct a case study of the Discovery programme, introduced in New Zealand in 1991, by tracing its historical development, examining its programme content, organisation and procedures, and understanding the overall contribution to the adolescent participants' development.

The case study approach was used, bearing in mind the developmental perspective underlying adolescence and the research literature previously reviewed in the preceding chapter. This methodological approach, which included participant observation, interviews, a survey, and some historical research, allowed for more detailed and more in-depth understanding of Discovery than any other approach would have given.

The three aims, described in Chapter One were:

- (i) To study the Discovery programme in New Zealand by examining its development, main purpose and aims, structure and content of the programme, availability of the programme, and the processes involved in staff training;
  
- (ii) To gain a background understanding of Discovery through an examination of previous participants' (Discovery NZ20 - 1997; NZ21 - 1998) responses to the programme in relation to skills mastered as well as the participants' views of Discovery in relation to their achievements and their development. The researcher undertook this preliminary investigation as part of this study; and,

- (iii) To focus on a detailed study of Discovery NZ22 held 12th - 18th July 1998. In this section, the focus was on the participants' views regarding the contribution of Discovery to their lifeskills and study skills development, the nature of communication patterns between the participating adolescents and parents, an overall perception of Discovery's influence in the teenage participants' lives, and, participants views on challenging issues such as depression and coping and aspects of Discovery which may have helped address these.

Details of the method used in gathering information about Discovery and its contribution to adolescent development are described in the following sections.

### **Framework of this Chapter**

The following first section outlines the research questions corresponding to the three aims of this study. The second section addresses the first aim and describes the procedure taken to obtain information about the Discovery programme. The third section describes the methodology used in addressing the second aim with the fourth section explaining the procedures which addressed the third aim. This latter section includes an explanation about the two questionnaires used during this data collection procedure. These are the Lifeskills and Study Skill questionnaire and the Parent-Adolescent Communication Survey. The description of these questionnaires include their development, the pilot testing of each, how and when they were used and the analysis procedures conducted for each. In relation to the third aim, the fifth section describes the participants of Discovery NZ22. The sixth and seventh sections of this chapter state the ethical considerations related to this study, with a summary ending the whole chapter.

### **The Aims and Research Questions**

Discovery in New Zealand is a programme which provides lifeskills' and study skills' training to teenagers and offers teenagers a number of strategies and skills designed to enhance their development. The first aim of this study was to trace the development of the Discovery programme in New Zealand - to describe its history, main purpose, aims and content of the programme and the processes involved in staff training. The main question for this section was:

1. What is the Discovery New Zealand programme and how did it develop?

The sub-questions which were developed to answer this main question were:

- 1-1. How did the Discovery programme develop?
- 1-2. What is Discovery's purpose and intended outcomes?
- 1-3. Who are Discovery's participants?
- 1-4. When is it scheduled and where?
- 1-5. What is the mode of address of the Discovery programme?
- 1-6. What is the structure and nature of training for staff at Discovery?
- 1-7. What is the content of Discovery programme?

The second aim was to obtain a preliminary understanding of previous participants' responses to the Discovery programme in relation to skills mastered, and the participants' views of the programme including the achievements in relation to their influence on their development. The main question relating to this aim was:

2. What have been the responses of previous participants to New Zealand programmes that are relevant to the present research?

The third, and final aim, was to focus on a specific Discovery programme, Discovery NZ22, with regard to participants' views about the effects it had on their lifeskills' and study skills' development, communication patterns between parent and adolescent, overall developmental skills, the influence of Discovery in their lives, and views of issues in adolescence. The examination of communication patterns involved the participating

teenagers' parents, those who were present on the last day of Discovery NZ22, as well as the teenager participants. The main research question for the third aim was:

3. What were the reactions of Discovery NZ22's participants to: the lifeskills and study skills sections, their perception of communication, their perception of Discovery overall, and the contribution of Discovery on coping ability and limiting or preventing depression in the adolescent years?

The following research questions were developed in relation to this third aim. These were:

- 3-1. To what extent does Discovery NZ22 contribute to the lifeskills and study skills development of the teenage participants?

The sub-questions which were developed to answer this main question were:

- 3-1A. What sections of the lifeskills part of Discovery were perceived most useful and least useful?
- 3-1B. What sections of the study skills part of Discovery were perceived most useful and least useful?
- 3-1C. What percentage of teenagers learnt new study skills?
- 3-1D. What percentage of teenagers improved their study skills?

- 3-2. To what extent does Discovery NZ22 influence changes in the nature of communication for the participating parents and teenagers?

The sub-questions which were developed to answer this main question were:

- 3-2A. Were there any changes in the parents' and teenagers' perception of communication before and after Discovery?
- 3-2B. What percentage of families had a change in their perception of communication after Discovery?
- 3-2C. What were the changes in communication for each gender for each member of the family?

- 3-2D. Was there any difference in the changes of communication for first-born teen families compared with families which have an older sibling?
- 3-3. What is the teens' overall perception of Discovery's influence in their lives?
- 3-4. From the teenage participants' viewpoint, to what extent would the sections of Discovery NZ22 have an effect on coping and depression in the adolescent years?

The sub-questions which were developed to answer this main question were:

- 3-4A. What are the challenges teenagers have to cope with?
- 3-4B. Is there anything in Discovery that would influence teenagers' ability to cope?
- 3-4C. What are the NZ22 participants' reactions to issues of depression?
- 3-4D. Is there anything from Discovery that would help an adolescent deal with depression?

### **The Methodology Relating to the First Aim**

The information gathering exercise pertaining to the first aim, "to study the Discovery programme in New Zealand by examining its development, main purpose and aims, structure and content of the programme, availability of the programme, and the processes involved in staff training" and research questions, followed the form of historical research. The information about the development, purpose, content and structure of Discovery was obtained from a variety of information sources.

One source of data gathering for this main research question was arrived by obtaining and reading the number of publications that the Global Youth Foundation had compiled and used for promotional purposes.

The second way of gathering data for the first research question of this study was by direct observation. The researcher's position as a staff member and researcher provided the opportunity to gather information about the participants, the content of the programme, training of staff and the mode of address without undue intrusion on the environment. Additionally, each day a diary was kept in regard to the content and activities of the day which provided additional information and insight into the Discovery programme.

The third data gathering procedure involved interviews with key people in the Global Youth Foundation and/or the Discovery programme. Four interviews were conducted by the researcher to gather information on about the Global Youth Foundation and the specifics of the Discovery programme. The two male and two female interviewees were selected for their long standing involvement with the Global Youth Foundation and/or Discovery. The interviewees had varying roles within the organisation and/or the programme. One was the Chairperson for the Global Youth Foundation Board, another was a Member of the Global Youth Foundation Board and Programme Director of Discovery NZ22, another was the Lead Facilitator of the Discovery programme, and lastly, the other interviewee was a Discovery "graduate" who continued with the Discovery programme in the capacity of a staff member.

Three broad categories of interview questions were asked (see Appendix V) which asked questions around the history of the programme, the personnel structure and content of the programme, and, teenage issues and development. An overview of the transcripts of the combined group of interviewees adds to the information source of this aim.

Out of the four interviewees, two people were interviewed by phone with the remaining two being interviewed face to face during Discovery NZ22. Signed consent was obtained from all four interviewees using the Interview Consent Form shown in Appendix IV.

Introductory letters were sent to the three New Zealand participants requesting consent and available times for an interview. When the consenting forms, shown in Appendix IV, were returned the researcher phoned the interviewees and conducted the interviews asking questions as set out in Appendix V. As each participant gave their responses to the questions, they were written down word for word by the researcher and confirmed for accuracy. The phone interviews took an average of 22 minutes to complete.

The third interviewee indicated it would be more convenient to be interviewed while at Discovery NZ22. Arrangements were made for this through the mail. Again the researcher wrote down each response the interviewee gave and reiterated it back for accuracy. The fourth interview took place during NZ22 also. This interview was recorded by an audio tape and was later transcribed. The face-to-face interviews took an average of 70 minutes to complete.

The researcher read each response to the questions asked in the interview format (Appendix V) and clustered each question's responses. The collective information was presented in answer to the first research question. Every comment given by the interviewees was recorded and reported in this research. Reference to the Discovery Core Staff Manual by the Lead Facilitator were obtained through the appropriate pages copied for the researcher and agreed that they were used solely for the purpose of this research. Permission to use the Discovery Core Staff Manual was given by the Lead Facilitator and the Programme Director.

The information gathered about Discovery through the three main sources - promotional publications and manuals, interviews and the researcher's observations - provides a three pronged approach to gathering data. This triangulation of sources contributed to the validity of the information gained. Such information is presented in Chapter Four.

### **The Methodology Relating to the Second Aim**

The information gathering exercise relating to the second aim which was “to gain a background understanding of Discovery through an examination of previous participants’ (Discovery NZ20 - 1997; NZ21 - 1998) responses to the programme in relation to skills mastered as well as the participants’ views of Discovery in relation to their achievements and their development” followed the form of historical research as well as an analysis of previous survey information. The information pertaining to previous participants’ responses of questions about Discovery came from questionnaires distributed by the Global Youth Foundation to the participants of the previous Discovery programmes. The responses to the questionnaires were used as preliminary information for this research.

The main question relating the second aim of this study was “What has been the responses to Discovery from previous participants that are relevant to the present research?” This was arrived at by examining previously completed questionnaires by past participants of NZ20 and NZ21 as these were the two programmes with the highest proportion of questionnaires returned. The responses from participants of NZ20 and NZ21 Discovery programmes - the two Discovery programmes prior to NZ22 were collected and reported as one group.

The range in age for NZ20 and NZ21 was 13 - 18 years with an average age of 15.7 years. A large concentration of participants was centred around the 15 - 16 year old age group (std. dev. = 1.12). One hundred and fifteen teenagers participated in NZ20 and 85 participated in NZ21. For both programmes there were approximately 12% more male teens than female teens.

The questionnaire used by the Global Youth Foundation offered a 10 point rating scale for 32 questions pertaining to personal, interpersonal and school situations. This part of the questionnaire was sent to the teens before the first day of Discovery and again given

to the participants on Day 7 of Discovery. The teenagers were asked to evaluate themselves on a rating scale of 1-10 where the rating of one referred to “awful” and 10 referred to “great”. The higher the rating the more positive was the evaluation of themselves in that situation. From NZ20 and NZ21, 172 out of the possible 201 (85.6%) teenagers’ questionnaires were able to be paired due to the first names and similar handwriting, and for some, the second names’ initial that were put on the questionnaire.

The other 17 questions given on the last day of Discovery asked about the teens’ expectations and skills learnt at Discovery, the programmes’ usefulness or not, personal achievements, changes in reading scores, an overall rating of Discovery and any perceived changes noticed in themselves. The last questions asked for the teens’ thoughts on the Facilitators and Team Leaders, whether they would recommend Discovery to their friends, what they would like included in a graduate programme, and any suggestions or recommendations for the programme.

Not all the questions of the evaluations of NZ20 and NZ21 were used. Only the responses to questions which were relevant to the aims of this research were utilised. This meant that the responses to 11 questions were used. Responses given to questions relating to graduate programmes, comments to other teens and the Facilitators and Team Leaders were not reported in this research’s results.

The responses from the participants from the two Discovery programmes were collected and reported as one group. Each questionnaire was read and responses clustered according to the topics which emerged. The results for this section are reported in Chapter Five.

### **The Methodology Relating to the Third Aim**

The third aim focused on the Discovery NZ22 programme and examined in detail the contribution the Discovery programme has on the teenage participants’ development

through an investigation of their lifeskills, study skills, parent-adolescent communication, overall perception of Discovery, and issues in adolescence. One main research question and a number of sub-questions were developed to answer the main question. These were:

3. What were the responses of Discovery NZ22's participants to: the lifeskills and study skills sections, their perception of communication, their perception of Discovery overall, and the contribution of Discovery on coping ability and limiting or preventing depression in the adolescent years?
  - 3-1. To what extent does Discovery NZ22 contribute to the lifeskills and study skills development of the teenage participants?
    - 3-1A. What sections of the lifeskills part of Discovery were perceived most useful and least useful?
    - 3-1B. What sections of the study skills part of Discovery were perceived most useful and least useful?
    - 3-1C. What percentage of teenagers learnt new study skills?
    - 3-1D. What percentage of teenagers improved their study skills?
  - 3-2. To what extent does Discovery NZ22 influence changes in the nature of communication for the participating parents and teenagers?
    - 3-2A. Were there any changes in the parents' and teenagers' perception of communication before and after Discovery?
    - 3-2B. What percentage of families had a change in their perception of communication after Discovery?
    - 3-2C. What were the changes in communication for each gender for each member of the family?
    - 3-2D. Was there any difference in the changes of communication for first-born teen families compared with families which have an older sibling?

- 3-3. What is the teens' overall perception of Discovery's influence in their lives?
- 3-4. From the teenage participants' viewpoint, to what extent do the sections of Discovery NZ22 have an effect on coping and depression in the adolescent years?
- 3-4A. What are the challenges teenagers have to cope with?
- 3-4B. Is there anything in Discovery that would influence teenagers' ability to cope?
- 3-4C. What are the NZ22 participants' reactions to issues of depression?
- 3-4D. Is there anything from Discovery that would help an adolescent deal with depression?

The data for the third aim and related research questions was gathered using two questionnaires. These were the Lifeskills and Study Skills questionnaire, developed by the researcher, and the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale, developed by Barnes and Olson (1982). From here on in, the former questionnaire is referred to as LASS and the latter questionnaire referred to as PACS. The LASS was designed to answer research question and the subsequent research sub-questions of 3-1, 3-3 and 3-4, with responses to the PACS used to answer research question and subsequent sub-questions of 3-2. An explanation of these two questionnaires follows, including information about the actual questionnaire, the pilot testing procedure, the method of gathering the data, and how the information was then analysed.

#### The Lifeskills and Study Skills Questionnaire (LASS)

The LASS questionnaire, outlined in Appendix I, comprised of 20 questions. All questions were designed by the researcher to get information from the teenager's own perspective and in their own words. A combination of open and closed type questions were used and a Likert type scale for question eight was used. The type and variety of

questions utilised were developed from existing questionnaires of Discovery as well as from Wadsworth (1997) and Creswell (1994) recommendations on constructing research questionnaires.

Questions 1 to 13 were specifically designed to elicit information about how meaningful and relevant Discovery's 'lifeskills' and 'study skills' sections were to the participants and what personal changes occurred, if any, during the week.

Questions 14 to 20 asked questions about teenage problems and how they thought Discovery may have influenced these situations. To encourage participation in these questions, and because of the disclosure needed to answer some of them, a less personal approach was asked for, yet still eliciting the valuable information required for this research. These questions asked for information about someone of their age group, hence removing any unnecessary discomfort of self disclosure.

On the covering page of the questionnaire the participants were asked questions about their age, gender and ethnicity as these variables provide valuable information in the analysis of results. The ethnic groups used in the questions were similar to those used in Inland Revenue forms.

#### Pilot Testing of the LASS Questionnaire

The LASS questionnaire was pre-tested for three aspects. Firstly, the survey was given to four graduate teenagers from Discovery to investigate each question and instructions on their user-friendliness. Comments on the questionnaire were collected face to face, on a one-to-one basis, from four graduates of the programme. All the graduates were females and were nominated by the Global Youth Foundation's National Manager to the researcher as willing participants. Initial contact was made with each graduate via phone and, as each teenager was willing to participate in the pilot study, appointments were

made to meet each graduate individually. The four graduates resided in the same city as the researcher and ranged in age from 14 to 17 years.

Two of the graduates gave verbal reports of how they would answer the questions. This involved changes to improve clarity and readability of the questions from a teenager's perspective. The following two graduates gave written responses and general comments about the questionnaire. This testing was to ascertain the length of time needed to complete the survey. The same two graduates' written answers were examined to ensure the responses given were relevant to the questions' intentions.

Changes to the questionnaire were made after each of the four graduate's comments so that the following graduate received the revised version of the questionnaire. All comments and suggestions were utilised and the final LASS questionnaire emerged (see Appendix I).

#### Method of Gathering Data Using the LASS Questionnaire

The LASS questionnaire was given to all 117 teenage participants present on the last day (Day 7) of the teen programme. One teenager was not given the questionnaire as he went home during Day 6 of the programme for health reasons. The questionnaire was introduced and given to the teenagers by the researcher during the morning of Day 7. It was explained through the verbal introduction, and the covering page of the questionnaire, that it was not compulsory to complete the form and anonymity was assured as there was no need to write their name on the questionnaire. Participation was agreed to by all those to whom the questionnaire was given hence all the questionnaires were returned to the researcher completed. Forty minutes was allocated to complete the questionnaire and each participant was encouraged to complete it alone.

Since some questions related to sections of Discovery and were given as a reference, each section was briefly explained to the teenagers before giving out the questionnaires.

The researcher was available for further explanation of the sections if needed while the questionnaire was being completed.

Once the questionnaires were completed they were collected and given to the researcher for later analysis.

#### Analysis Procedure of the LASS Questionnaire

Analysis of the LASS questionnaire began with reading and tabulating the answer to each question for each teenager. All answers to each question were read first and then clustered according to the themes that emerged. Every comment was reported including those not able to be clustered to a topic.

The responses given to the questions which used the names of sections and their likes and dislikes to these sections, were collated and counted. The percentage of those who liked or disliked each section was reported.

#### The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS)

The PACS, outlined in Appendix III, was developed by Barnes and Olson (1982) to assess the views of adolescents and their parents regarding their perception of communication with each other. The PACS was used to gain responses to research question six and the written permission to use the instrument for this purpose was obtained from Dr. Howard Barnes in 1998 prior to Discovery NZ22.

The PACS questionnaire provides information regarding the extent of openness or freedom to exchange ideas, information and concerns between generations, the trust or honesty experienced and the tone or emotional disposition of the interactions between family members, whether positive or negative. Two sub-scales, open and problem, measure the positive/negative processes and content issues in parent-adolescent communication. Ten items measure the openness (positive) aspect of communication

with the remaining ten items measuring problems (negative) in communication. The items are intermingled to reduce the bias of responses.

An original version of PACS consisted of 35 questions corresponding to three factors: 1) open family communication, 2) problems in communication and 3) selective family communication. Eventually the selective family and problem communication sub-scales measuring negative communication were combined and reduced to 10 items improving the construct validity. The reliability score (Cronbach's Alpha) for the current PACS for a sample of  $n=1,841$  was .87 for open communication, .78 for problem communication and .88 for the total score (Barnes & Olson, 1982).

The open communication questions correspond to question numbers 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17. An example of an open communication question is:

1. I can discuss my beliefs with my (child/mother/father) without feeling restrained or embarrassed.

The problem communication questions are the remaining numbers 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 20. An example of problem communication is:

2. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my (child/mother/father) tells me.

The first sub-scale, open communication, focused on the freedom or free flowing exchange of information, both factual and emotional as well as the lack of constraint and degree of understanding which fosters satisfaction in interactions. The second sub-scale, problems in communication, focuses on the negative aspect of communication such as hesitancy to share and the general dissatisfaction with their interactions (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen & Wilson, 1982).

The 20 items on the PACS are answered on a Likert Scale from 1 to 5. These refer to

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=moderately agree, 5=strongly agree. The PACS is easily administered and scored. It is designed for ages 12 years and older and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

In addition, the post-Discovery covering letter, shown in Appendix II, sent to the teens explaining the research and the questionnaire also had on it a question asking the teen where they were placed by age in the family. Since the dynamics of the relationship, and hence communication, between parents and their children change as the child grows into adulthood (Barnes & Olson, 1982), the reason for the question was to investigate whether being the first-born teen in the family made any difference to scores compared with those who had an older child in the family and whom had already experienced possible teen-parent communication patterns. Such communication patterns were examined through the average total scores for the parent and teen groups with the teen being the first-born in the family and the parent and teen groups where the teen was not the first-born in the family?

#### Method of Data Gathering Using the PACS

One parent or guardian of each teenager who was present on Day 7 (Parents Day) of Discovery, was asked to complete the parent's form of the PACS. The PACS questionnaire (Appendix III) was mailed to the teenagers and their parents 12 days prior to the first day of Discovery for teens, and again two months after Discovery NZ22 had finished.

In recognition of the different arrangements of family members, the following packages were adhered to for both mail-outs:

- (1) One parent form and adolescent form was sent to the families where all members had the same address.

- (2) For the families whose parents had different addresses, the parent and adolescent form was sent to the address where the teen and one parent resided together, and, only a parent form was sent to the other parent's address where the teen lived separately from this parent.
- (3) Two parent forms and two adolescent forms were sent to families that had two teenagers participating in Discovery NZ22.
- (4) Where the teenager and parents all have differing addresses the appropriate individual forms were sent to each member of the family.

Envelopes were packaged up by the researcher with the various combinations of forms. Each envelope sent out contained a postage paid self-addressed envelope (researcher's name, Global Youth Foundation address) to send the forms back in. Appendix III shows the forms to be completed; one by the teenager, and the other by their parent. Another envelope was provided for both the teen and parent to enclose their completed questionnaires in before placing them in the postage paid, self-addressed envelope. It was neither encouraged nor discouraged to discuss the responses with each other. However, the two envelopes provided for each questionnaire allowed for discretion if the participants preferred this. Most of the individual envelopes returned to the researcher were individually sealed.

Once the questionnaires were packaged according to the different family arrangements described above, and to ensure confidentiality of family details to the researcher, the envelopes were sent to the Global Youth Foundation where they were addressed and the appropriate package sent to each family according to their situation. The Global Youth Foundation was responsible for addressing and sending out the PACS to all teenagers and their parents both before and after Discovery NZ22. The returned envelopes,

addressed to the researcher, were put aside unopened and passed on to the researcher soon after the return deadline.

### The PACS Sampling Procedure

**Pre-Discovery:** Of the 118 family packs of the PACS sent out, two families were eliminated because two teenagers decided at the last minute not to go to the programme. Two other teenagers readily took their places, however they did not receive the PACS and so were not included in this part of the research. Every parent or guardian received the parent form of the PACS except for four teens' fathers whose addresses were unclear, two parents of two different teenagers who had overseas addresses, and those late enrolments previously explained. Although these parents did not receive PACS the other parent did which ensured at least one parent was involved. The limited number of days (12) given for the completion and return of the questionnaires was the reason for not sending them to the two overseas addresses. Therefore 116 families were available to complete the PACS forms. Of the 116 families, 97 teenagers and 100 parents returned the pre-Discovery PACS (Table 3.1), which resulted in 96 matches between parent and teen. This parent-teen match equates to approximately 83% response rate to the first PACS.

**Table 3.1 Response Rate for Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale**

| Questionnaire | Sample                               | Returns |      |           | Final Sample        |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|---------|------|-----------|---------------------|
|               |                                      | Parent  | Teen | P/T match | P/T match to PACS 1 |
| PACS 1        | 116 families*                        | 100     | 97   | 96        | not applicable      |
| PACS 2        | 96 families*<br>eligible from PACS 1 | 58      | 56   | 56        | 50                  |

\*one teen, one parent

PACS 1=two weeks before NZ22

PACS 2=two months after NZ22

P/T=Parent, Teen

**Post-Discovery:** The same procedure for pre-Discovery mail-out was followed for the Post-Discovery PACS mail out. All families, with the exception of the two overseas parents and the four teen fathers whose addresses were unclear, were sent the PACS

again. Although 116 families were sent the PACS form the second time, 96 families were eligible for the PACS comparison sample. As shown in Table 3.1, of the 96 families for the second participation of the communication scale, 56 families (P/T match) (58%) returned their questionnaires and 50 families (P/T match to PACS 1) (52%) were able to be matched to previous questionnaires leaving the final sample of the PACS at 50 families.

#### Pilot Testing of the PACS Covering Letter

A covering letter accompanied the PACS questionnaire sent out to the families. This is shown in Appendix II. However, before this was sent out, the letter was read over by respective people. Initially, the covering letter and Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale was shown to three teenagers for comment on the letter's clarity and level of understanding from a teenage perspective. One teenager was a graduate of Discovery and the other two teens had not been on Discovery at the time of the pilot study. The National Manager organised these teens to comment on the covering letter and it was revised according to the teenagers' comments. No change was intended to be, and subsequently was not, made to Barnes and Olson (1982) Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale.

After the covering letter had been revised based on the comments of teenagers it was again tested, along with the parent covering letter, by a 15 year old teenager and her mother. This family had not been involved with Discovery at all at the time of the pilot testing. Limited prior knowledge of Discovery was important as most of the families completing the forms would also be in the same situation.

The parent and teenager both made comments about their corresponding covering letters in regard to readability and the length of time allocated between send-out and send-back. These comments were utilised and the final covering letter (Appendix II) for the PACS questionnaire emerged.

### Scoring PACS

Items from the two sub-scales of problem and open communication are intermingled. The scoring procedures differ for each scale. The process was developed by Barnes and Olson (1982) to reduce the response bias. While the scores of open communication items can be added without alteration, the problem items needed to be reversed in point value. Any problem item questions numbered 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19 and 20 given a score of 5 would be flipped to 1, and a score of 4 flipped to 2, 3 stays the same, 2 changes to 4 and 1 to 5. Once the values of these ten sub-scale items have been reversed, they may be added to the open responses for a total scale score. Total scores of PACS range from 20 to 100. The higher the score indicated more positive communication.

Each sub-score ranges from 10 to 50. A high score on the open communication sub-scale relates to more positive communication. A high score on the flipped scores of problem communication relates to fewer problems in communication than for those with a low flipped score. In this study the post-Discovery scores will be compared to pre-Discovery scores and analysed for changes in scores for parents and teen groups as well as families.

### Analysis Procedure of the PACS Questionnaire

Each questionnaire of the final sample of fifty families was read and each question's responses recorded. Two types of analysis took place to attain the results required by the sub-questions of research question 3-2. Firstly, the teen and parent questionnaires were grouped separately for analysis, and secondly, the teens' and their parent's questionnaires were connected using the codes each participant filled out on the form, and then these were analysed according to intrafamily communication.

The analysis of scores applies to second research question of the third aim (Research Question 3-2). An explanation of such analysis is as follows:

- 3-2A. The mean total scores for the parent group and teen group are compared before and after Discovery, and conclusions are made.
- 3-2B. The changes in total scores were calculated for each family dyad (parent and teen) and the percentages of families with a positive change, a negative change and no change in scores were reported.
- 3-2C. The participants were divided into four groups according to their gender and role in the family. The four groups were male teen, female teen, male parent and female parent. As the groups was not even in numbers, the percentage of participants within each group were calculated for any change in total scores - positive, negative or no change.
- 3-2D. The participants were divided into four groups. These groups consisted of two teen groups, one where the teen was the first-born teen in the family, the other where the teen participating in Discovery was not the oldest (non first-born teen). Two parent groups consisted of a parent group where their teen participating in NZ22 was the first-born teen in the family and a second parent group was where the teen participating in NZ22 was not the oldest child (non first-born teen). The mean total scores for each of these groups were calculated and compared among all the groups.

All results pertaining to the third set of research questions are recorded in Chapter Six.

### **Discovery NZ22 Participants**

The 118 teenage participants at Discovery NZ22 were aged between 13 to 18 years. The average age of the teenagers was 15.2 years with equal numbers of each gender. The standard deviation of the age distribution was 1.285 showing a large number of teenagers (56%) concentrated within the 15 and 16 year age group. There was a

representation of ethnicities in the sample of teenagers. Fifty nine percent identified themselves as Pakeha, 2.5% identified themselves as Maori and approximately 6% identified themselves as both Maori and Pakeha. Under 2 % were Pacific Islanders with same percentage being either Chinese, European or South African.

Discovery NZ22 participants were predominantly from New Zealand's North Island with the exception of two teens and their families who were from the South Island.

Parents of the teenagers were also participants of the PACS questionnaire. The parents who were eligible for this study were those who could come to Day 7 of Discovery NZ22. This is the last day of the programme and involved the parent workshop. The final sample of parents selected for this study, consisted of 39 females and 11 males.

### **Ethical Considerations**

A number of ethical issues were addressed. These are outlined below:

- i) A written submission to the Global Youth Foundation Board requiring permission for the research was obtained from the Global Youth Foundation Board at the beginning of the research year. This was granted and full, formal approval was given for the project by the Board. Initial meetings and conversations with the National Manager, the Chairperson and the Treasurer of the Global Youth Foundation Board, helped to develop and clarify the research for the Global Youth Foundation and identified logistics of how the research would be conducted. Regular reports were sent to the National Manager to circulate to the Global Youth Foundation Board's members and added to the agenda of each meeting. Any other information or daily questions were dealt with by the National Manager who later added to the agenda of the next Board meeting. Updates of the progress of the research was provided for the Board at regular intervals.

- ii) Confidentiality of the participants and their responses was maintained. Names and personal details were not gathered at any point of the research. Therefore the participants remained anonymous and all data collected was treated as confidential. Results of their responses were reported as a group.
  
- iii) All participants were informed of the main objective of the research and that participation was voluntary. It was also made clear to the participants that they could withdraw at any time during the research and any requests of information or questions were welcomed. This was made clear at every point of data gathering. Informed consent was given by the participants.

### **Summary**

The case study into the adolescent programme was intended to highlight what the Discovery programme is all about, including past participants' views and a specific investigation into Discovery NZ22 and its contribution to teenage development. The research questions were tailored to answer the main three aims of the research. These research questions provide the basis for three main sections of results. An explanation of the data gathering methods for the three aims and corresponding research questions has been provided in this chapter. The first data gathering procedure was designed to gather information about the development, content and structure of Discovery. This is reported in Chapter Four. The method relating to Research Question Two, focused around gathering the responses of previous participants' to questions about previous Discovery programmes. The results for this section are reported in Chapter Five. The third data gathering procedure focused upon Discovery NZ22 and the responses from its participants. Information for the research questions relating to the third aim was gathered through the Lifeskills and Study Skills Questionnaire (LASS), and, The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS). These results are reported in the Chapter Six.

# **PART TWO**

**CHAPTER FOUR - THE DEVELOPMENT, CONTENT  
AND STRUCTURE OF THE DISCOVERY PROGRAMME  
FOR NEW ZEALAND ADOLESCENTS: THE RESULTS**

**CHAPTER FIVE - PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS  
OF DISCOVERY: THE RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND  
CONCLUSIONS**

**CHAPTER SIX - PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF  
DISCOVERY NZ22: THE RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND  
CONCLUSIONS**

**CHAPTER SEVEN - DISCUSSION AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

# **THE DEVELOPMENT, CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE DISCOVERY PROGRAMME FOR NEW ZEALAND ADOLESCENTS: THE RESULTS**

### **Framework of This Chapter**

This chapter traces Discovery's development as a programme in New Zealand and reports the results of the research question asked for the first aim of this study. It is the results of historical tracing, interviews and participant observation. The sections of this chapter explain the historical development of Discovery and its purpose, Discovery's participants, scheduling and venue for the programme, mode of address, staff structure and training, explanations of specific sections of Discovery and finally, the content of the Discovery programme.

### **The Development of Discovery**

#### **(in answer to Research Question 1-1)**

The Discovery programme has been directly developed from "Winners Camp" in Hawaii. "Winners Camp", set up by local people in Hawaii, was modelled on another adolescent Camp in the United States of America named "Super Camp". Although both programmes were aimed for the 13 - 18 year old age group, "Super Camp" was predominantly focused on academic skills whereas "Winners Camp" focused more on the psychological welfare of its participants. Originally, a group of facilitators wanted to bring the "Super Camp" programme to Hawaii however the cost of doing so was prohibitive so instead, in 1985, they developed the programme called "Winners Camp".

After many years providing "Winners Camp" to teenagers in Hawaii, a group of Australian people approached the founders of the programme asking for it to be taken to Australia. The programme was revamped and renamed and in 1988 the first Discovery programme in Australia was held for teenagers 13 - 18 years of age. The "Winners

Camp” facilitators and staff were brought to Australia from Hawaii for the Discovery programme. The one constant staff member of the programme was Michael Wall, one of the co-founders of “Winners Camp” and whom provided this information and most of the historical information about Discovery.

After approximately eight Discovery programmes in Australia the Lead Facilitators decided to move further afield and in the end Michael Wall took over the Lead Facilitator’s role. From there Michael kept changing the content of the programme so that the previous Facilitators’ curricula were not being used. Many of the curriculum changes came out of Michael’s background of workshops and experimentation with games and activities. The language used in the programme was simplified over the years, changing it from a neurolinguistic programming focus toward a more lifeskills and experiential programme.

After several programmes with Michael Wall as Lead Facilitator in Australia, a group of New Zealand parents and friends heard about Discovery and went to Australia to experience it for themselves. Their teenagers participated in the programme first and then the parents later staffed the programme. The positive experiences for the New Zealand adults and their teens fuelled the interest in bringing the Discovery programme to New Zealand. After some time organising how Discovery would be brought to New Zealand, the Global Youth Foundation was founded and established in New Zealand to provide for the administration of the Discovery programme.

The Global Youth Foundation is a registered charitable trust and is governed by a Board of Trustees. As stated in the Global Youth Foundation’s promotional brochures, it is also a non-partisan organisation that guarantees no religious, racial or gender bias. The Foundation, at time of writing, has one office in Auckland and employs one full-time person with extra help from temporary part-time positions and volunteer staff. At the

time of Discovery NZ22 in July 1998, the Head Office was in Wellington and employed two full-time people and two regular part-time positions.

In 1991, the first Discovery programme was held in New Zealand with the help of the experienced Australian staff. After a number of programmes, and as the New Zealand staff became more experienced in staffing Discovery, the utilisation of the Australian staff became less. In June 1998, the 22nd Discovery programme was held, with NZ23 following in October, and further programmes scheduled throughout the New Zealand High School's holidays.

A few programmes continued to be run in Australia as the New Zealand Discovery began. It is unsure however, whether Discovery still exists in Australia as Michael Wall, the Lead Facilitator of New Zealand's Discovery, is no longer associated with the programme and it is doubtful whether it is still going at all.

### **Discovery, its Purpose and Intended Outcomes**

#### **(in answer to Research Question 1-2)**

Written on the flipcharts at the Discovery programme, and confirmed with the National Manager, the Global Youth Foundation's mission is "to enable youth and families to develop, learn and grow" The stated purpose of Discovery is:

- i) to provide teenagers with the skills of accelerated learning, clear effective communication and leadership
- ii) to increase self esteem, self confidence, positive attitudes to life and to encourage the family to work as a supportive co-operative unit.
- iii) to assist all involved in developing personal responsibility for their own well-being and direction of their lives, supporting a world of harmony, peace and great discoveries

(Discovery Core Staff Manual)

The three broad aspirations of the Discovery programme extend to nine intended outcomes which are described in the Discovery Core Staff Manual and summarised as follows:

1. To give the teens an opportunity to form and/or strengthen their own internal structures or frameworks for living life as a responsible adult. It is in their terms and through their own feelings that their sense of integrity act as the “guiding principles for right action in their lives”.
2. To allow teenagers to be aware there is a choice of how they respond to a situation and that they are responsible for their own actions and their own quality of life.
3. Discovery intends to provide a positive, safe and supportive environment for the teenagers to experience and experiment with new and positive approaches to challenges in life which empowers everyone.
4. To encourage the teens to appreciate and respect others’ model of the world.
5. To eliminate the belief surrounding failure and focus on the realisation that mistakes are okay and should be celebrated.
6. Through the Discovery programme it is hoped that each participant’s motivation is sparked in a non-dependant way. Learning new skills and facing challenges can be positive and an opportunity to grow individually.
7. Flexibility is an outcome which would provide the teenagers with a variety of behaviours, skills and attitudes to use in the variety of situations they may encounter throughout their lives. “Learning to be flexible encourages the teens

to experiment with new ways of relating with others” (Discovery Core Staff Manual).

8. To increase self esteem and acceptance of self. This is Discovery’s overall goal.
9. For the teens to discover that learning can be fun and easy and that it is maintainable in their lives (Discovery Core Staff Manual).

### **Discovery’s Participants**

#### **(in answer to Research Question 1-3)**

Discovery is for all teenagers between the ages of 13 to 18 years of age of all skills and abilities. Between 80 - 120 teens attend each programme. The teens and their parents predominantly learn about Discovery from friends or family or through a sponsorship programme their employer provides. Discovery has also been promoted through magazine and newspaper articles, press advertisements and mail-outs to schools and community organisations.

Initially the programme attracted those whose parents could afford to come to the programme. However, it is now more available to all as scholarships and sponsorships are provided to those who cannot meet the full cost of the programme.

Most of the staff have heard about Discovery usually through word of mouth or staffing campaigns. Each staff member is interviewed prior to Discovery and once accepted they are encouraged to come along with the intention of supporting others and to uphold the agreements they each signed before coming to Discovery. Once at Discovery the staff then become a part of the process of “discoveries” for teenagers.

## **Scheduling and Venue of the Discovery Programme**

### **(in answer to Research Question 1-4)**

The Discovery programme has taken place in the North and South Islands of New Zealand. Nga Tawa College in Marton and Lincoln College in Christchurch are the venues for the programme and both provide accommodation, professional catering services and facilities in a country setting. In 1998, the programme was delivered in the South Island for the first time as it had only been delivered in the North Island since its beginning in New Zealand.

Discovery is strategically placed through the secondary school holidays so all teenagers have an opportunity to participate. The programme continues to be run in the school holidays every year.

## **Mode of Address**

### **(in answer to Research Question 1-5)**

Throughout the whole programme there are many opportunities to anchor information so that the teens are more likely to apply the skills, strategies and behaviours, required by society, for their entry into adult life. Daily opportunities are given to the participants to share their skills learnt at Discovery and they are also asked to explain how these can be applied in their lives.

Activities are incorporated into the programme which serve as an analogy to the real issues and challenges teenagers may have. It is through these activities that the teenagers experiment with the skills and strategies in a purposeful and meaningful way. For example, the activity of juggling serves the purpose of teaching the principle of attaining a goal in smaller step as well as the lesson that practice is needed to master a skill.

Each activity in the programme is designed to: “mirror back present beliefs; attitudes and behaviours; provide a context in which these may be evaluated safely as to their

usefulness; offer new beliefs, attitudes and behaviours which might be more effective; test the new information; evaluate the results through pairs or group shares (debrief); generate examples of how/when to use the new information in the future” (Discovery Core Staff Manual).

The Discovery programme is an excellent model of the processes of accelerated learning which is also part of staff training. Accelerated learning techniques produce rapid learning, ease of absorption and lasting results.

Discovery is a programme which is set up to show that adults and teens are learning together. The processes within Discovery encourage dialogue between adults and teenagers as participants in Discovery. The three day staff training before the teenagers arrive also provides the staff with the learning experiences prior to the teenagers participation allowing for an appreciation of what the teenagers and so keeps the staff slightly ahead of the teenagers.

The programme offers the teens new skills and strategies which are immediately tested behaviourally through some sort of challenge be it an activity, simulation, personal interactions, a physical event or something in the academic field. The overall focus is “how are you responding?”. The programme is not concerned with “why” people do what they do. It is concerned with whether what they are doing is useful to them in facing the challenges in their lives.

### **The Structure and Training of Staff**

#### **(in answer to Research Question 1-6)**

Discovery is a seven day residential programme for young adults which includes a lifeskills part and a study skills part. Prior to these seven days, there are three days of intensive training for the volunteer staff as well as their workshop continuing throughout the seven day workshop for teenagers. Within the staff structure there are a number of

roles which enable to the Discovery programme to function effectively and support the programme in the delivery of its objectives.

There are four facets of staff members specifically belonging to the Discovery programme: Facilitators, Core Staff, Extraordinary Staff, Town Staff. Each role is important in the production of Discovery and each role is discussed separately.

**The Facilitators:** there are two key educators who facilitate the lifeskills and study skills sections of the programme. One facilitator, the Lead Facilitator, travels from Hawaii to facilitate the programme for New Zealand teenagers. Michael Wall is an internationally renowned facilitator and also the co-founder of Discovery. The other facilitator, the Study Skills Facilitator, is based in New Zealand and is involved in facilitation through the corporate sector and has extensive training and experience in facilitation.

**The Core Staff:** the seven Core Staff, and their understudies, take a leadership role in different departments which combine to provide excellence in the delivery of the Discovery programme. The leaders are experienced staff and usually have understudied the role at least twice before. The understudies are therefore supporting the leader as well as learning the leader's role. The Programme Director is part of the core staff and is responsible for the overall functioning of the programme and ensures that the Global Youth Foundation interests are upheld. Assistants are placed in certain roles decided by the Programme Director as to where they would be best used to support the staff.

**The Extraordinary Staff:** these members are past staff returning, teen graduates returning as staff (up to six per programme), or first time adult participants. These people pay an amount to be staff members on the programme with a reduced amount paid if they are returning staff. The Extraordinary Staff

participate in Discovery for their own learning experiences and mainly to support the teenagers through the seven day programme.

**The Town Staff:** these are adults who are not able to volunteer their time for ten days but want to be involved in Discovery for a day. They travel to the venue for the day of the Ropes Course (3rd day of teen programme) and return home that evening. They assist the Extraordinary Staff in delivering the Ropes Course activities.

There is a staff member for every two to three teenagers. The contribution of the Extraordinary Staff maintains the low staff/teen ratio.

The Town Staff have a two hour overview of the day before they combine with the Extraordinary Staff on the Ropes Course.

The three days training for Extraordinary Staff are intended for the Extraordinary Staff to experience some of the activities and psychosocial processes intended in the teenage programme. It is also set up to provide training on how to interact effectively with teenagers in order to enhance their development as well as keeping them one step ahead of the teenagers when the teenage programme is underway. The following explanation of staff training is focused upon the Extraordinary Staff workshop as these are the people in direct contact with the teenagers and are the biggest number of staff. This information was obtained through the interviews as well as the writer's observations and experiences during Discovery NZ22.

#### Staff Workshop:

**Day 0:** The Core Staff arrive and connect together. A sense of a team is established. An overview of the programme is discussed and setting-up for the next ten days

begins. The extraordinary staff arrive later in the day and initial activities, designed to be “icebreakers”, are undertaken during the course of the evening.

*Day 1:* The Extraordinary Staff finish registration and meet the Lead Facilitator, Michael Wall. He then gives them the basic concepts of what will be used in the programme. This is aimed at familiarising the staff with the language and content so that they are slightly ahead of the teens in their programme.

*Day 2:* The objective is to become more familiar with the terminology to be used over the next eight days and also to provide an opportunity to experience some of the activities and games the teens will be doing. Training on day 2 is also designed to help the staff understand what they are here for and the best way of achieving that goal. Team building is a major part of the day.

*Day 3:* The aim is to overview the teens’ curriculum and content and to prepare for the teens’ arrival the following day. Skills on how to interact effectively in order to uphold the culture intended for Discovery are provided.

### **The Content of Discovery**

#### **(in answer to Research Question 1-7)**

This section outlines the activities and topics covered in the seven day programme on a day-to-day basis. However, before the daily content of the programme is reported, an explanation of activities and topics is first explained. This information was obtained through the interview of the Lead Facilitator as well as the writer’s observations and experiences during Discovery NZ22.

#### An Explanation of Sections of Discovery

The curriculum for the programme is divided into sessions and each session usually involves an activity or is based around a topic. Each activity or block session has

objectives which the facilitator attempts to achieve. Activities and games are used to deliver the objectives to the participants and to enhance the developmental process through practice in the Discovery environment. The following explanations describe the activities and topic areas covered during Discovery NZ22. These have been arranged in chronological order in relation to when the activity was presented throughout the day and throughout the programme. A basic understanding of each activity or topic is intended. The terminology used for each topic or activity are ones that are used during Discovery. These have been kept as these are also used within this study's questionnaires. A brief explanation in brackets is provided alongside each heading.

Activity Name: Juggling (an analogy for taking small steps towards a goal)

This activity involved learning to juggle with three juggling balls. The purpose of this activity was to exercise the practise of taking small steps towards a goal. In the example of juggling this means leaning the timing, posture, height of which to throw the balls, while juggling with one, two then three balls. The teens are introduced to juggling on the first day by first practising throwing the ball to the correct height, and also some exploration what timing the throwing of the balls. The teenagers are given one ball first, then building up to two balls then three. Many opportunities are given throughout the skills training sessions on juggling, and during the breaks and free-time sessions. The teenagers are given a set of juggling balls to take home.

Topic: Chunking (the ability to achieve a goal step by step)

Chunking refers to the little steps, or chunks, which make a up the bigger picture. Mastering the easiest bit first in encouraged through a discussion on the topic. Chunking is a skill that can be used throughout the whole programme and used initially with the analogy of learning to juggle. Here the adolescents are learning the skills of engaging in small steps which is one step closer to their goal whatever that may be. The topic of chunking is discussed in regard to the initial steps of achieving one's goals.

Topic: Blocking I. D./jamming I. D. (strategies for dealing with the “negative voice”)

I.D. refers to Internal Dialogue which is explained as the little voice inside one’s head that talks someone out of doing something, or tells them that they can’t do it. For example, a person who is asked to go up on the stage to talk in front of a large audience may panic and think that they don’t want to, or can’t do that. That is an example of the little voice that talks a person out of something. The participants learn skills to block their I.D. by first becoming aware of when it occurs, and that it may be the doubt or fear of doing the activity that encourages the negative feedback. Realising this and pushing this aside helps to “block” or “jam” the negative internal dialogue. Minimising the “little voice” and maximising other more functional skills and actions is discussed and the teenagers are given the opportunity to relate this in their lives and acknowledge when these skills would be most helpful.

Topic: Great Moments (new terminology and new concept about mistakes)

This is a rephrasing and rethinking of mistakes. “Great Moments” are introduced as a way of celebrating moments which have previously been termed as a mistake or failure. The shift in thinking from presuming mistakes are bad or the association given to failure, to the realisation that these moments are acceptable and worthy of celebration is taught and practised. Basically, the idea is that “Great Moments” are okay and are a part of the natural course of progress.

Topic: Outside Your Comfort Zone (expanding one’s experiences)

A comfort zone can be described as the psychological space which is created around a person and in which the person feels safe. This is the space where very little learning takes place as the same things are done over and over again. The idea that stepping outside the comfort zone allows for growth and learning of new things which does not happen if the person remains within the previous comfort zone is taught. Discovery is designed for participants to learn new things and so stepping outside the comfort zone is a part of Discovery and discussed as such.

Topic: State Changes (being in charge of your feelings and attitudes (states))

Skills that show the participants how to change their mood or feelings are taught and many opportunities to experiment with these strategies is provided. State changes, or psychological changes, are an underlying philosophy of achieving a goal or facing challenges or various situations. It is intended that teens understand they can choose what mental state they are in and they are shown strategies to help them to get into a desired mood or feeling by addressing their breathing patterns, physiology, and what they are saying to themselves.

Topic: Agreements (rules signed by the teenagers before beginning Discovery)

The agreements are aimed at ensuring a safe environment for all. They include agreements related to local or national laws such as not bringing or consuming alcohol or drugs which are not prescribed by the doctor and not assaulting anyone or vandalising property. Other agreements are designed for the healthy functioning of the programme, such as to stay out of the opposite sex dormitories or remain within the stated boundaries of the venue and are discussed at various times throughout the programme. Each day the Lead Facilitator checks in to see how they are doing with their agreements. These agreements are intended to provide a safe environment for the teenagers while they are at the programme as well as leading discussions about responsibility, reliability and trustworthiness. Also explored during these sessions is the teens' own integrity and self respect and the consequences, that by breaking agreements, they risk their own self-esteem and confidence.

Topic: Me/We (the relationship between the teenagers and their environment)

This leads into a discussion about where the teenager (me) is in relation to their environment or the bigger picture, and that what they do has an impact on others (we). The big picture ensures that their environment, including society, is considered, at no expense of one's own self worth or individuality.

Activity Name: Autobiography (sharing of information about oneself)

This is an activity set in the evening of the first day and it is an opportunity for the teens and their team leaders to get to know each other. The teens and Team Leaders work together in small groups and talk about themselves such as how many in their family, where they live and so on. It is the first activity in which the team interacts and this helps with bonding as a team.

Activity Name: Initiative Run (provides the analogy of a challenge)

This is an activity when the teens are challenged to run a 1 km circuit with 100% dedication. They are told to stop if they are no longer giving 100% and then start when they feel ready to give that level again. It is discussed that we, as a culture, do not know when we are giving 100% to a task and that it is okay to stop until such a time that we can give 100% again. The initiative run is an activity which is repeated two more times throughout the seven day programme and which challenges the state of mind they are using to complete the task.

Activity Name: A Good Look (the process in which teenagers realise they are the same)

The teens are taken through a process in which they are invited to evaluate their own behaviours and how it helps to define their personalities. The teenagers are then given the opportunity to make a statement about themselves in the form of a question, and then those whom it also applies to stand up. It is a collective understanding that other people have the same experiences as they do and that they can talk it over with each other and learn from each other also. This session is performed with the utmost respect for each other and is also done in isolation from the staff. Only the facilitator and one or two key staff are present during this process, increasing the chance of the young people expressing their feelings among people their own age.

Topic: Mindmapping (skills for learning)

The skill of mindmapping involves learning where and how mindmapping can best be adapted in teenagers' lives as well as how to visually illustrate a lesson. The most common, versatile and easily learned mindmap has branches coming out from a central title which displays the material pictorially and conceptually to aid in easy learning.

Topic: Speed Reading (skills for reading faster and for better comprehension)

This is an academic section which involves many sessions on the skill of speed reading. Extensive practice and exercises are involved including eye exercises, scanning, and searching for key words. The teenagers' are given a before and after test where they read a given article, are timed and then asked to calculate their comprehension score. The scores are calculated at the beginning of the sessions and again at the end of the last session. They are then compared and improvements in reading speed and comprehension are celebrated.

Topic: Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences(understanding the way one learns/operates)

The teens learn and analyse their learning styles through their preferred way of gathering and encoding information. Learning styles include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning and have already been explained in the "Definition of Terms" section of Chapter One. Also discussed are seven multiple intelligences - spatial, mathematical, musical, linguistic, physical, interpersonal and intrapersonal. These learning areas give a more comprehensive view of how people learn and the teenagers are given the opportunity to relate to these styles. An explanation of the seven multiple intelligences is also given in the explanations of terminology in Chapter One.

Topic: Being Smoke-Free (an invitation for smokers to stop smoking for the 7 days)

The teenagers and staff who were smokers are invited to try something different and become smoke-free. The people who commit themselves to being smoke free are given

full support by key staff members as well as being given support packages which help with the smoke-free process. Their progress is monitored throughout the programme.

Activity Name: Act As If (practise with new ways of changing how one feels and acts)

This is a game where the teens experiment with changes of one's emotional and physiological state. Working in pairs they attempt to place themselves in the mood that is called for by the Lead Facilitator. They then compete with their partner to display that state more appropriately than the other person. In other words, it is a kind of competition to put themselves in the best state possible and practise in all seriousness.

Activity: Ropes Day (outdoor activities)

This is a one day adventure based activity which is held on the third day of the teenage Discovery programme. Ropes Day provides the teenagers with an opportunity to practise teamwork skills in a space outside of the facilitation room. Various physical activities including ropes, taut wires and swinging logs are set up to challenge the teams of teenagers. This allows the team to utilise the range of skills they have learnt over the previous two days.

Topic: Teamwork (working together as a team)

Teamwork is fundamental to the whole programme. Supporting each other and working together in harmony is discussed and modelled throughout the programme. The teenagers are given many opportunities to support each other and work together as a team.

Activity Name: Noughts and Crosses (skills for co-operation)

This activity has the basis of teamwork and is designed to provide the example of a win/win situation. The teenagers belong to a team which consists of about 10 to 12 teenagers. Each team is split into two groups and given a game to play with the instruction of "to finish as a team" given. However, each group usually works against

the other trying to win points for themselves. The aim of this activity is to question why it has to be a win/lose situation as everyone thought. The groups are then given another chance to play the game creating a win/win situation. This may or may not occur the second time and again the win/win situation is discussed until it is realised that each team can place their symbol (nought or cross) in every square, thus giving a win/win situation. Teamwork, win/win situations and support are discussed in the lead up to the ropes course activities.

Session Topic: Addictions (why and how one gets reliant on things)

This involves the exploration of an addictions (to any substance including chocolate, drugs, smoking, chat rooms, etc.). Addictions are discussed in the context of “it does not necessarily happen to other people”. The realisation that substance abuse is a way to deal with “I don’t like how I feel” and “this is the easy way I can ignore or change it” is actually the most harming approach when self-esteem and confidence are at stake. The structure of addictions was discussed by highlighting the initial causes, the on-going cyclic patterns that emerge, and the transfer of past behaviours to more positive applications. Calculations are made to examine the amount of time, money and effort spent when addicted to a substance (the example taken is smoking) and that the time, money and effort can be spent elsewhere with better rewards at the end of it. The activity of calculating and discussing what actually is at stake, not only in monetary terms, is stressed.

Session Topic: Memory Techniques (a number of strategies for improving learning)

These are based around techniques for studying. Such things as highlighting, chunking, using colour and relaxing are some of the techniques discussed. Mindmapping is one of the techniques of memory techniques which is a topic unto itself and has already been discussed.

Topic: Peer Relationships (understanding friendship and opposite sex relations)

Stereotypical behaviours are discussed and acted out and the teens look at peer relationships which generates a good deal of humour. For example, things discussed as behaviours between the sexes might be giggling, oggling, make-up, strutting, whispering, language and these are re-inacted by the staff members. The teenagers are then invited to join in the role play of acting out to the opposite sex. After this the focus then turns to understanding what male and female teens want from a relationship and what quality relationships are about. The teens are invited to look at some of the ways people are taught to behave as males and females and then think about generating some different behaviours to convey the real messages of relationships.

Topic: Communication Skills

How to communicate effectively is one of the crucial skills taught. Activities designed to practise communication skills are provided throughout the whole programme such as how to talk with parents (see parent relationships) and how to relate with others.

Topic: Parent Relationships

The teens are invited to see the relationship from the parents' perspective. The realisation of what their parents have done for them since birth is quite shocking for some of them as they are taken through the visualisation process of their families at the time of their birth up until the present day. They examine themselves and their behaviours towards their parents and then a discussion was led as to the realisation that if they want to have a good relationship with their parents they at least have to meet them half way. Communication is a big aspect of this session. They spend time generating a list of behaviours they would do and theoretically what they might say to their parents as if they were never going to see them again.

Topic: Four-Part Clean Up (learning the method for taking responsibility)

This method involves four steps to make something right. It is used in situations where a person needs to make up for something they have not done right. The four steps include 1) acknowledging what has happened, 2) taking responsibility (owning up to the event), 3) making it right and 4) recommitting to what was agreed upon in the first place.

Topic: Goals/Commitments (skills for making and sticking to a goal)

The teenagers write down their goals - one in terms of their relationship with their parents, and the other their personal goals. Fears which need to be overcome in order to reach that goal are individually brought to light and the challenge of facing them and breaking through them initiated. The next process of this session is related to what is called genius. This is an integrated exercise giving the teenagers an opportunity to use all the skills learnt during Discovery. The teens are given an opportunity to break through their fears and go for their goal by individually writing their fear on a wooden board and physically breaking through the wood. Proper training and practice has taken place before this and the actual activity will only take place if the trained staff member will allow them partake in the individual activity, which is only when they have demonstrated that they are able to do so. The aim of this activity is to present a major challenge to the teenagers encouraging them to utilise the skills learnt at Discovery. This activity is used as an analogy for the challenges or fears the teenagers may face in their lives when going for their goal, and how they will react to it.

Activity Name: Thirty Days to Live (an introspective process on the participants' lives)

This is an activity which provides the scenario that they only have thirty days to live and the question is asked "how would you now live and what things would you do if you knew this?". This is a time where the teens reflect on what is important to them and they write down what they think they should be doing in order to get the most out of their lives.

### The Content of the Discovery Programme for Teenagers

The Discovery programme has an integrated curriculum of four fifths lifeskills and one fifth study skills. Included in the lifeskills section is a one day physical adventure-type programme. The overall purpose of Discovery is to encourage each participant to respond effectively to challenges in life by growing personally and academically during adolescence. The overall purpose of the Discovery programme is broken down into three main areas addressed in the seven day curriculum. These are “relationships”, “the self” and “academics”. Each day’s summary, outlined below, elaborates on these ideas. The underlined activities or topics are those which have been explained in detail in the preceding section.

#### Teen Workshop:

The re-numbering of days begins again as soon as the teens arrive (as opposed to carrying on from the staff training days). This now becomes the first day of Discovery for teenagers.

**Day 1:** The aim is to create overwhelming fun so that the teens do not have a chance to think about wanting to be somewhere else. Icebreaker games and activities are introduced within the first couple of hours and teams of approximately 10-12 teenagers plus two extraordinary staff are immediately organised. The primary concepts of Discovery are introduced in the first day as experientially as possible. During the morning the teens are introduced to the staff and get to know their team staff throughout the introductions. Juggling is introduced and the teens get to practice their skills for a while, with the concepts of chunking and blocking internal dialogue introduced. The analogy of juggling also introduces the notion of great moments where the teenager begins to understand that mistakes are no longer a part of the vocabulary to be used, instead the terminology of “great moments” calls for more celebrations of these occasions.

The first day is also aimed to encourage the teenagers to step outside your comfort zone. The aim of this is to allow the teenagers to practise with the ideas and strategies presented throughout the following six days. The aim of the staff is to provide an environment in which the teenagers are able to feel safe and comfortable enough to do so.

State changes is referred to and the ability to act to challenges in the appropriate psychological and physical state is practised.

The agreements that the teens and staff signed prior to coming to the programme are acknowledged and shared so that it is fully understood what they are about. The agreements are statements which the participants agree to uphold while on the programme. They are aimed at creating a healthy and safe environment for all and are revisited throughout the whole programme. In relation to agreements, the idea that “what you do impacts on others” is discussed in the topic of me/we.

The evening activity, autobiographies, is for getting to know one another and to create an emotional level such that there is a sharing of details about oneself.

During the first day the researcher observed the mood in the morning to be very apprehensive, especially when the teenagers arrived together off the bus. A sense of not wanting to be there was noticed. However, once the games got underway the mood appeared to lighten and this progressed throughout the day, until the evening exercise of autobiography relieved the tension by allowing the opportunity to meet more intimately with those within their allocated teams. These teams are divided so that there are a variety of ages, gender and geographical area they came from.

The first day was critical in trying to convey the culture of the Discovery programme. The Lead Facilitator's role in the first day was trying to present Discovery as a time when the young people can feel safe enough to experiment with the skills and behaviours generated during the programme. In a way, the Lead Facilitator planted the seed of curiosity to encourage the experimentation of doing things differently than they may have previously. The staff were also encouraged to be role models for the behaviours such that when an invitation was given to join in an activity the staff showed their eagerness by being the first to jump up and get involved in it.

**Day 2:** This day provides experimentation with some of the strategies learnt so far and starts with the initiative run first thing in the morning. After this the skills associated with blocking one's internal dialogue (I.D.) are discussed in reference to the initiative run. There is also an opportunity for the teens to relate to others by sharing their experiences and challenges such as in the Good Look exercise. Each teen is also invited to evaluate their own behaviour and how it defines their personalities. An introduction of study skills is given by the Study Skills Facilitator with mindmapping being the first of the study skills taught. A pre-test of speed reading skills is also given on Day Two and learning styles/multiple intelligences is introduced.

The session inviting the participants to give up smoking for the seven days (smoke-free) is designed for all participants, including those that do not smoke. If a teenager chooses not to smoke, then they commit in front of the whole group. This then shows who is trying to give up smoking and the support from key staff members is given. The idea is that a commitment is harder to break if it is made in front of the whole group. The stop-smoking commitments are regularly revisited throughout the seven days.

The teenagers get to play the act as if game which expands upon the ability to choose the state, or mood, you are in by applying certain strategies. These strategies are taught and practised.

On the second day the researcher noticed a more relaxed atmosphere than the day before although the morning proved to be less relaxed than the afternoon. During the morning the Good Look exercise was the predominant activity. The Lead Facilitator and Programme Director were the only staff members present for this activity. Direct observations could therefore not be made. However, after the session the teenagers appeared much closer before and less anxious as some young people were observed to be providing comfort to those who were expressing their emotions, and others were more jovial than beforehand. In listening to some of the young people as they talked during break time there was definite recognition that things that they thought were only applicable to them were also shared amongst the rest of the group. For example, one young person said “I didn’t know (name) had lost his father also”.

The Study Skills Facilitator was also introduced on the second day and every opportunity was taken to ensure the academic part of Discovery was distinctly different from a “school” approach to teaching. This was done through the use of popular music at the beginning of the introduction, dancing, celebrations of cheering and willingness to learn as shown by the staff who were still role modelling at this stage. It was evident that the young people were realising that this part of Discovery would not be like school as comments such as “this is cool, school ‘suxs’” or “I wish my teacher could be like this” indicated.

**Day 3: Ropes Day:** Team work, support and consideration of each other is explored outside of the course room and away from the hype and motivation provided in the controlled environment. It is a major opportunity to experiment with some

of the strategies defined in the course so far and to apply them in challenging situations such as the ropes course. The Noughts and Crosses game is designed to pre-empt teamwork skills required for the outdoor activities. Following the game, a discussions leads into identifying that up until now the teenager has had the opportunity to go along with the positive culture created by staff. For the rest of the day it is made clear that it is up to the individuals and teams to experiment with the skills to self-perpetuate and team-perpetuate the skills required to complete the challenging tasks in the outdoor setting.

In the evening, agreements and remaining smoke-free are discussed again. Support is given to those who have remained smoke-free and a discussion identifying those who have kept the agreements or not. The me/we attitude is reviewed.

The Ropes Course involves each team of 10 - 12 teenagers and their Team Leaders in a number of activities. The aim is for each team t finish the task assigned to each activity, which, when they have completed that activity they can move to the next one as a team.

A variety of activities was offered on the Ropes Course which involved the whole team, or pairs or a single person. Although the whole team was not actually on the wires or the ropes of the activity as in the pairs and solo activities, the remaining team members were responsible for the participants welfare by catching them if they fell and providing the support required to help the young person/people involved in the activity.

The position of the researcher as one of the activity facilitators allowed the researcher to directly observe the participation and dynamics of the group. One observation was the eagerness of supporting and accepting support form peers,

both in a verbal and physical sense. This was particularly important for those who did not necessarily complete the task first time as the groups observed during NZ22 showed great encouragement of those to complete the tasks providing suggestions at the end of each attempt. Team hugs and cheering were typical of successful attempts as the closeness of the team improved as the day went on.

**Day 4:** This is when the teenagers start to experiment with the strategies learnt in the previous three days. More opportunities are given to use strategies, skills and new behaviours in challenging situations, such as another initiative run, where the teens start to begin to notice what works for them. The participants start to assimilate and apply the concepts that are going to work for them as by now the teenagers have the language through which to evaluate their own behaviours and they are able to think about other ways to behave and consequently notice what works. Values such as “responsibility”, “reliability” and “trustworthiness” are discussed, in relation to having their own integrity and their own self-respect, and that the very core of these values influences their self-esteem and self-confidence. The teens are invited to look at their own culture and what things they do primarily to demonstrate that they are no longer little kids. The by-products of this is that they may sometimes risk their own self-esteem and self-confidence which is what the agreements part is all about which is visited later.

Day four also involves discussions about addictions. The primary issues are to attempt to deal with “I don’t like how I feel” and “this is the way I can change it” - by being dependant on something. The teens are invited to look at how much money, time and effort is invested in being addicted to something, per day, per year, per lifetime to date. The idea is that if they can easily choose to invest

it in their life they will get back something that is more positive and enhancing than being addicted to something.

Study skills, such as speed reading strategies and memorisation techniques, take up a major part of the day incorporating plenty of opportunity to practise and experiment with these skills. The academics skills sections were comprehensive and the participants were given the opportunity to make mindmaps together, practise speed reading from the material they were given such as eye movement skills where the reader trains their eyes to read a collection of words at the same time. List of phrases and words were given to practise with and the reader practises the matching of correct words in a line of words or phrases.

Agreements, including the smoke-free agreements, are talked about again and there check-in for all staff and teenagers. The example of smoking is then used as the basis to discuss addictions and how easy addictions are formed.

Later in the evening the aim is to begin to discuss relationships. On this day peer relationships, with the focus mainly on male/female relationships, are discussed and explored in a way that highlights the conditioned behaviours we are taught as males and females. A facilitated process allows the teenagers to learn from each other what is really important in a relationship by discussing in pairs what they really want from a relationship.

The research observed that the second time the participants ran the one kilometre of the initiative run, there was more commitment to the exercise. The commitment was shown in their faces as they run the hardest they could. When they had completed the run, more “finishers” returned to verbally support those who were coming in after them, as compared with the first run.

The session on addictions poses the reality of being addicted to something is real. The exploration of what it means being addicted to something held the interest of the young people until the stage where the example of being addicted to smoking was worked through. This involved taking the example of a smoker from the audience and calculating, with the help of the smoker, what it would cost them per year in cigarettes and the time it took to smoke. It is at this point on that the audience became somewhat restless which the researcher attributed to the fact that the teenagers applied this only to those who were smokers and failed to see the relevance of the example in everyone's life.

*Day 5:* Speed reading skills are practised and experimented with for half of the day. The other half of the day is focused around communication skills and begins the process of parent-teen relationships. The outcome is that the teens are able to relate to their parents on a different level and they begin to listen and understand their parents' perspectives. They also been to reflect on what behaviours might be more effective in their relationships with their parents. The strategies of taking responsibility when something goes wrong is discussed through the formula outlined in the four-part clean up approach. Smoking is addressed again and those who have continued to remain smoke-free are acknowledged and continue to be supported.

The section about parent-adolescent relationships was something which the participants could relate very well to. This was particularly noticeable when the teenagers were asked to brainstorm what they do that really bugs their parents, and what their parents do that really bugs them. It was no problem for the teenagers to generate ideas to these questions. Some things that came up were comparing them to others, being mean, arguing, pierce ourselves, refuse clothes they buy, steal, swear, run away, answer back. When they were asked what they really want from their parents this too was easy for them to express. Comments

such as being able to talk without arguing, have more fun, love, trust, support, patience and having the chance to talk more often were given.

**Day 6:** This is the part when the programme takes on a whole new beginning. It is when the programme's intention clearly shifts to "you are about to go home". It starts the participants thinking about what they are going to do when they leave the next day. Goal setting/commitments is discussed and the teens make goals - one personal goal and one goal in their relationship with their parents. The activity thirty days to live is provided to encourage the individual to look at their life and make some choices about what they should be doing with their lives and what is really important to them.

The later part of the day provides activities geared around the closure of the course so that the group are able to leave Discovery, as they knew it, and still be able to access and use the skills, strategies and tools in their lives. This is facilitated through a visualisation process where they set-up the course room (where they have been for the last seven days) in their minds eye and leave it there knowing that they can access it whenever they want. The reality is that they are about to return to the world, or environment, they knew before Discovery, and that they have the tools and strategies to improve their lives and make it as though they were still at Discovery if they choose.

The focus during Day Six is definitely on the closure of the learning experience. In the morning the activities around making commitments is in preparation for the finale of the day - the activity genius. The commitments made by each person is written on a piece of paper. A visualisation process of the steps taken to achieve that goal is conducted by the Lead Facilitator and the fear standing in the way of achieving that goal is written, using one word, on a piece of wood. The Lead Facilitator then tells the participants that the challenge is to break

through the board so that they can achieve their goal. He then tells them to check their Internal Dialogue and use all the skills they may have learnt at Discovery to get through the challenge. At this stage there was an air of excitement as the Lead Facilitator showed everyone how it was done. The teenagers then practised their skill in breaking the board with their hand, and other trained Core Staff members went around everyone giving them feedback on how to improve their technique of breaking the board. This was all done without the board in place. As everyone practised the level of excitement and tension arose. When the final checks of readiness had been done the activity began and a number of staging posts were set up to take the boards on. The staging posts were facilitated by two Core Staff and included two solid square cuts of wood approximately 30 cm high and placed about a foot away from each other, wide enough so that the wood could be placed on top of them with slight overlapping. When the participant thought they were ready to take the challenge they would step up to the staff member at that post. One staff member would then ask them to practise their techniques so that they could evaluate whether they had the right technique to complete the challenge. Feedback was given until such a time when they were ready. The piece of paper with their commitment on it was placed open, below the two posts, which would hold either side of the board, and the board, with their fear written on it, was placed flat on the two posts. In their own time the participant then broke through the board.

When the activity began it took a few teenagers to successfully break through their boards (representing their fears) before the excitement and team spirit increased and the tension, that was there beforehand, diminished. As each person broke through their fears there was a celebration, such as hugging, crying, pats on the back, which all, who gathered around the staging posts,

participated in. The evening continued until all participants completed the challenge to the best of their ability.

This activity appeared to be a positive influence on the confidence of each person and helped to integrate all the skills learnt at Discovery, which is what it set out to do.

**Day 7:** There are two simultaneous workshops during Day 7 which involve the teens and the parents separately. These workshops are held in separate rooms until mid afternoon when the two groups are brought together. Each workshop, teens and parents, is outlined separately until both groups come together.

#### Teens

In the morning the teens again have the opportunity to practise their responses to a final challenge, the initiative run, and compare their notes on how they handled it. The day for the teens is again about closure and reflection upon the week's activities. Chosen songs were practised for when they would sing them to their parents and final farewells were given as they got ready to join with the parent group. They also were asked to think about what they would like to say to their parents and what they would like to talk about with them.

The teenagers were very close to each other at this stage as a lot of hugging and farewells took place during the morning. The Lifeskills and Study Skills (LASS) questionnaire was also given out to the participants during the morning. This was instructed by the researcher.

The tension rose as they got closer to mid afternoon when they were to join the parent group. This was noticeable by the numerous questions asking about

when they were going to see them, and also what they will do when they see them and what they are going to say.

### Parents

The primary aim of the parents' workshop was to give them an overview of what their teens have been learning. They were also invited to see the flipside of their teen's learning and start to experience how to listen to their teens, how both can benefit from their relationship, and be willing to see their teen's perspective. This enables the parents to realise the volume of what their teen has learnt and to give them space to practise the skills and strategies and to experiment with them, especially within the communication area. The parents were also asked to look at what behaviours they were willing to change in order to enhance their relationship with their teen. The emotional level was raised as the Lead Facilitator talked them through the things they have gone through as a parent and how appreciative their teens are of them even though they may have said so in the past.

The parents were eager to see their child again as they were always looking for their faces. Some even wandered around the complex looking for them. During lunchtime with the parents, the researcher was told they couldn't wait to see their child again. They felt it had been such a long time since they had seen them.

### Both - Parents and Teens Together

Initially it is intended to get the emotions high for both parents and teenagers, and then allow space for each family to reunite and communicate on a level they perhaps have not had before, that is, to really listen and really communicate. After the initial greetings when the teenage group sang their songs, they were given the opportunity to speak to the group of parents about what they had

learned and how things are for them now. During Discovery NZ22, this happened by the teenager coming forward from the group and calling their parent/s to stand up and then telling them what they have planned by way of their commitment they have made. This was emotional for both the teen and the parent/s.

Once the families physically reunite, the teen took the parents on a trust walk where they led their blindfolded parent/s around a circuit. Time was also allowed for the parents and teenager to talk together and discuss whatever they want to as a family, and as a teenager to a parent. At that time, the families are introduced to the concept of "heart talks" which allows the person who is holding the "heart" (a small grain filled heart) to speak while the other family members listen; thus laying the ground rules for communication. This "heart" is given to the family to take home and use as necessary.

The final closure part of the programme spends time in farewelling the staff, then each family leaves together to go home.

Most families were genuinely excited to see each other again and emotions were high as they talked with each other. The trust walks allowed the teenager to take the responsibility in the activity with the parents following their instructions. Some parents were apprehensive about this situation as shown by their uncertainty of the instruction and their lack of willingness to follow their instructions. The teenagers on the other hand appeared to enjoy the experience as they were laughing at their parents uncertainty.

The rest of the activities were done in the privacy of their family discussion groups.

### Staff Workshop:

**Day 8:** The aim of Day 8 is for closure for the staff and an opportunity to say thank you and goodbye to the other staff members. It is also a time where the staff really understand the magnitude of what they have been a part of and that they personally can make a difference, and are encouraged to do so. Following the closure activities and farewells, the Extraordinary Staff go home.

The Core Staff remain to review the past ten days before going home later that day.

### **Summary**

The details set out in the above section have provided an insight into what Discovery is and how it developed. This information is related to the first research question and sub-questions of this study from information gathered through interviews and promotional material put out by the Global Youth Foundation, and participant observation.

Discovery is a programme which provides lifeskills and study skills training for adolescents between the ages of 13 - 18 years of age. The curriculum is designed around four fifth lifeskills training and one fifth study skills training. A one day physical adventure-based programme is included in the lifeskills component of the programme. Discovery's roots come from a similar programme developed in Hawaii, and has been adapted and changed to suit the New Zealand audience. In 1991, the Global Youth Foundation was set up in order to bring the programme to New Zealand.

The purpose of the Discovery programme is to provide teenagers with the skills to enhance their academic lives and their personal lives by gaining skills in communication, leadership, enhancing positive attitudes to life, and develop personal responsibility for their own well being and direction of their lives. Through this it is hoped that an increase of self-confidence and self-esteem is gained. The Discovery programme is scheduled

during the secondary school holidays and is usually offered at Nga Tawa Girls' High School just out of Palmerston North in the North Island although it has been offered once in the South Island.

The facilitation of the seven day programme incorporated accelerated learning techniques designed to enhance learning. It is ensured that Discovery is a safe place for the participants to feel comfortable enough to experiment with the new skills and behaviours generated at Discovery. Many opportunities are given to anchor the information and skills learnt at Discovery into their lives, and activities are designed as an analogy to life's circumstances so as to instil the relevance and transfer of skills to the outside world.

Although the staff have three days training prior to the first day of the programme for teenagers, they also learn alongside the teenagers throughout the seven days, except for the Core Staff who have a lot of prior experience of the programme and have been chosen for the leadership role amongst staff.

Discovery's curriculum consists lifeskills training study skills training. These are divided into sections which are taught at planned times during the seven days. An explanation of these sections and an overview of each days activities was provided in this chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS OF DISCOVERY: THE RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

The responses from previous participants to questions about the Discovery programme were investigated for their perspective of Discovery. The responses to the Global Youth Foundation questionnaire, which was given to the participants of NZ20 and NZ21 at their respective programmes, were collated and reported in answer to the second research question of this study.

The aim of this part of the study was to utilise only the relevant questions, to this present study, from previous questionnaires which corresponded to eleven open-ended type questions. In addition to these eleven questions, 32 before-and-after comparison ratings of questions about the Discovery programmes were also included in this presentation of past participants' reactions to Discovery. Each of the questions analysed helped to provide an insight into the achievement of the lifeskills and study skills of adolescents as well as to their views on the content of the programme.

This chapter follows the order of questions as they were presented in past questionnaires with the exception of the pre/post comparison questions which are presented near the end of the chapter. The collective responses to each question is reported. Within these reports, the comments identified as specific sections of Discovery are underlined. This relates to the specific sections described earlier in Chapter Four. At the end of the chapter an analysis of results and conclusions are discussed as to how it relates to the literature discussed in Chapter Two.

### **The Results: Previous Participants' Views of Discovery**

The 200 combined participants of NZ20 and NZ21 were asked to prioritise the learnings from Discovery when asked the question “What did you get out of Discovery that will enhance your life at school, home and with friends?” The responses to this question were categorised under four major areas of similar proportions. Firstly, the teenagers reported comments about personal development. Such comments included communication skills, motivation of self and using Discovery specific terminology such as changing state, blocking I. D., act as if. Secondly, the social development area collated comments such as meeting new people and the ability to communicate better, teamwork attributes and the acceptance of others. Thirdly, an improved general attitude to life was commented upon by one quarter of the teens directing their new found skills toward having more fun and giving more to living. Again Discovery’s specific terminology was used such as “win/win”, “celebrate great moments”, and, “stepping out of my comfort zone”. Comments such as chunking, and speed reading, study skills and mindmapping were classified under academic skills and were the fourth categorisation of responses. Eleven teenagers made no response to this question.

The question “What was the biggest personal breakthrough for you?” was also asked of NZ20 and NZ21’s participants. The majority of teenagers from both programmes said breaking through their fear to achieve their goal was the major breakthrough for them (25%). This is relating to the activity of genius which is part of the goals/commitments section. Following this, the teenagers reported “giving it 100%” (initiative run) and “making a commitment” was their biggest breakthrough (22%). The third equal comments given were the realisation that “I can do anything I want” and “I have more confidence and belief in myself” (13%). The acceptance of support, and the realisation that with support anything can be achieved, was a major breakthrough for 10% of the teenagers from NZ20 and NZ21. Other explanations were given as a major breakthrough by a lower percentage of teenagers (<10%). These were the ability to motivate myself (8%), better communication generally (8%), acceptance of self (7%),

better communication with parents (6%), trust in others (4%), having fun, being positive all the time, changing state, win/win, stepping outside the comfort zone, and becoming an adult. The learning and personal development which appears to occur at Discovery is on an individual basis which is why every comment is recorded here to reflect that. One comment made by a female participant as a personal breakthrough, and is worthy of its own category was "I learnt that suicide isn't the way to deal with my problems or bad situations". Where one person's breakthrough was to have fun, another's may be as sobering as the previous comment.

"What important things did you discover about yourself and others?" was another question asked. This question reflected most of the comments from the above questions showing that their personal achievement and breaking through their fear (genius - part of the goals/commitment section) towards their goal was an important discovery in themselves (30%). The ability to be supported and that people wanted to support them was also commented on by 27% of the participants. The realisation that male and female teenagers are the same and want the same things in a relationship was reported by 13% of the teenagers. Being supported by others which helped to achieve one's goals was reported by 9% of the teenagers as so were comments related to "being yourself". "Labelling people 'sux'" and "getting on with life no matter what the challenges" were other comments given by individuals.

The following question in the questionnaire asked "Did you notice a change in yourself during the week? If yes, what changes have you noticed?" This question was similar to the question asked of NZ22 participants which elicited a number of explanations. First of all, 86% of the participants replied "Yes" they did notice a change in themselves over the week, 6% said "no", and no response given by 8%. No reasons were given by those who said "no" and of those who made no response to the question, most went on to give positive comments that were typical of the rest of the teenagers. The main thrust of the comments suggested that they gained confidence (86%), they were more supportive of

others (79%), they had more energy, or felt more alive (59%), they were able to go for their goal, they were more motivated (50%), more positive, happy (44%), more open (42%), and more able to face the challenges (38%). These were the main comments given by the group of teenagers. Other comments given by various numbers of teenagers were, a change in speed reading (11%), "I was more myself", "I was able to stand in front of a group and talk" and "I have participated more". One male teen said "I am not a drugie any more thanks to Discovery".

In the next question the specific section of Discovery were asked for and the question provided a list of the main sections of the programme. The actual question asked was, "a) What were your favourite sections of the programme? (please circle the top five and prioritise them in order from 1-5); b) what were the low points of the programme for you? (put an X through those you think we should get rid of)". The most favourite section of Discovery for the group of teenagers from NZ20 and NZ21 was ropes day (Table 5.1). Close behind the most favourite was a good look followed by thirty days to live and teamwork. Both ropes day and a good look were rated within the top three for 65% of the teenagers. The goal setting nature of commitments was voted the fourth most favourite section, with communication skills following close behind. All the sections that were given as a reference point in the question was rated by at least one teenager as one of their top three favourite sections.

The least popular section rated by the teenagers was indicated by the participants putting an X through the word/s. The majority of teenagers rated aerobics as the least favourite, closely followed by speed reading. The initiative run was the next least favoured section rated as a low point of Discovery. All but two sections, a good look and teamwork, were rated as low points by a varying percentage of participants.

**Table 5.1. Percentages of Teenagers who Rated the Sections as Favourite or Low Points**

| favourites           | percentage | low points           | percentage |
|----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| ropes day            | 36.6       | aerobics             | 27.9       |
| good look            | 31.9       | run                  | 21.5       |
| 30 days              | 19.7       | mindmap              | 13.9       |
| teamwork             | 19.7       | juggling             | 11         |
| commitments          | 17.4       | agreements           | 7.5        |
| communication skills | 16.8       | noughts and crosses  | 7.5        |
| parent relationships | 15.7       | 30 days              | 5.8        |
| genius               | 15.7       | speed reading        | 4.6        |
| juggling             | 11.6       | commitments          | 2.9        |
| speed reading        | 9.8        | peer process         | 2.9        |
| noughts and crosses  | 5.8        | ropes day            | 1.7        |
| peer process         | 4.6        | genius               | 1.7        |
| agreements           | 2.9        | communication skills | <1         |
| run                  | 2.9        | parent relationships | <1         |
| mindmap              | 1.7        |                      |            |
| aerobics             | <1         |                      |            |

The next question asked “How useful will the skills you have learned on the programme be in helping you at school?” The participants responded to this question using a scale stating their response as one of the following: very, okay, sometimes, not at all really. The circled comments were tallied and reported in percentages of teenagers. Thirteen percent did not respond to this question. Of those who responded to the question, 72% agreed that the skills were very useful, 18% said the skills were okay, 6% replied with sometimes, and 4% said the skills were not at all useful.

In relation to the study skills section of Discovery, the following question was asked: “What were your reading and comprehension scores at the programme? (pre-test and post-test)”. The collective group of participants from NZ20 and NZ21 had an average pre-test scores for reading and comprehension of 185 words per minute and 68 percent comprehension. The average post-test scores increased to 579 words per minute for reading with a 82 percent comprehension rate.

The question “Considering what you got out of the programme would you recommend Discovery to your friends? If no, why not?” was asked. This prompted a “yes”

or “no” answer. The majority of participant responded affirmatively to this question (92%). Of those who said “no”, the main reasons given were that “it may not suit them”, or “they would be more motivated if they found out about it for themselves”.

A rating of Discovery was asked in the following question: “Overall on a scale from 1 to 10 please rate Discovery (1=awful, 10=great).” Most teenagers rated Discovery as great (Table 5.2). Seventy five percent rated Discovery as “9” or above. This was by far the biggest group of participants’ ratings. The remaining 26% percent rated the programme “7” or below and only 1% gave no response.

**Table 5.2 Percentage of Teenagers’ Ratings of Discovery**

| Rating: 1=awful,<br>10=great | % of teenagers |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| 10                           | 48             |
| 9                            | 27             |
| 8                            | 6              |
| 7                            | 4              |
| 6                            | 4              |
| 5                            | 2              |
| 4                            | 3              |
| 3                            | 2              |
| 2                            | 2              |
| 1                            | 1              |
| no response                  | 1              |

“If you were designing Discovery what would you add to the programme?” was another question asked of the participants. The responses showed that more outdoor activities was the number one suggestion given by the teenagers (24%). Eleven percent suggested nothing at all needs to be added to Discovery. Following this consecutively were suggestions of personal benefit such as more sleep (9%), better food (7%), more free time (6%), more interaction with each other (6%). A suggestion made by 8% of the teenagers was to “get us into it more earlier”. This is interesting as it is up to the teenagers themselves to “make the most of it” with the support from the staff and the

environment which is created. Two teenagers commented that they would like more information about dealing with depression and stress. More information about drugs was also suggested and so was "how to help others, not just support them".

The last question asked was "any comment you would like to make about your experiences at Discovery?" Ninety-five percent of the teenagers made comments which reflected their pleasurable experience with Discovery. "Brilliant", "it was cool", "it was great", "awesome", "I really learnt heaps about myself", "it changed my life" were some examples. Some made suggestions to have more breaks or the possibility of mixed dorms. Others made specific comments such as they would like to come back, or thanking the staff for their support and help in making it a great experience.

There were also a number of questions in the questionnaire which were designed as a before and after survey. The following 32 questions (see Table 5.3) were asked of the programmes' participants. These were questions which could be compared with ratings of the individual questions before, and again on Day 7 of the respective programmes (NZ20, NZ21).

These questions asked the participants about personal attributes, academic issues, and relationships within the family, with peers and with others. The highest percentage of positive change for the teenagers was the willingness to be challenged (94.2%). Making new friends quickly (93.6%) was also significant in the positive change. Relationships were reported as changed especially those with their peers (both male and female (91.3%)). Just over eighty percent of teenagers improved on all questions (Table 5.3).

Those questions which had a negative or no change are also important to understand although minimal in comparison to the large percent of teens who had a positive change. The question with the biggest group of teenagers, item number 17, who had no change or a negative change was related to the attitude toward teachers/authority (18.6%).

Closely following this was the relationship with siblings (18%). Personal integrity and honesty (18%) was also an attribute given by a high percentage of teens who had a negative change. All negative and/or no change comments in the listed items are shown in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 Percentages of Teens From NZ20 and NZ21 who Made a Change in the Corresponding Questions**

| Question numbers and items                                     | % pos. change | % neg. change | no change |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1. Ability to make new friends quickly                         | 93.6          | 6.4           | 0         |
| 2. Relationship with peers-female                              | 91.3          | 8.1           | 0.6       |
| 3. Relationships with peers-male                               | 91.3          | 6.9           | 1.2       |
| 4. Self confidence and courage                                 | 91.8          | 7.5           | 0         |
| 5. Willingness to be challenged                                | 94.2          | 5.2           | 0         |
| 6. Reading-Speed and comprehension                             | 84.9          | 15.1          | 0         |
| 7. Personal integrity/honesty                                  | 82            | 18            | 0         |
| 8. Friendliness/openness to others                             | 90.7          | 8.1           | 1.2       |
| 9. Self discipline and commitment                              | 83.7          | 14.5          | 0         |
| 10. Note taking at school                                      | 84.8          | 12.2          | 1.7       |
| 11. Level of confidence to speak in front of a group           | 89.5          | 8.7           | 0         |
| 12. Relationship with parents                                  | 83.1          | 13.9          | 2.4       |
| 13. Accepting people as they are                               | 82.5          | 16.3          | 0.6       |
| 14. How well you work with others as a team                    | 90.7          | 9.3           | 0         |
| 15. How well you relate to strangers                           | 87.2          | 10.5          | 0.6       |
| 16. Relationship with brothers and sisters                     | 79.7          | 13.4          | 4.65      |
| 17. Your attitude to teachers/authority                        | 80.8          | 18.6          | 0         |
| 18. Personal responsibility                                    | 83.1          | 16.8          | 0         |
| 19. Memorisation skills                                        | 86.6          | 12.8          | 0         |
| 20. Homework/Study skills                                      | 83.7          | 11            | 4.1       |
| 21. Dealing with 'mistakes'                                    | 84.9          | 9.3           | 3.5       |
| 22. Taking risks or stepping out of your comfort zone          | 86.6          | 7.5           | 4.65      |
| 23. Self motivation/100%                                       | 88.9          | 6.4           | 4.1       |
| 24. Communication skills                                       | 87.8          | 6.9           | 4.65      |
| 25. Responding to change                                       | 90            | 5.2           | 4.1       |
| 26. How comfortable are you with being real in front of others | 82.5          | 9.3           | 6.4       |
| 27. Enjoyment of learning and having fun doing                 | 86            | 9.3           | 3.5       |
| 28. Goal setting and achievement                               | 89.5          | 6.4           | 3.5       |
| 29. Making new friends                                         | 88.4          | 6.4           | 4.1       |
| 30. Comfortable expressing feeling                             | 89.5          | 5.8           | 3.5       |
| 31. Listening                                                  | 80.8          | 15.1          | 3.5       |
| 32. Overall attitude to life                                   | 84.9          | 11            | 3.5       |

### **The Analysis and Conclusions: Previous Participants' View of Discovery and the Contribution to Their Development**

The comments from previous participants were reported to gain an insight into the participants' perspectives of Discovery. Overall, the results from past evaluations showed the teenagers made positive changes in the psychological, social and academic aspects of their lives as reported by positive responses to most of the questions. For these participants, Discovery offered skills which enhanced these three elements of development. The psychological and social growth was reported through the teenagers' comments such as the positive changes noted by themselves and the comparisons that were made between the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire. From a psychosocial perspective the improvement in interpersonal relationships, confidence and outlook on life were clearly skills that were perceived as improved after Discovery and ones which are not necessarily quantifiable by an observer. Such psychological and social adjustment is reflective of the developmental tasks posed by Havighurst (1955) and Newman and Newman (1995). The ability to relate to others and make the psychological adjustments associated with their lives and their future was particularly important for these young people. Therefore, an enhancement in interpersonal and intrapersonal skills has contributed to the healthy development of the adolescents.

The skills which were most popularly reported by the participants related to the psychological and social skills. These involved teamwork skills, opening up to others and sharing personal experiences and the relief that they are not alone in those experiences. Lastly, the ability to evaluate one's life and make adjustments to live life as you want it was also rated highly. These skills enhance the development of the adolescent as there is an acceptance of oneself and also an acceptance of the changes which take place throughout adolescence. The skills gained from the most favourable sections of Discovery, such as ropes day and thirty days to live, indicate the importance of the associated skills of that activity for someone their age in the New Zealand environment.

An example of the skills Discovery provided for the teenagers was highlighted by the accounts of what each teenager got from Discovery that would enhance their lives. Communication skills, motivation, an enhancement of interactions with others, the general attitude to life and the study skills they cited are all important in the development of the young person. This is in keeping with skills associated with developmental tasks required by Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995) developed from important tasks leading to a resolution of their identity crisis as claimed by Erikson (1963).

The academic skills attained by NZ20 and NZ21's participants were highlighted the before-and-after survey. The situations relating to academic activity or school related work showed a marked increase in the after survey. Note-taking, attitude to teachers, memorisation skills, homework/study skills were all skills which the participants made positive changes in. However, although the post-question was given on day seven of Discovery the participants may not have had a chance to experience such skills at school and so the results are therefore interpreted as changes they intended to make. One specific skill which was tested in the course of the Discovery programme was speed reading. Better comprehension and increased speed of reading, reported for both NZ20 and NZ21 participants, hopefully contribute to better grades at school and consequently provide more opportunity to attain a qualification.

The academic skills and lifeskills sections are separately taught by different Facilitators. However, the sections themselves are not necessarily intended to be separate from each other. Discovery is intended to provide an integrated curriculum of both study skills and lifeskills although there are distinct sections which these skills are taught in. Therefore the skills learnt from both parts of Discovery are not all task-specific skills. There are a number of generic skills (e.g. communication skills) in Discovery which can be transferred and successfully used in a variety of situations. For example, the results from one question "How useful will the skills you have learned on the programme be in

helping you at school?" demonstrated the transfer of skills as most participants thought the skills would be very useful at school. The positive nature of this is that as most of the teenagers' time is involved in the schooling environment, the skills learnt at Discovery are able to be transferred into this environment. This illustrates the transfer of learning which is intended by the design of the programme.

### **Discussion**

There is evidence to show that the Discovery programme has provided some of the skills required in the healthy psychosocial development of adolescents, specifically for those who participated in NZ20 and NZ21. The responses given by the teenagers indicate that the teenagers were working through similar skills required for the achievement of adolescent tasks described by Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995). The importance of social skills regarding the ability to be accepted and relate to others is particularly reflective of the developmental tasks of early adolescence in Newman and Newman's (1995) and Havighurst's (1972) perspective of adolescence.

Participation in the Discovery programme has been profitable for the participants of Discovery NZ20 and NZ21. Our attention now turns to Discovery NZ22 and the participants' perspectives of Discovery in relation to their development and the contribution to adolescence in general.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISCOVERY NZ22: THE RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This section of the study focused upon the 22nd Discovery programme in New Zealand and the contribution it makes to the development of teenagers. A number of research questions stemmed from the third main aim which helped to answer what the educational programme Discovery had to offer teenagers in their development as an adolescent. This chapter's results relates specifically to Discovery NZ22 participants' reactions to questions about the lifeskills part of Discovery, the study skills part of Discovery, its possible influence on parent-adolescent communication, the overall perception of Discovery, and, issues in adolescence.

The responses given from the participants about the lifeskills, study skills, overall perspective and issues in adolescence, were elicited through the Lifeskills and Study Skills Questionnaire (LASS) (see Appendix I). This information related to the main research questions 3-1 To what extent does Discovery NZ22 contribute to the lifeskills and study skills development of the teenage participants?; 3-3 What is the teens' overall perception to Discovery's influence in their lives?; and 3-4 From the teenage participants' viewpoint, to what extent do the sections of Discovery NZ22 effect coping and depression in the adolescent years? In regard to Research Question 3-2, To what extent does Discovery NZ22 influence changes in the nature of communication for the participating parents and teenagers?, the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) (see Appendix III) was used to elicit such information about their communication patterns from both the parent and teenager.

### **The Structure of This Chapter**

As there is a lot of information to reported for each research question, this chapter is organised under four main headings following the main research questions' topics for this section. These are 1, The Lifeskills and Study Skills Sections of Discovery NZ22 (Research Question 3-1), 2, Changes in the Nature of Communication between Parent and Teenager (Research Question 3-2), 3, The Overall Influence of Discovery in the Teenagers' Lives (Research Question 3-3), and 4, The Perception of Discovery and its Contribution to Coping Ability and Depression in Adolescence (Research Question 3-4). Firstly, the results are presented for the main research question and subsequent sub-questions, then an analysis of results follows, incorporating the review of literature and developmental perspectives in adolescence.

The specific topics and activities of Discovery which the teenage participants made particular reference to, already explained in Chapter Four: "The Development, Content and Structure of the Discovery Programme for New Zealand Adolescents: The Results", have been underlined for ease of reference.

### **The Results: The Lifeskills and Study Skills Sections of Discovery NZ22 (in answer to Research Question 3-1)**

Questions 1 to 5 and 8 to 13 in LASS questionnaire (Appendix I) were designed to elicit information about the participants' perspective of the contribution of the lifeskills component and study skills component to their development. Question 1 to 5 specifically centred around the lifeskills section and the remaining Questions 8 to 13 were related to the study skills section of the Discovery programme.

#### The Participants' Views on Discovery NZ22's Lifeskills Sections

##### The Most Useful Lifeskills Sections of Discovery

Research Sub-Question 3-1A. What sections of the lifeskills part of Discovery were perceived most useful and least useful?

Sections of the lifeskills part of Discovery were provided for the teenagers as a reference point (see LASS in Appendix I). The teenagers were able to list other sections they felt were useful and not listed. Results from Question 1 of LASS showed that state changes (40%) and ropes day (39.3%) were the sections most reported as being useful (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1 Sections From the Lifeskills Part of Discovery Found Useful by the Teenagers**

| Lifeskills Section                   | % of teenagers | Related comments                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| state changes                        | 40.00%         | self control over moods<br>power to choose                               |
| ropes day                            | 39.3           | support and teamwork                                                     |
| 30 days to live                      | 31.62          | I realised what I should be doing<br>with my life                        |
| commitments/goals                    | 30.76          | realisation I can achieve goals if I<br>focus                            |
| great moments                        | 27.35          | that it is okay to make mistakes                                         |
| teamwork                             | 27.35          | learnt to give and receive support                                       |
| parent relationships                 | 18.8           | helped me to understand their point<br>of view and relate to them better |
| me/we                                | 16.23          | to think of others                                                       |
| peer relationships                   | 15.38          | able to relate better and understand<br>the opposite sex better          |
| initiative run                       | 14.53          | taught me I can do anything<br>I can motivate myself and others          |
| communication                        | 14.53          | I needed it<br>taught me how to talk to others                           |
| addictions                           | 8.5            | because I need to know                                                   |
| noughts and crosses                  | 8.5            | make a situation positive for all                                        |
| agreements                           | 7.7            | NIL                                                                      |
| autobiography                        | 7.7            | releases a lot<br>opens myself up                                        |
| act as if                            | 7.7            | to achieve state changes                                                 |
| juggling                             | 4.5            | perseverance                                                             |
| a good look                          | 2.56           | NIL                                                                      |
| <b>Participant's added sections:</b> |                |                                                                          |
| confidence                           | 1.7            | NIL                                                                      |
| focusing                             | 1.7            | NIL                                                                      |
| everything                           | 1.7            | everything was great                                                     |
| self motivation                      | <1             | NIL                                                                      |
| fun                                  | <1             | NIL                                                                      |
| no response                          | <1             | NIL                                                                      |
|                                      |                |                                                                          |
|                                      |                |                                                                          |

The most common comments given for state changes were related to the control factor in oneself and the power or benefit related to the choice of emotional state they are in. Support and teamwork benefits were highlighted by most teenagers with regard to ropes day. Table 6.1 shows the percentage of participants who classified certain sections as most useful. The comments given as to why these sections were most useful have been added using actual responses from the participants which encapsulate the comments overall.

#### The Least Useful Lifeskills Sections of Discovery

The least useful sections of the lifeskills part of Discovery were addressed in Question 2 in LASS (Appendix I). One third of the teenagers made the response that everything was helpful (33.33%), implying that all sections of the programme were useful (Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2 Sections From the Lifeskills Part of Discovery Found Least Helpful by the Teenagers**

| Lifeskill Section             | % of teenagers | Related comments                          |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| everything helpful            | 33.33          | loved all                                 |
| addictions                    | 19.6           | I am not addicted to anything             |
| juggling                      | 14.5           | already know how                          |
| no comment                    | 11.11          | NIL                                       |
| initiative run                | 7.7            | dislike running                           |
| autobiography                 | 4.3            | not sure what to say                      |
| parent relationship           | 4.3            | already have a good relationship          |
| act as if                     | 3.4            | NIL                                       |
| peer relationship             | 2.5            | NIL                                       |
| noughts and crosses           | 2.5            | life is hardly ever like that             |
| ropes day                     | 2.5            | wanted it more challenging                |
| me/we                         | 1.7            | NIL                                       |
| teamwork                      | 1.7            | NIL                                       |
| great moments                 | 1.7            | it's mistakes only renamed                |
| 30 days to live               | 1.7            | too late to pay respect to my dead friend |
| Participant's added sections: |                |                                           |
| going home                    | <1             | too much fun                              |
| not allowed inside for breaks | <1             | NIL                                       |
| speed reading                 | <1             | NIL                                       |
| smoking                       | <1             | NIL                                       |

Of those who indicated a section least helpful, addictions (19.6%) was commented on most with the reason being that it did not apply to them. Juggling (14.5%) was the next least helpful section as most said they knew how to do it already. Eleven percent of the teenagers made no response on the least useful section question in the LASS (Question 2, LASS, Appendix I). The list of all sections the teenagers responded to as the least helpful is shown in Table 6.2 alongside examples of reasons given for them choosing the sections as least helpful.

Interestingly, speed reading was given by one participant as the least helpful in the lifeskills sections. Speed reading was not part of the lifeskills' portion of Discovery. It was part of the study skills section. However, it was included in this table as every response was reported.

The ability to use the lifeskills (learned in the programme) in the future was questioned to ascertain the potential usage of these for the participants (Question 3, LASS, Appendix I). Over two thirds of the teenagers (69%) said they would use the skills, strategies and tools learnt at Discovery, at school, in study time, preparing for exams, doing homework or just "getting in the right mood" as one teen termed it. Others (37.6%) commented they would use the skills at home with the majority indicating they would use the skills mainly with respect to their parent relationships. Nearly one third said they would use the skills in the future to improve their communication with friends and others, and in achieving any future goals. Seventeen percent stated they would use everything learnt everyday in every possible situation they encountered. Job hunting, work and career situations would be a good place to use such skills for 13.7% of the participants, with 7.7% using the skills in sporting or leisure activities. A few indicated they would use their skills when public speaking (<1%).

### Other Comments or Suggestions Given About the Lifeskills Sections of Discovery

The teenagers' responses were sought in regard to any skill they felt should be included in the programme. It was an opportunity to understand how Discovery may better provide for New Zealand teenagers. Of the 30 % who responded to Question 4 in the LASS (Appendix I) it was indicated that more information on sex education, safe sex, sex orientation and boy/girl relationships (28.6%) should be included. The latter three topics were suggested by older teens especially in the 16 and 17 year old age group with an equal mixture of gender. The next category suggested as a topic to include or expand upon, was based around becoming independent (22.8%) such as leaving home, flatting, money handling skills, cooking, applying for jobs. A mixture of 15-18 year olds made these comments, with more females than males made these comments. Dealing with siblings was the next skill suggested by the teenagers as beneficial (11.3%) as was relating to others, especially friends (11.3%). Shyness, dealing with jealousy and confidence in speaking in public were also suggestions made by various teenagers. Dieting, coping with depression, coping with stress, self-esteem, use of drugs, and suicide were given by individuals as other lifeskills thought to be beneficial to people their own age and which they would like to see added to Discovery.

Further comments on the lifeskills part of Discovery were encouraged through Question 5 of the LASS (Appendix I). Responses to this question were based around how much they really enjoyed Discovery indicating this by the choice of words such as "loved it", "awesome", "the best", "fun", "fantastic", "excellent", "cool", "great", "it rocked", "brilliant" (25.6%). One fifth of the teenagers thought the Lead Facilitator was excellent (23.5%) and others suggested Discovery was very helpful/useful (3.4%) and somewhat life challenging (3.4%). Two of the teenagers said "thank you" with the same or fewer participants commenting on the need for more personal time, too much emotional work (male) and more ropes days. As the experience of Discovery is a totally individual experience, some other comments which it was not possible to group elsewhere are reported. One teenager is quoted as saying, "I now feel totally set to take all aspects of

life on and I no longer have a huge fear of rejection". Another gave the general comment that, "lifskills are important to learn".

### **The Analysis and Conclusions: Discovery's Lifskills Sections and Their Contribution to Teenage Development**

The usefulness of the lifskills sections give an indication of the skills that are necessary in the development of a young person and highlights the role of Discovery in providing these skills. It is clear that the skills associated with the state changes and ropes day sections were the most useful for the participants because of the power of choice and control over their own lives being associated with the state changes, and the support and teamwork experienced during ropes day. In regard to state changes, the positive attributions of taking control over their own lives is part of adolescent development and is reflected in the developmental perspectives which come from Erikson's notion of identity formation particularly that of identity achievement through commitment. Likewise, according to Marcia, an adolescent is likely to crave for a sense of autonomy and control over their lives when perhaps in their childhood days their parents would resume that control. In adolescence, this control is tested as the young person endeavours to take more control over their own lives as they mature (Eme, Maisiak & Goodale, 1979). The section on state changes helped to provide the skills so that the participants can take control of their own emotions and gave them the skills to change circumstances if they choose. Acquiring the skill of taking control of one's own life is a psychological and behavioural adjustment which Discovery's teenagers found useful and is linked to Havighurst's (1972) developmental tasks 4 and 8: achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults, and desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour, and Newman and Newman's (1995) two developmental tasks: emotional development, and, autonomy from parents.

In reference to ropes day, support and teamwork were skills also reported which applied to this outdoor activity day. Ropes day involved each team of teenagers in physical

activities which, much like all team approaches to physical activities, has the underlying purpose is to “foster teenagers” personal and social development through experiences involving co-operation, trust, problem solving, decision making, goal setting, communication, leadership, responsibility and reflection” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.46). The third day, Ropes Day was a day of outdoor activity which challenged the teenagers mentally, physically and socially. It was also a time in which the teenagers were able to utilise the skills learnt in the prior two days. The social skills gained through the outdoor activities were particularly important for NZ22’s participants as “support” was commonly reported as the reasons for the usefulness of ropes day. The positive impact of an adventure type programme is reflective of the findings of Moote and Wodanski (1997) in their review of literature of the outcomes of lifeskills training through an adventure based medium. The suggestion for more ropes days given by a number of teenagers may be an indication of the importance of feeling supported and the ability to “work side-by-side” in a situation when each member of the team potentially required the same support and assistance. Peer support and acceptance is particularly important for those aged between 12 to 18 years as emphasised in the adolescent development theory by Newman and Newman (1995). Other developmental tasks which the ropes day activity supported were accepting one’s physique and using the body effectively (Havighurst, 1972) and physical maturation (Newman & Newman, 1995).

Discovery provided the teenagers the opportunity to discover what really matters to them in their lives, through the third most rated useful section - thirty days to live. This section allowed the teenager to reflect upon their lives, and analyse their behaviours and actions, to think about what is important for them and then to generate a list of behaviours and actions which may be more profitable and positive in their lives. The reflective nature of the exercise encourages responsibility and control in one’s life and provides the skills which the developmental perspectives presented in this study suggest are important for the healthy development of an identity. This third most recorded section on the lifeskills part of Discovery provided a springboard for growth and

development. Taking stock of where they were at, what they were doing in their lives and what changes they were going to make to lead a more fulfilling life is like providing someone with the skills for evaluating their own lives allowing the power to make positive choices in one's future. Again this leads to the skills of being in charge of one's own life. These feelings also contributed to the acquisition of a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour as in the developmental perspectives (Havighurst, 1972); achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes (Havighurst, 1972); and internalised morality (Newman & Newman, 1995).

Although the first three sections of the Discovery programme were discussed here in the application of skills they provided, it is important to note that all sections of the lifeskills component of Discovery were reported as being most useful. This is similar to the responses given by previous participants from NZ20 and NZ21. In regard to the usefulness of sections, the section state changes was not included in the questionnaire for the previous participants and so no responses or comments were received pertaining to its usefulness. This was replaced with a good look which was perceived as the second most useful section for these teenagers. The high rating of a good look was in contrast to the present study where the least number of teens reported it useful. One explanation of this may be attributed to the differences in the teenagers' interpretation of the sections between NZ22's participants and the participants of NZ20 and NZ21.

When asked what were the least helpful sections of Discovery, one third contradicted this question claiming that all sections were useful. The highest percentage of teenagers made this comment, which strengthens the usefulness of Discovery and the skills it provided the young people on their journey to adulthood.

Of those who did name a section which was least helpful, the addictions section was perceived as the least helpful because it was a matter not concerning them as they do not have a problem with being addicted to a substance. These findings can be interpreted in

two ways. Firstly, addictions is a complex condition in which someone with an addiction finds it difficult to recognise their condition and to seek help and so would not perhaps be able to “see outside their situation”. Secondly, perhaps the twenty percent of participants, who suggested the section on addictions was not helpful for them, were in fact those young people who do not have a problem with substance abuse, or at least not at that time. Statistics show that 27.5% of 15-19 years olds in a sample of the New Zealand secondary school population classed themselves as smokers (Wilson, Russell & Pauline, 1990). Furthermore, one third of the young men 14 - 17 years surveyed in a general New Zealand population sample were heavy drinkers (New Zealand Board of Health, 1986). Drug abuse is also prevalent in this age group as 8% of drug users in a rehabilitation centre in New Zealand were under the age of 20 years (Lungley & Baker, 1990). These statistics indicate, to some degree, the prevalence of substance abuse in adolescence. However, at the time of completing the questionnaire the teenagers felt that the skills associated with preventing or overcoming addictions was not relevant to them.

According to the Lead Facilitator of Discovery, the aims of the section of addictions was to also present an addiction as something that could happen to them and that people are addicted to all sorts of things. The aim was to provide young people with the information on how addictions are formed, the behaviours that are usually exhibited and to emphasise the changes required to break the cycle and the benefits of alternative living. An example of an addiction was portrayed: usually someone from the audience, gives a detailed account of how much money, time and effort is put into the addictions and, as the example is followed through, the extra money, time and adjustments needed to keep the addiction is highlighted. New behaviours and the necessary psychological and social adjustments are generated and explained as alternatives to the addiction. These skills for the future were obviously missed by these teenagers who deemed the section on addictions as irrelevant. Although the skills and strategies gained in the section on addictions may not have been applicable to the twenty teenagers who

indicated addictions as irrelevant at that time in their lives, it remains unknown whether these skills may be instrumental in the prevention of an addiction in the future.

Another section reported by the Discovery NZ22's participants as the least useful by the next largest group of teenagers was juggling with most replying that they already knew how to juggle. Juggling is used as an activity to teach skills such as chunking, goal setting, persistence and practice are the steps to mastering a skill. It is also an activity practised through breaks for those who want to do so. One interpretation of these results could be that the analogy was not understood such that the activity had lost its relevance to the teenagers' lives. The same type of reasoning may be applied to those who responded with the initiative run as the next least helpful section. The primary aim for the run was to provide the example of giving 100% to a task, and giving support and encouragement of others in their similar endeavours and accepting support in the same way. As for the sections on addictions and juggling, the participants failed to see the concepts and skills embedded in the activities and therefore found the sections irrelevant as shown by their comments.

The rating of juggling and the initiative run as the least helpful section was also high for previous participants although no reasons were given for these ratings. The section on addictions was not included in past participants' evaluation and so no rating on this section was able to be compared. The ratings of usefulness and least helpful sections were reinforced by the previous participants with the exception of a good look which was rated more useful for previous participants than Discovery NZ22's teenagers.

In regard to the sections overall, state changes, the section perceived as the most useful, was not mentioned by any of the 117 teenagers of NZ22 as least helpful, clearly giving strength to the section's usefulness. Other sections not mentioned by any participants negatively were commitment/goals which was categorised fourth useful, along with a good look, agreements and communication sections. Although the latter three were

found most useful by fewer numbers of teenagers it serves to show that these sections were regarded as more useful than not for the teenagers.

The possibility of using the skills, which were learnt at Discovery, in the future were supported by both NZ22's participants and previous participants. The teenagers were able to state cases where the skills they had learnt at Discovery would be useful in the future. These mainly centred around school and home and were in agreement with the majority of teenagers from the two previous Discovery programmes. The anchoring of information, skills and strategies to their lives outside of Discovery is perhaps one of the unique characteristics of the programme. The Lead Facilitator consistently gives the opportunity for the participants to relate the skills they may have learnt in a session to their lives outside of the Discovery programme. This is done privately or through a group sharing process. The anchoring of information, skills and strategies into their lives, enhances the probability that they would use those skills in the future and transfer of learning will be achieved. The association to everyday life is important in the process of learning as it maximises the effects and utilisation of such skills.

The needs of the developing adolescent go beyond the skills Discovery provided. Sex education and skills for independence were areas the teenagers also required. These were mainly typical of the older teenagers and are consistent with the later developmental tasks in the theories of Newman and Newman (1995) and Havighurst (1972).

In conclusion, Discovery has facilitated and allowed the teenager to experiment and take ownership of lifeskills that are necessary for their healthy development. The psychological, social and behavioural skills the teenagers obtained contributed to the development of the participating teenagers. Discovery has provided a positive experience for the participating teenagers and helped to equip them with the lifeskills to enable a healthy and positive transgression from childhood to adulthood. In this way,

Discovery has passed on the “lore of the tribe” by providing skills and experiences that may not have been available to the young person otherwise. The skills and the experience of participating in Discovery are grounded in the psychosocial theories of adolescence.

### The Participants Views on Discovery NZ22’s Study Skills Sections

#### The Most Useful Study Skills Sections of Discovery

The other part of the Discovery programme’s curriculum consists of skills useful for the adolescent in their academic life. The opportunity to learn skills for studying and academic work is part of the Discovery programme. Approximately one fifth of Discovery’s curriculum is related to study skills which consist of mindmapping, speed reading skills, memory techniques and understanding individual learning styles and multiple intelligences. The participants’ responses to questions about the study skills part of Discovery, and the sections which were involved, relate to the research questions 3-1B, 3-1C and 3-1D which are described in the following sections’ headings.

Research Sub-Question 3-1B. What sections of the study skills part of Discovery were perceived most useful and least useful?

The majority of teenagers maintained that mindmapping, speed reading, multiple intelligences/learning styles and memory techniques would be potentially very useful (Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3 Ratings of Study Skills by Percentages of Participants for Each Study Skill**

| study skill                                | very useful | quite useful | somewhat useful | fairly useful | not very useful |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| mindmapping                                | 27.35       | 56.41        | 11.96           | 3.42          | <1              |
| speed reading                              | 72.65       | 20.51        | 2.56            | 3.42          | <1              |
| multiple intelligences/<br>learning styles | 23.08       | 51.28        | 1.71            | 4.7           | 1.71            |
| memory techniques                          | 35.89       | 41.02        | 15.38           | 4.7           | <1              |

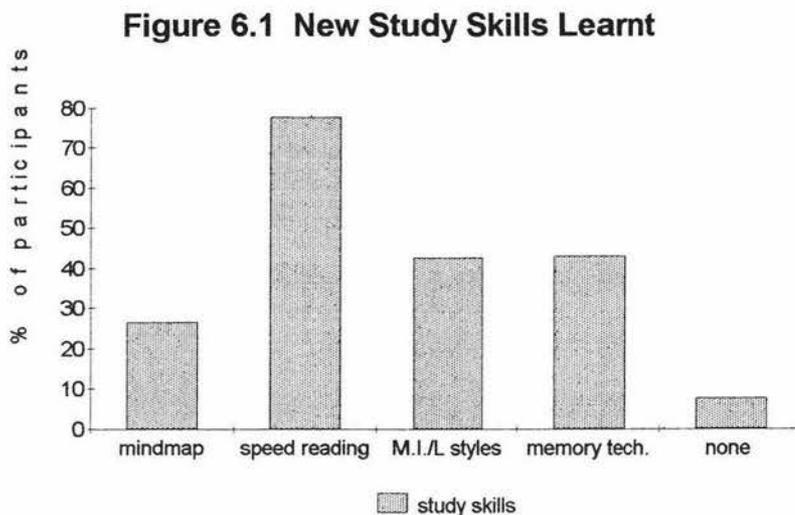
The participants were given a rating scale from very useful to not very useful to rate each study skill according to their thoughts (Question 8, LASS, Appendix I). The highest rating of very useful study skills was speed reading with 85 out of 117 participants in agreement. Over three quarters of the number of participants found mindmapping quite useful or above. Half the participants rated learning styles/multiple intelligences as quite useful while 41% rated memory techniques similarly. Most rated the four study skills higher than somewhat useful (Question 8, LASS, Appendix I) than lower than somewhat useful.

#### The Least Useful Study Skills Sections of Discovery

The highest percentage of participants at the other end of the scale, which included not very useful and fairly useful rating combined, was multiple intelligences/learning styles (Table 6.3). The next rating for the least useful study skill by the same ratings, not very useful and fairly useful, was memory techniques followed by speed reading and mindmapping with equal percentages of participants's ratings. This is the reverse of the most useful skill in the previous question, namely speed reading, which was rated one of the lowest in the least useful rating.

Research Sub-Question 3-1C. What percentage of teenagers learnt new study skills?

This research sub-question can be answered by Question 9 in the LASS questionnaire (Appendix I). Responses from Question 9 of the LASS questionnaire showed that speed reading was the skill learnt that was new to most of the teenagers (77.77%) while mindmapping was the least newest (26.5%) (Figure 6.1). Responses to multiple intelligences/learning styles and memory techniques were closely associated, with less than half of the participants learning about each of these two study skills for the first time.



Research Sub-Question 3-1D. What percentage of teenagers improved their study skills?

Those who already knew some or all of the study skills were asked to what extent, if any, did they learn more about them (Question 10, LASS, Appendix I). The intention was that those who learnt new study skills at Discovery would answer Question 9 (LASS, Appendix I) and those who already knew about some or all of the study skills learnt at Discovery would answer Question 10 of the LASS (Appendix I). The sum of those who responded to Question 10 in the LASS (Appendix I) suggested that those who learnt about the study skills for the first time (Question 9, LASS, Appendix I) also answered Question 10. For example, 91 teenagers stated that speed reading was a new study skill learned at Discovery (Question 9). However 28 teenagers then replied to Question 10 saying that they learned more about the study skill at Discovery. This brings the total of responses to Question 9 and 10 to 119 responses which is over the total number of participants at Discovery. Therefore, some of those who answered Question 9 in the LASS questionnaire also answered question 10 saying not only did they learn a new skill but also improved on it.

The least newest study skill, mindmapping, was the skill that most respondents said they learnt more about (55.55%) (Table 6.4). In reverse order of those who learnt new study

skills, multiple intelligences/learning styles followed with 29.06% of participants, then memory techniques (27.06%) and lastly, speed reading (24.79%). Twenty three teenagers (19.66%) gave no response to the question.

**Table 6.4 Comparison of New and Improved Study Skills by Rank Order  
1=highest ranking....4=lowest ranking**

| study skill                            | new | learnt more |
|----------------------------------------|-----|-------------|
| mindmapping                            | 4   | 1           |
| multiple intelligences/learning styles | 3   | 2           |
| memory techniques                      | 2   | 3           |
| speed reading                          | 1   | 4           |

Nearly all the teens (98.3%) participating in Discovery NZ22 maintained that their study skills would be different from now on (Question 11, LASS, Appendix I). Only one participant said “no”, explaining “I can’t read faster than normal because I don’t enjoy it or get all the information I need. I miss things out”. The other participant did not respond to the question.

The teenagers’ reasons for an intended difference in their study skills, as elicited from Question 11 in the LASS questionnaire, were related to tools and strategies taught in the lifeskills section of Discovery. Chunking, jam I.D., focusing on goal, get into the right state to study were comments given. Also the participants related the attribution of a Discovery tool or strategy to their study success in the future. For example, being “more motivated and able to do stuff”, “focus hard and get the results I want” were explanations given. Some explained their own strategy for study when they leave Discovery that would promote or enhance some part of their academic lives. Four gave no explanation of how their skill will be different from now on.

### Other Comments or Suggestions Given About the Study Skills Sections of Discovery

The participants were encouraged to report study skills learnt at Discovery which may not have been already discussed (Question 12, LASS, Appendix I). The skills given by the teenagers were mostly related to lifeskills. Twenty out of the 23 participants who responded to the question named lifeskills such as “keep calm and focus”, “face my challenge”, chunking and change state. One participant suggested warm-ups to exams were learnt through Discovery. The other two participants suggested that listening to calming music, a technique used in certain sessions throughout the seven day programme, was learnt. It is evident from these responses, and as discussed earlier, that the lifeskills and study skills learnt are interrelated.

The participants suggested certain study skills to be included in Discovery (Question 13, LASS, Appendix I). Of the 28 participants responding, most suggested either more information on memory skills and/or techniques and how to deal with studying for exams. These skills were suggested by teens aged 14 years and older. Taking notes, time management and studying at home were examples of skills suggested for exams and studying. Other skills suggested by various teenagers were mathematics or number skills, how to use cue cards, how to boost academic confidence and a general comment asking for more time to be spent on academic skills in the programme.

### **The Analysis and Conclusions: Discovery’s Study Skills Section and Their Contribution to Teenage Development**

The fifteen year old age group, of Discovery NZ22’s participants, appears to mark the change in the teenager’s approach to school and coincides with the examination of national qualifications. This became apparent as those 15 years and older listed a number of study skills they wanted included in the programme. The participants wanted the following study skills to be included in the Discovery programme: more information on memory skills, how to deal with studying for exams, use of strategies for study,

mathematical and numerical skills. These skills were considered necessary by the young people and is an indication of the seriousness of school in their lives.

The importance of gaining a qualification becomes important as statistics have shown that qualifications promotes better employment opportunities (Statistics New Zealand, 1998; Crockett & Petersen, 1993; Ministry of Education, 1995; Ministry of Education, 1997). This is in line with Havighurst's (1972) developmental task; "preparing for an economic future", and Newman and Newman's (1995) developmental task on "career choice".

An indication of the pressure of exams and to succeed was given in the participants responses to what skills they wanted to learn more about. Skills relating to exams and improving study habits were wanted by teenagers who were at fifth form level which is an indication of the level of education they are at and the opportunity to promote development by enhancing their entry into employment. This is not surprising as exams and the pressure to succeed increases with the proximity to national exams and have shown to be major challenges in a teenagers life as reported in this study and also in the study by Mates and Allison (1992).

Discovery's contribution to the teenagers' study skills has been mostly positive. The four study skills were all rated highly for their usefulness: speed reading, multiple intelligences/learning styles, mindmapping, memory techniques. Learning new study skills and improving familiar study skills were also indicated by most of the teenagers.

All the four study skills were found to be useful as either quite useful or very useful. Speed reading was the study skill in which the most teenagers perceived to be most useful and was also rated as the favourite study skill for participants of NZ20 and NZ21. The mastery of such a skill are also evident in the before-and-after test results. The scores for NZ22 as a group showed that they had increased in speed by 470% with an

84% increase in comprehension. Similar improvements were shown for NZ20 and NZ21 participants also clearly showing the mastery of speed reading while at Discovery. The skills associated with speed reading were new to the majority of participants and therefore the acquisition of these skills are attributable to the participation in Discovery.

Multiple intelligences/Learning styles and mindmapping skills were the least newest to the teenagers; however mindmapping was a study skill which most teenagers actually learnt more about. Participants indicated that although skills were new to the teenagers, Discovery helped in extending their knowledge of such skills.

Discovery helped to improve their knowledge of skills they may have already known. Over three quarters of the participants either learnt something new or improved their knowledge on at least one or two study skills. Overall, Discovery contributed towards an improvement in the teenagers' ability to learn. Such learning applies to Newman and Newman's (1995) developmental task as enhancing the process of "thinking in more complex terms" is an important stage in adolescent development. This is the stage where more abstract learning takes place and the young person thinks beyond himself or herself. Discovery appears to have provided skills to enhance learning and allow the adolescent to utilise more complex thinking patterns.

The teenagers reported that the study skills gained at Discovery would be able to be used in their lives. Personal examples were given by the teenagers explaining how their study skills would be different and how they would use the skills in the future, thus making a contribution toward their future. Lifeskills sections of Discovery were also popularly incorporated within their explanations, reinforcing Discovery's premise of an integrated curriculum. This was also apparent in the teens' explanations in which they asked about other study skills learnt at Discovery. The teens' responses to this related to the lifeskills sections of Discovery and the accelerated learning techniques (used throughout Discovery) such as listening to calming music, being more motivated, and "going for my

goal". This again reinforces the view between Facilitators, that although there is a study skills section and a lifeskills section these sections are often meshed and inseparable. The skills learnt in the lifeskills section could be transferred into study skills and vice versa.

The responses by the participants of NZ22 were again reinforced by previous participants' responses. Overall, past participants (of NZ20 and NZ21) said their study skills would be very useful for them at school and reported that their memory skills, homework skills and attitude to teachers were much more positive after their Discovery than their pre-programme ratings. The change to positive attitudes indicated by the participants in their responses to the future use of study skills may well promote a positive attitude to schooling, an attitude which Gordon and Grant (1997) found in negative in adolescents' responses in their study. The participants of NZ20 and NZ21 also reported more enjoyment of learning after Discovery. The evidence shows that the participants from the three programmes learnt new study skills, improved on their study skills and found all the study skills useful to them in their future.

Nearly every teenager in Discovery NZ22 indicated their approach to study skills to be different in the future, each providing reasons for such changes. These changes were either due to the changes in attitudes or to a different use of strategies predominantly learnt through the lifeskills sections of Discovery. This is again an example of Discovery's integrated curriculum of lifeskills and study skills and the transfer of skills in all aspects of a teenager's life.

### **The Results: Changes in the Nature of Communication Between Parent and Teenager (in answer to Research Question 3-2)**

The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) (Appendix III) was used to investigate any changes in communication before and after Discovery and address the question: To what extent does Discovery NZ22 influence changes in the nature of communication for participating parents and teenagers?

The scores of the PACS for each participant was totalled and comparisons between PACS 1 (pre-Discovery) and PACS 2 (post-Discovery). The PACS consisted of two types of questions: problem and open items. The open questions are scored on given value whereas the problem questions are scored in reverse. The scores reported in the following section are inclusive of the flipped problem questions scores. The total scores range from 20 - 100 where a higher score indicates better communication and this applies for each sub-scale. That is, a higher score on the open communication scale (range 10 - 50) indicates more open communication than a lower score, and a high score on problem communication indicates a lack of communicative problems (range 10 - 50).

The scores will relate to either PACS 1 or PACS 2 as stated in the following results. PACS 1 refers to the first PACS sent to the teens and their parents two weeks prior to the first day of Discovery for teenagers. PACS 2 was sent to the same families two months after the last day of Discovery.

There are a number of sub-questions relating to this main research question. These were organised in such a way to fully investigate the changes in communication for those involved. The results for each sub-question are explained in the following sections. The influence of Discovery on communication patterns are discussed nearer the end of the chapter.

#### The Changes in the Parents' and Teenagers' Perception of Communication

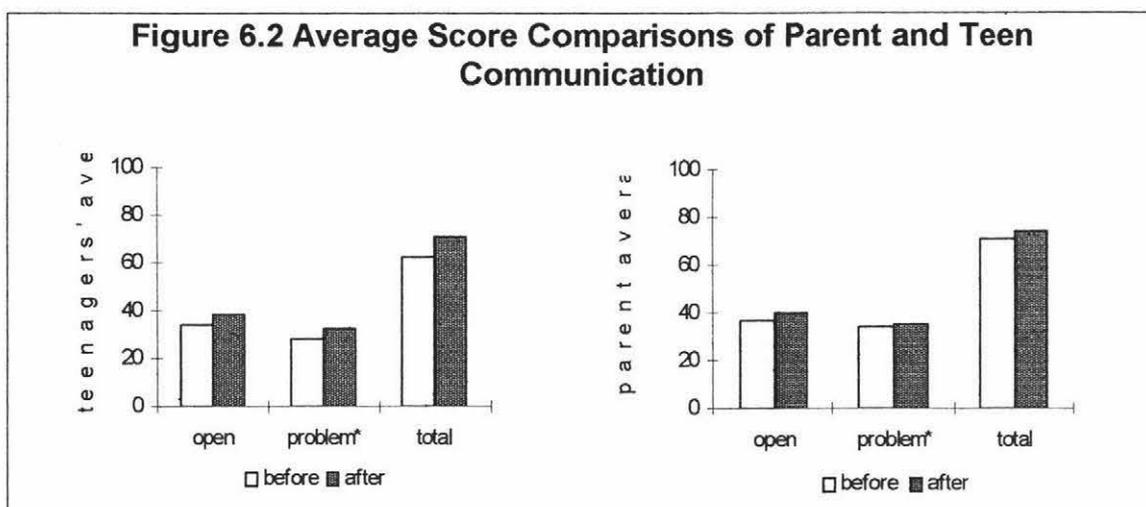
Research Sub-Question 3-2A. Were there any changes in the parents' and teenagers' perception of communication before and after Discovery?

The PACS scores of the parents and teenagers were separately calculated to obtain the average total score for each group. The total scores combined the open and problem communication scores where the problem score was the sum of the flipped scores as described previously. The average total scores from the PACS were used to determine the changes in parent's and teen's perception of communication. The parent group had

an average total score of 70.64 on PACS 1 (Figure 6.2). This is above the median (60) for the possible communication score. Two months after Discovery the same group's average score was 74.52 indicating an improvement in communication overall.

The improved change in communication appears to be rather small, nevertheless, it is important to note this direction in change towards improved communication.

The average score for the teen group showed lower perception of communication before Discovery (62.52) than the parent group (Figure 6.2). The average score of the teen group increased two months after Discovery to a score of 70.82 making a bigger increase than the parent's group. The improvement in scores was more than double the average improvement in parent scores.



\*flipped score

The perceived improvement of communication was made within each of the sub-scale scores for open communication and problem communication as shown in Figure 6.2. The teen group improved evenly on both open and problem sub-scores when comparing the scores between PACS 1 and PACS 2 as indicated in Table 6.5. The increase within the problem communication sub-score for the parent group was less than their increase in open communication giving a reason for the smaller change in the total score as compared with the teens' total scores.

**Table 6.5 Average Scores of PACS 1 and PACS 2 for Parents and Teens**

|        | open   |       | problem |       | total  |       |
|--------|--------|-------|---------|-------|--------|-------|
|        | before | after | before  | after | before | after |
| teen   | 33.8   | 38.64 | 28.74   | 32.18 | 62.52  | 70.82 |
| parent | 36.34  | 39.7  | 34.3    | 34.82 | 70.64  | 74.52 |

Overall, for both parents and teens there was a shift towards better communication as revealed by the comparison of results of PACS 1 and PACS 2.

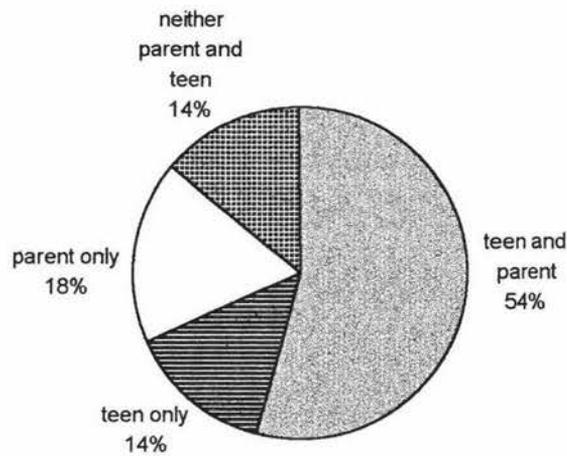
#### The Number of Changes in Communication Scores

Research Sub-Question 3-2B. What percentage of families had a change in their perception of communication after Discovery?

The percentage of changes was dependent on whether each member of the family (the teen and the parent) had a change in total score and what that change was. Looking at the separate groups, the results showed that the total number of parents whose scores showed an increase was 34 (68%) as compared to 36 (72%) teens who increased their score. Three parents' total scores remained the same and thirteen scores lowered. Thirteen teens decreased their score on PACS 2 and one teen stayed the same.

On familial examination, 54% of families had both an increase in parent and teen scores (Figure 6.3). Neither parent nor teen (14%) combined showed an increase in communication scores. In those families where one member increased their score, 18% of parents increased their score and 14% of teens did not increase their score. These statistics relate to 54% of parents and teens within the same family showed a perceived improvement in communication, and, a further 18% of parents and 14% of teens also showed a perceived improvement in communication with their child or parent respectively.

**Figure 6.3 Percentage of Participants who Showed an Increase in PACS Scores**



#### Communication Changes by Parent, Teen and Gender

Research Sub-Question 3-2C. What were the changes in communication for each gender for each member of the family?

The changes in communication were examined for each member of the family according to gender - male teen, female teen, male parent and female parent. The female parent group was by far the largest group. Of the parent group, over three times more female parents (78%) participated in PACS than male parents (22%). There was a fairly even split of gender in the teen group with male teens (52%) slightly higher than female teens (48%). Due to the differences in the numbers within each of the four groups the results have been calculated according to each group's patterns. The results show the number of participants within each group who made a change in total scores.

The number of participants for each category were tallied for those who had an increase in their total score and those who did not. Only one male teen, female teen and male parent had no change in their total score. Three participants had no change in total score for the female parent group.

The percentages of those participants who increased, decreased or remained the same in the total communication scores is shown in Table 6.6. The male teen group (76.92%) had the highest percentage of participants increase in their total scores followed by the male parent group (72.7%). The female parent group (66.66%) and female teen group (66.66%) equally had the same percentage of participants to increase in their total communication scores. Female teens were the largest group to decrease their total scores in comparison to others who had decreased their scores. Of the teens, more male teens increased their score than female teens, and conversely, more female teens had a decrease in their total score than male teens. Overall, both male groups had more increases in scores than the female groups. There appears to be no significant relationship between the change in their total score and the gender/role of the participants (chi-square (3N=50)=2.7346,  $p < .05$ ) as shown in the chi-square test.

**Table 6.6 Percentages of Gender/Role Participants who Showed a Change in Total Score**

| Gender/Role   | Increase | Decrease | No change |
|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Male Teen     | 76.92    | 19.23    | 3.85      |
| Female Teen   | 66.66    | 33.33    | NIL       |
| Male Parent   | 72.7     | 27.3     | NIL       |
| Female Parent | 66.66    | 25.64    | 7.7       |

The average score change for male teens was 8.8 showing an increase, meaning a positive change. That is, the male teen group had an average change in score from PACS 1 to PACS 2 of 8.8. The female teen average score change was 8.3 which was also a positive change. For the parent group, the fathers' change was 5.82, also a positive change, and mothers' change was 3.33, a positive change again. This shows that teen groups had the greatest change in average scores compared with the parent groups. Specifically, male teens had the highest average total score change followed by female teens, then male parents and female parents. This is reflected in the percentages

of those who increased, decreased or had no change in average total scores for each group.

Changes in Communication for First-Born Teen Families and  
Non First-Born Teen Families

Research Sub-Question 3-2D. Was there a difference in the changes of communication for first-born teen families, compared with families which have an older sibling?

The teenagers were asked on their accompanying letter with PACS 1 where they were placed in the family (see Appendix II). This helped in understanding whether they were the first-born teenager in the family or not the first-born teen (non first-born) in the family. The groups were as follows: the teen group who was the first-born teen in the family, the teen group who was not the first-born teen (non first-born teen), the parent group whose teen (at Discovery NZ22) was the first-born teen in the family (first-born teen parent group), the parent group whose teen (at Discovery NZ22) was not the first-born teen (non first-born teen parent group).

The total changes in total scores were calculated for each participant in each group: first-born teen group, non first-born teen group, first-born teen parent group, non first-born teen parent group, then these scores were averaged for each group. There were 25 (50%) teenagers who were the first-born teen in their family, and 23 (46%) teenagers who were in the non first-born teen group. Two teens did not answer the question.

By comparing the two groups, first-born and non first-born families, it could be seen that there were differences in total communication scores before Discovery and after Discovery for teen groups, and, differences before and after Discovery for the parent groups. There was a difference of 3.02 in total average scores between the first-born teen group and the non first-born teen group before Discovery. This changed to a

difference of 5.33 after Discovery. This means there was more of a difference in average total scores between the two teen group on PACS 2 than PACS 1. The parent groups showed little difference in total average scores before Discovery (0.29) but increased in the difference in scores after Discovery (2.14). The teen groups had greater positive changes in communication than the parent groups.

Further investigation of each group separately, illuminated the change in average scores for each group (Table 6.7).

**Table 6.7 Difference (PACS 2-PACS 1) in Average Total Scores Within Each Group**

| Role   | Families with first-born teen | Families with non first-born teen |
|--------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Parent | 4.95                          | 3.1                               |
| Teen   | 13.34                         | 4.89                              |

The difference in average score for the first-born teen group was over three times more than the participants who were the non first-born teen. In other words, the first-born teen group increased their score more than all the other groups. Parents with their first-born teen on Discovery also increased their score more than parents who have experience with teenagers (non first-born teen parent group). On the whole, the family with the first-born teenager had higher changes in average scores than those who already had experience with teenagers (non first-born teen parent group).

### **The Analysis and Conclusions: The Changes in the Nature of Communication**

#### **Between Parent and Teenager in Relation to the Literature**

The sections of Discovery on communication, and especially parent-adolescent communication, have proven to be useful in identifying communication patterns. More families than not perceived an improvement in communication. Also, the present study showed that parents' and teens' average total communication scores improved, showing

an improvement in communication for both parties. This is also indicated in the changes made in both the open and problem sub-scores.

According to Barnes and Olson (1985) verbal communication dictates the underlying condition of a relationship such that good communication forms the basis of a good relationship (Noller & Callan, 1991). Discovery has provided the basis for a number of parents and teenagers to improve their communication skills. This may be attributable to the specific communication skills training provided at Discovery. With the focus on the roles within the family, it is important to note that the parents perceived their communication in their relationship better than the teens which is consistent with Barnes and Olson (1985) study where parents tended to report more openness and fewer problems in communication than their teen (Barnes and Olson, 1985; Noller & Callan, 1986; Cooper & Ayers-Lopez, 1985). Noller and Callan (1991) refer to these differences as perceptual. That is, the parents' prefer to present the family in a good light, and the adolescents' need for independence and to develop a separate identity prompts the more negative, and separatist, view of their relationship.

Although the parent's scores indicated they perceived their communication with their child better than the teen group, the teens made the biggest gains in communication. Discovery was able to provide communication skills which they later use within their relationship with their parents. This is supported by the high rating of the parent-teen relationship section as useful. The skills about communication definitely benefited the teens more than the parent in their immediate relationship after Discovery as more teens than parents perceived an improvement in their communication. Such skills provided the foundation for gaining independence and autonomy from parents which can be a very conflictful time for families. These are skills which Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995) highlight as important in an adolescent's development: Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults, and, autonomy from parents, respectively.

Male teens benefited the most from the communication skills training as the average communication score for this group increased the most, and, the number of male teens who made an increase was more than any other group. An interpretation of these findings shows that training in communication skills is especially regarded important for male teens. This may be indicative of the traditional sex role stereotypes where males are perceived as instrumental and females are more expressive and willing and able to communicate on an emotional level. This also relates to sons being less willing to disclose aspects about themselves as Noller and Bagi (1985) reports. Likewise, fathers were the least likely person to communicate with on most topic for reasons which the fathers were perceived by the teenagers as least interested in them (Noller & Bagi, 1985).

The previous explanations can also be given for the improvement in the perceived fathers' communication levels. Communication skills learnt at Discovery were also beneficial for fathers as the percentage of fathers who improved communication with their child was the next highest. Mother were the group who perceived the least improvement in their communication with their child. Studies by Noller and Bagi (1985), Noller and Callan (1991) and Barnes and Olson (1985) reported that adolescents viewed their communication with their mother as more open and frequent than their communication with their father. The present findings shows that this may indeed be the case. What this may indicate is that skill training in communication is most beneficial for fathers. One interpretation of this is that Discovery provided the opportunity fathers to learn how to communicate better with their teen than perhaps they would have previously. Thus, the male parents may have discovered skills during their one day workshop which helped them communicate more openly and freely with their teen.

Overall, both teens and parents made notable gains in communication. Programmes, such as Discovery, which aim to promote healthy communication between parents and teenagers may provide each member with the skills to nurture their relationship as a

person-to-person relationship as opposed to a parent-child dictatorial relationship that a younger child may experience. Communication changes automatically take place as the young person gains increasing independence from their parents as Havighurst's (1972) fourth developmental task: emotional independence from parents and other adults, and Newman and Newman's (195) developmental task pertaining to later adolescents: autonomy from parents, advocate. The communication changes a family experiences through the maturity of their members can have both positive and negative consequences depending on the adaptability of the family. Notably, there were more improvements in communication overall, however negative changes for families, and parent and teens separately, also occurred.

One area of questioning in the interviews of the four people (Question 13, Appendix V) referred to parent-adolescent communication. All four interviewees discussed ways in which Discovery provides tools for the enhancement of communication between the parent and teenager. The main contribution which all agreed upon was that Discovery aids both sides of the partnership in understanding the others' perspective in the relationship. This involved a shift of communication for the parent from telling their child what to do or what not to do (Baumrind's (1991) authoritarian parenting style) to actually allowing their child to become an equal partner in the relationship (Baumrind's (1991) authoritative parenting style). This type of communication insists that the parent sees their child as a person first and hence find ways to relate to them in that way. Likewise, through Discovery, the teens get to appreciate what that parent has done for them and to understand what their parent's perspective is. One interviewee commented that Discovery provides a type of initiation into adulthood for the teens. In this way parents realise they that their job is practically finished and now the levels of communication with their teenagers can develop into new levels of person-to-person communication.

In contrast to the positive effects, there were a number of teens and parents who indicated their communication weakened in some areas. This occurred for approximately one quarter of both the teen and parent groups. However these negative effects did not necessarily correspond within the same family as only 14% of families had negative changes or made no changes for both members of the family. The remaining families consisted of contrasting views of communication as one member of the family perceived an improvement in communication while the other perceived their communication as worse.

From a developmental perspective one explanation of the negative changes overall may have occurred because of the resistance to a changing relationship. For example, the teens received training in communication skills throughout Discovery and specifically in the section on parent-teen relationships. The teens reported, in the LASS questionnaire (Appendix I), that they would use these skills in the relationships with their parents. The parents, who participated in the parent day of Discovery NZ22, were also exposed to a set of new skills and strategies they might use with their teens. However, the teens had more time to assimilate and practice communication skills during their seven day training, and gained more confidence and belief in oneself as a person, and as a teenager, that they were possibly the leader of the newly changed communication patterns that proceeded Discovery. As the teens emerged with a more positive outlook on life and themselves as a person, they were eager to try the new skills and strategies in their relationship with their parents. This eagerness may have come from the readiness, or "ripeness" as Havighurst coins it, to become more independent and strive for a more mature relationship with their parent. Likewise the parent, who is a major socialising role model in the teenager's life, also may expect certain changes in their communication with their child and therefore puts pressure on the teenager to perform to the expected social skills they insist.

Such changes require a balancing of power in the relationship which is known to induce conflict between parent and adolescent in everyday life (Smetana, 1985). Empathy and equality in the relationship are part of the training Discovery offers the family. Therefore finding the right formula in the communication/relationship pattern may take time, and so two months after Discovery may not have been long enough for some teens and parents to have practised and mastered the new communication skills. The parent-adolescent relationship, and hence communication, is forever evolving and therefore Discovery may have provided the first step in this process that is required for that healthy development of the teens and the family they belong to. Perhaps then the changes in communication were less favourable as the relationship between parent and adolescent was changing.

The methodological aspects of this study may account for some of the negative perceptions of communication. As it has been eluded to in the previous paragraph the snapshot view of communication may also have accounted for the parents' and teens' negative perceptions of communication. On another day, the perception in communication may have been somewhat different. These factors were not controlled in this research and may be one explanation for the contrast of those who increased their score and those who decreased their scores at an aggregate level.

#### The Analysis and Conclusions: Discovery and its Influence on the Adolescents and Their Families

The communication scores were analysed for differences between the teen and parent groups and for two different family compilations giving four groups. These were the parent group whose teen (at Discovery NZ22) was the first-born teen in the family, the teen group who was the first-born teen in the family, the parent group whose teen was not the first-born teen (at Discovery NZ22), and the teen group who was not the first-born teen (non first-born teen). The reasons for this type of analysis is due to the differences in family dynamics as the child grows up and therefore to investigate whether Discovery may have helped with this process. The developmental theories of a child are

similar to the developmental theories of a family (Wilkinson, 1993). The family undertakes a number of stages in its natural lifecycle of which according to Wilkinson (1993) the fourth stage is noted as “a family with children”. This is the stage applicable to this study.

As the first-born child in the family matures, adaptation and changes are required. Such changes may include the acceptance of loss of control and power on behalf of the parent, and, learning to assert oneself with peers and adults pertaining to the teenager (Wilkinson, 1993). With this theoretical base then it is clear that Discovery contributed strongly to families whose first-born participated in the programme because the parents of first-born teens and the first-born teen groups both made greater positive changes in communication than those families who already had teens in the family. Thus, families with first-born teens made more improvement in communication than those who had already had experience with teens, clearly indicating that Discovery provided the skills necessary for these families. The greatest improvement was for the first-born teen group making at least three times more improvement in communication than the other teen group and respective parent groups.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that learning communication patterns may be especially important for those teens who have not had an older sibling and whom to model communication with their parent. This is also applicable for parents who have had no experience with teens and consequently no experience in the development of their child from childhood into adulthood.

**The Results: The Overall Perception of Discovery NZ22 in the Teenagers’  
Lives (in answer to Research Question 3-3)**

Research Question 3-3 of this study was “What is the teens’ overall perception of Discovery’s influence in their lives?”.

The teenagers' perspective on how Discovery influenced their lives were prompted through Question 6 and Question 7 in the LASS questionnaire (Appendix I). The participants' responses to questions about the influence of Discovery, which relates to the third research question in this section, are reported here and a discussion on the overall influence of Discovery in the teenagers' lives follows this.

#### The Overall Perception of Discovery's Influence in the Teenager's Lives

Every teenager responded with "yes" to the question asking whether the participants noticed a change in themselves over the week and all gave positive reasons for the change (Question 6, LASS, Appendix I). Most gave three (37%) or four (33%) reasons to explain the change with twenty four percent giving two reasons. "Being more confident" and "more outgoing" was the most popular reason for the change in themselves (Table 6.8). "Working together with others" and "trust" and "acceptance of others" were the next most given reasons. Predominantly, lifeskills and examples of personal improvement were reasons given for the change. Academic skills were noted by 8.5% of teenagers.

**Table 6.8 Changes Noted in the Participants During the Week**

| Changes in self noticed                  | % of teenagers |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| more confident                           | 64             |
| working with people and accepting others | 35             |
| more energy, motivated                   | 32             |
| more committed                           | 28             |
| more positive toward life                | 25             |
| more able to be myself                   | 23             |
| more happy                               | 22             |
| more focused                             | 15             |
| self esteem improved                     | 14             |
| study skills better                      | 8              |
| more able to communicate                 | 8              |
| more able to change relationships        | 5              |
| I stayed smoke free                      | 1              |
| I can juggle                             | 1              |

The biggest breakthrough for most participants (Question 7, LASS, Appendix I) as shown in Table 6.9 was “believing in myself” and “having the confidence to do what I want” (27%). The next largest group said that “breaking through my fear” was the major breakthrough for them (24.78%). Breaking through the fear would apply to an activity where the teenagers had to physically break through their fear and connect with their goal as explained in the section called commitments in Chapter Four. “Being who I am” was a breakthrough for 12 of the teenagers making comments such as “accepting and loving myself”, and “realising I am worth it”. “Opening up” gave a variety of responses with 3.42% of teens stating such things as “I opened up and talked about all the stuff I had been hiding”, and “getting out the fear deep inside”. Other comments given corresponding with certain sections of Discovery, related to feelings or states, and one comment directly named study skills sections. Less than one percent said everything was a major breakthrough for them.

**Table 6.9 The Biggest Personal Breakthrough for the Teenagers**

| <u>Biggest personal breakthrough</u>        | <u>% of teenagers</u> |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| believing in myself                         | 27.35                 |
| breaking through my fear                    | 24.79                 |
| being who I am                              | 10.26                 |
| not being shy/getting up in front of people | 10.26                 |
| ability to make new friends                 | 7.69                  |
| realising about relationships               | 5.13                  |
| I opened up more                            | 3.42                  |
| supporting others                           | 3.42                  |
| understanding failure as a stepping stone   | 3.42                  |
| not giving up on anything                   | 2.56                  |
| staying smoke free                          | 2.56                  |
| act as if                                   | 1.71                  |
| changing states easily                      | 1.71                  |
| trust                                       | 1.71                  |
| speed reading                               | 1.71                  |
| everything                                  | <1                    |
| more positive on life                       | <1                    |

\*Seven teenagers gave no response to this question

The participants were offered the chance to write about anything they may want to say about any part of Discovery (Question 21, LASS, Appendix I). Most gave no response to this question, however of those who did (45.3%), most made direct positive comments about Discovery such as “it’s cool”, “it rocked”, “awesome”, or “ropes day was cool”. Some made more personal comments such as “I now have a whole new outlook on life”, “It made me realise how lucky I am and not take things for granted”, or “excellent programme, your changing lives”. Suggestions were given by the remaining teenagers which either revolved around better food, more time to dance or the availability of more free time, as well as comments such as “make it longer” and “we need more of the study skills”. Comments such as more sleep, a reunion, more ropes days, more on relationships between sexes and more on addictions were offered by individuals also.

### **The Analysis and Conclusions: The Overall Perception of Discovery’s Influence in the Teenagers’ Lives**

Every teenager reported a change in themselves over the week with most relating this to the influence of Discovery in their lives. This is the only question which all teenagers answered and every explanation given for the change indicated a positive shift in the psychological and social health of the teens.

“Confidence” and “belief in oneself” and “a more positive outlook on life” were the major personal consequences of Discovery. For all the teenagers the most notable changes were the gain in confidence and the ability to break through their fear to achieve their goals or face any challenges in their lives. Changes in the teenagers social development were also noticed as interpersonal skills were reported to have improved and indicate a positive shift in development as both Havighurst’s (1972) first developmental task: achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes, and Newman and Newman’s (1995) developmental task: membership in a peer group, regard as necessary skills in adolescence. The psychological and social aspects of

development reported by NZ22 participants were supported by previous participants also.

Comments relating to the mental health of the participants were given by the four people interviewed by the researcher. One question in the Interview Schedule, (Question 12, Appendix V) asked for the interviewees thoughts about Discovery's contribution to the psychological health of the teenagers. It was suggested that Discovery's contribution to the teens' psychological development was by assisting teens to become more responsible and accountable for their own lives, by realising that they have a choice in their actions and states, and by affirming the need to evaluate their coping skills. It was also suggested that Discovery helps to disintegrate the myth that everything should appear okay. It was explained that peer pressure forces teens to appear as though nothing matters to them yet they may have different feelings inside. What Discovery intends to do is to provide a situation where the teenagers listen to others and realise they are not alone in their challenges and thoughts and that others have the same challenges as them. Additionally, instead of feeling that the world is against them, Discovery helps the teens to realise that most people are good and that everyone is trying to do their best in their lives. Again this reiterates the importance of understanding others' perspectives.

The environment created at Discovery NZ22 was a major part in promoting the psychological development of the participating teenagers. It was commented, by those who were interviewed, that the underlying factor of teenage problems was a lack of positive self-esteem which can be contributed to an unsupportive environment. According to one interviewee, Discovery endeavours to encourage positive self-esteem through many of its activities and teachings, as well as provide an extremely supportive, safe and positive environment. The environment plays an important part in the prevention of problems in adolescence, which is just one way that Discovery contributes to the psychological and behavioural adjustment of teenagers. One interviewee reported that three previous participants of Discovery with eating disorders had their problems

diminish after Discovery. Other cases specifically observed also indicated positive results such as individuals who had abused certain substances were known to have positively changed their addictive habits after Discovery, and have maintained these changes. The same interviewee also added that no teen to the date of the interview, had ever committed suicide.

Generally, the participants of the present research reported a positive change in themselves over the week and gave personal and interpersonal skills which changed the personal lives of many young people. This positive focus of these comments strengthened the conclusions that Discovery was able to provide skills which enhance the process of growing-up during the teenage years by providing the teenage with the foundation for increased confidence and belief in themselves. These are similar to the consequences of other successful teenage programme such as the Bridging the Gap programme developed and implemented by the Salvation Army in the United States of America.

**The Results: The Contribution of the Sections of Discovery NZ22 on Coping Ability and Depression in the Adolescent Years: Participants' Viewpoint**  
(in answer to Research Question 3-4)

The Discovery programme has shown that it contributed to the participants' lives by providing lifeskills and study skills which contribute to the positive development of the adolescent and potentially enhanced the process of better communication between parent and teenager. The psychological and social adjustments necessary during maturation can often bring about many challenges and sometimes negative consequences in their lives. This part of the study investigated two issues - coping and depression, which are issues that are often a part of adolescence; and the possible influence Discovery may have on adolescents facing these issues. The participants' responses to questions about coping and depression relate to the fourth main research question of this section (Research Question 3-4): "From the teenage participants' viewpoint, to what extent would the

sections of Discovery NZ22 have an effect on coping and depression in the adolescent years?"

Questions 14 to 20 of the LASS questionnaire (Appendix I) were designed to elicit information about depression and coping with challenges in adolescence and the possible contribution Discovery may have had on these issues. The following research sub-questions are followed by the results and the application of results to adolescent development discussed.

Teenage Challenges and the Teenager's View on Discovery's  
Contribution to Coping Ability in the Adolescent Years

Research Sub-Question 3-4A. What are the challenges teenagers  
have to cope with?

The LASS questionnaire asked the participants about coping skills. Firstly, the question asked "What are some situations someone your age may find it challenging to cope with?" (Question 18, LASS, Appendix I). This was intended to establish if there was anything challenging in teens' lives and what exactly those challenges were. The most recurring response from the teenagers dealt with relationships (85.47%). These related to parent relationships, friends, opposite sex relationships, and relationships generally. Surprisingly, 47% of those who had responded with parent relationships as a challenge were 15 years old. School was also stated by 45 of the teenagers as challenging to cope with (36.75%) with approximately one third relating this to exams. A further 5% commented that pressure from parents, schoolwork and the expectation to succeed was challenging. The use of substances was reported as being the next highest category of challenges for teenagers (23.93%). Drugs, addictions, alcohol and smoking were stated as challenges in adolescence although no elaboration was given. The death of someone (12.82%), including suicide, and rejection (10.25%) were responses given by the other participants. Other responses given were being depressed, no self worth, emotions, life,

work, making mistakes, saying “no”, freedom and eating disorders. These responses were given by fewer than 5% of the participants.

In examining the ages of the participants and their responses some interesting results emerged. Generally, the older the teen the more challenges they listed, giving some evidence that the older one gets the more challenges they have to cope with. Interestingly, the 16 year old teens reported slightly more challenges to cope with than any other age group. More 16 and 17 year old teens commented that exams were a challenge than any other group which perhaps reflects the crucial level of education they are at. For similar reasons, school was mostly stated as a challenge for those of 15 years and older. Thirty percent of all 15 year olds at Discovery NZ22 commented on school being a challenge. Of those who said school was a challenge, 43% were represented by 15 year olds. Likewise, more 16, 17, and 18 year old teenagers (by percentage of numbers in each age group) reported school as a challenge than the 13 and 14 year olds. Of the total population of 16 year olds and 17 year olds at Discovery NZ22, approximately 30 % in each age group said school was a challenge. Forty percent of 18 year olds also reported the same. Thirteen years olds reported smoking as a challenge whereas in comparison to the older age groups, that is 15 years and above, referred to drugs and addictions as being a challenge.

The gender of the teenagers made no notable differences except for females 15 years and older who were more likely to comment on emotional/sexual and physical abuse as a being a challenge to cope with. Pregnancy was a also a category that was specific to female teens. No other gender differentiation could be made.

Research Sub-Question 3-4B. Is there anything in Discovery  
that would influence teenagers' ability to cope?

The strategies the teenagers gave for coping with the challenges their age groups face were strategies specific to Discovery (25.64%). This became apparent as sections of

Discovery were stated such as state changes, speed reading, giving 100% (initiative run), act as if, win/win (nought and crosses), positive I. D., 30 days to live, chunking, and getting outside your comfort zone. Of the total sample of teenagers at NZ22 twenty five percent did not complete this question (Question 19, LASS, Appendix I). However forty percent of comments made were specifically related to Discovery. Other comments that were consequences of the Discovery programme were time out (<1%), study skills (4.3%), talking to someone (10.2%), support (11.9%), belief in self (8.5%), and staying focused (4.3%).

The understanding of what teenagers had to cope with gave background information into how they thought Discovery may help those with such challenges. All replies to Question 20 (LASS, Appendix I), which specifically asked if there was anything that Discovery offered teenagers to help them cope with challenges in their lives, indicated that Discovery had many sections which offered a teen with coping (Table 6.10). Twelve teens (10.2%) did not answer the question. Of those who did answer, most of the teenagers gave specific sections of Discovery which would help a young person to cope with issues in their lives (Table 6.10).

**Table 6.10 Sections of Discovery Which may Help Teenagers Cope With Challenges**

| <u>Section of Discovery</u>    | <u>% of teenagers</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| relationships: with parents    | 16.19                 |
| study skills                   | 7.62                  |
| state changes                  | 6.66                  |
| dealing with internal dialogue | 4.76                  |
| relationships: with peers      | 4.66                  |
| addictions                     | 3.64                  |
| 4 part clean up                | 2.73                  |
| non-smoking programme          | 2.73                  |
| chunking                       | 1.9                   |
| autobiography                  | 1.9                   |
| agreements                     | <1                    |
| 30 days to live                | <1                    |
| a good look                    | <1                    |
| ropes day                      | <1                    |

Some teenagers responded to the question with just a “yes”, whereas others gave comments which were not specific to sections of Discovery but still attributed by participation in the Discovery programme (Table 6.11).

**Table 6.11 Other Reasons Given for how Discovery Helps Teenagers Cope With Challenges**

| <u>Responses other than Sections of Discovery</u> | <u>% of teenagers</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| support from others and staff                     | 16.24                 |
| yes                                               | 16.24                 |
| strive for goals                                  | 13.67                 |
| everything                                        | 12.82                 |
| communication skills                              | 11.96                 |
| confidence building                               | 8.55                  |
| positive attitude to life                         | 5.98                  |
| trust                                             | 3.42                  |
| accept challenges                                 | 2.56                  |
| be themselves                                     | 2.56                  |
| dealing with things in the past                   | <1                    |
| that life is worth it                             | <1                    |

Two other teenagers gave comments not reported in the corresponding tables. One teenager stated that one could “ask for help if contemplating suicide”, while another felt that “good communication would help with suicide prevention”. These were all the comments given as to how Discovery could help a teenager cope with challenges in their lives. There was no other differentiation in gender, age or ethnic background for these responses other than those reported.

### Teenage Depression and the Teenager’s View of Discovery’s

#### Contribution to Depression in the Adolescent Years

Research Sub-Question 3-4C. What are NZ22 participants’ reactions to issues of depression?

Firstly, to obtain the definition of depression from the teenagers’ perspective, the participants were asked to define depression in their own words (Question 14, LASS, Appendix I). A high percentage of teenagers explained depression in feelings or states

(75.2%). Three quarters explained depression in words such as “non-energetic”, “sad”, “unhappy”, “feeling low”, “not motivated”, “not wanting to do anything”, “lost belief in self”. Others gave definitions of hopelessness giving comments such as “give it away”, “sick of life”, “wanting to die”, “no way out” (18%). Approximately 9% of teenagers explained depression as “being alone” and “no-one cares” or “letting others and yourself down”. Physical indicators were given by a smaller group of teenagers referring to “being silent”, “not smiling” and “head down” as being depressed (7%). Eight teenagers (6.84%) indicated that “something” would trigger depression although they did not state what. One teenager gave a medical type explanation of depression stating that it was mainly “a chemical imbalance”.

Gender, age and ethnicity were also examined for the question asking about what contributes to teenage depression (Question 15, LASS, Appendix I). The results showed that thirteen year olds generally felt that “not being in the right state”, “not listening to others”, “teasing”, “fighting”, “having no friends” were contributors to depression. One year onward, teenagers felt depression could be triggered by “being put down by others” (especially male teens), “having family problems” and “school problems” such as school being too hard. Female fourteen year olds were particularly concerned with mortality issues such as losing someone close to them.

From the age of 15 years and older, drugs and alcohol featured as contributors to depression when it was not commented upon at all for those younger. In the 15 year old age group “being put down” and “being rejected” featured again, more for males than females, however females talked about relationship problems more than males in this age group. The general contributors of depression for the 15 year old age group were school, family, friends (including peer pressure), and being abused by someone (female).

Along with drugs and alcohol, “breakups” were particularly commented upon by males as a contributor to depression for 16 year olds. Failure, rejection, death, relationship

problems, school grades were common among both genders. Contributors to depression such as being “treated badly by others”, or “hurt” or “abused by someone”, again featured for the females of this age group and not the males.

In addition to what the 16 year olds reported as contributors to depression, the 17 year olds felt that “no direction in life”, or, “no sense of purpose in life” would contribute to depression. Having no support also featured for teenagers 17 years and older. The 18 year olds commented that physical appearance was a contributor to depression.

Males generally reported failure, rejection and being put down more often than females. Only females discussed winter or bad weather as a contributor to depression. Females, especially 15 years and older, said that being abused, raped, recipients of violence, having your period and food were contributors.

Like the issues related to coping with challenges, the older age groups (15 years and above) reported twice as many contributors to depression than the younger age groups. The only cultural differences in reporting contributors to depression were that both the Pacific Island teenagers said having no support would be a contributor to depression. The Pacific Islanders’ strong family ties may have been a reason behind such results. No other results of cultural differentiation could be made.

The participants’ main response to prevention of depression for their age group (Question 16, LASS, Appendix I) was to get support from people, namely, friends and family (40.17%). “Having someone to talk to” was reported most often. “Having a positive attitude” and making a state change were the next two things that were reported as being able to prevent someone from becoming depressed. Fifteen teenagers (12.82%) wrote Discovery as their way to prevent someone becoming depressed with a further 13 (11.11%) teens using terminology specific to Discovery such as 30 days to live, “jam it”, block I. D. and state changes. Focusing on a goal was the next most significant help the

participants could suggest. Other comments given by less than 5% for each were having “fun”, “peace at home”, “facing what was making someone depressed” and using an “antidepressant drug”. Only four participants (3.41%) gave no response to Question 16.

Research Sub-Question 3-4D. Is there anything from Discovery that would help an adolescent deal with depression?

The results from Question 17 (LASS, Appendix I) showed that over one third of the participants said that changing your state would help to limit or prevent depression (34.2%). Changing state is one section of the lifeskills part of Discovery. Approximately twenty five percent said support from others and self would be helpful. Blocking I.D (6.83%), 30 days to live (5.13%), focus on goals (4.28%), giving 100% (initiative run)(4.28%), a good look (3.42%), were sections of Discovery that participants stated would help limit or prevent depression for people their age. The consequences of being more confident and motivated (5.13%) were also given as helpful skills from Discovery for depression. One teenager gave the response “no”, and another said “it was for a doctor to deal with”. Another participant said they had “no idea”. Learning to handle rejection was also given as a way to limit or prevent depression.

#### **The Analysis and Conclusions: Depression and Coping Ability in Adolescence**

The teenagers explanations of depression were comparable with other teenagers explanations of depression as in Gordon and Grant’s (1997) study. The general consensus of depression was that it was an inner state or feeling which has negative overtones and/or physical indicators.

As stated by the participants, there were many similarities between the description of contributors to depression and the types of situations the teenagers reported as challenges in adolescence. Relationship problems, school problems, substance use and death of someone were commonly reported and are consistent with the stresses reported by teenagers in other studies (Moore, 1997; Morris, 1985).

In a breakdown of these stresses, relationships with friends, siblings, parents and the opposite sex were described as issues someone their age may have to cope with and were possible contributors to depression. The anxieties reported about peer relationships throughout all the ages, including opposite sex relations, implied the fear of alienation and not being accepted. These fears are consistent with the psychosocial crises of early adolescence described in Newman and Newman's (1995) theory: group identity versus alienation, and their related developmental tasks, and is also reflective of the first developmental task of Havighurst's (1972) theory: achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes.

Stresses related to the relationship with their parent are reflective of the changing nature of relationships within the family as the young person matures. The strive for independence, indicative of Havighurst's fourth task of adolescent development: emotional independence from parents and other adults, and the move away from Marcia's foreclosure status of development, often causes conflict and stress for the adolescent as shown by the reports from those 15 years and older and another age-related study (Mates and Allison, 1992; Smetana, 1988).

School exams and the pressure to succeed were reasons given for being a challenge to cope with and was also cited as a possible contributor to depression. These comments came from those who were 15 years or older and therefore reflect the stage of education (School Certificate) they were at, and the pressures that go with it. These pressures are often from parents as the eagerness for their child to succeed is paramount (Mates & Allison, 1992) hence helping the socialisation of their child. School achievement and school related activities were similar stresses recorded in other studies in the literature review in Chapter Two such as Mates and Allison, 1992; Morris, 1985; and, Silva, 1989.

The other concerns for teenagers, which were typical of the older teens (15 years and older), were the use of substances such as drugs, tobacco, alcohol and addictions. These

are consistent with the findings of other studies (Mates & Allison, 1992; Violato & Holden, 1992). Perhaps the twenty four percent of teenagers who indicated substance abuse as a challenge to cope with are in contrast to the nearly twenty percent who referred to the addiction section of *Discovery* as least helpful. This is not saying that those who said substance abuse was a challenge were those with an addiction to a substance, however, it does indicate that becoming addicted to something is prevalent in the teenage years as other studies have shown and studies reported in an earlier section (The Analysis and Conclusions: Lifeskills and *Discovery's* Contribution to Teenage Development) of this chapter.

The mortality issues raised were also consistent with other studies of New Zealand teenagers (Patten, 1988; Nicol, 1987). These comments came from the older teenagers (16 years and older) and are indicative perhaps relate to the teenagers' understanding of their own mortality.

Older females were more aware of their sex role in society and stated more things they have to cope with pertaining to their gender such as pregnancy, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

The causes of depression for the male population related to feelings of inferiority or rejection and more males than females reported dissatisfaction with their physical appearance. Adjusting to the changes in the body is a developmental task Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995) both include in their theories of adolescent development. "To be proud, or at least tolerant, of one's body" is the ultimate goal of this stage of development Havighurst (1972) spells out. Feelings of inferiority or rejection may also be related to these physical changes taking place and affects the self image of the teen and the nature of peer relationships (Newman & Newman, 1995).

The older teens provided examples of later developmental tasks which focused on their future prospects. Having a purpose in life or having a future where reported contributors

to depression and indicate the developmental tasks of planning for a future as listed in Newman and Newman's (1995) and Havighurst's (1972) tasks, of adolescent development (career choice, and, preparing for an economic future, respectively). The questioning of life also indicates the increasing search for their own identity which is the core of the psychosocial theory of Erikson (1968) and the other developmental perspectives presented in this research.

The number of challenges a teenager has to cope with increased with age, and there were also more circumstances which contributed to depression as the teenager matured. In other words, the older teenagers (15 - 18 years) listed more contributors to depression and more challenges than those who were younger (13 - 14 years). This is interesting as one would suggest that the previous developmental tasks are not necessarily mastered before the next task is presented, hence giving an accumulation of skills to be acquired. Likewise, changing times and a changing society may require increasingly complex sets of skills such as the current technological age. The increase in the number of situations which are overwhelming for the teenager as they mature suggests that these skills have not necessarily been mastered before the next developmental task is upon the teenager. Thus, the skills to accomplish these tasks have a compounding effect.

The increase in the number of skills required, and the proficiency of the tasks, become overwhelming for older teenagers and have the potential to lead to depression and challenges in adolescence.

### **The Analysis and Conclusions: Discovery's Influence in Preventing or Limiting Depression and the Ability to Cope With Challenges**

It was clear that the participants thought that Discovery or sections of Discovery would be helpful in limiting depression and would enhance the ability to cope when challenges arise in adolescence. A number of sections in the Discovery programme were named as strategies for coping with challenges and also for limiting or preventing depression

indicating that Discovery itself would have a positive influence on both depression and coping with challenges in adolescence. When specifically talking about limiting or preventing depression in adolescence, the results suggested that the ability to prevent or limit depression in adolescence would depend on the support from family and the friends a teenager has. This was especially important for Pacific Island teenagers in the present study. As discussed in the communication section of the Literature Review Chapter, "having someone to talk to" was reported most often by all participants and was also the major finding in a study which investigated teenagers' perspective of prevention of suicide (Nelson, Farberow & Litman, 1988) of which depression has been found as the biggest contributing factor in youth suicides (Antoniadis, 1988). Again, "having someone to talk to" was also important for coping with challenges for the teenagers showing that this is the one major factor in helping teenagers to develop positively as an adolescent. Having the support required would lessen the impact of such issues in adolescence and enhance the ability to master the necessary developmental tasks Havighurst (1972) and Newman and Newman (1995) propose as necessary in adolescence. Discovery is a programme which offers a supportive environment through adult role modelling and the team environment fostered among the participants.

When specifically talking about coping with challenges in adolescence, other skills were reported to be helpful for coping with challenges. These were mainly psychological processes and attributes. These attributes, reported as contributing positively to the teenagers' lives, were in contrast to Mates and Allison's (1992) reports of strategies for coping. Whereas the teenagers in Mates and Allison's (1992) study reported more diversionary or adversive tactics, the teenagers in this study gave more psychological and emotive changes that could take place personally. Perhaps the difference was due to that fact that the participants of this study had just finished a highly emotive programme fostered such internal exploration.

Discovery was suggested by most of the teenagers as a strategy or skill for helping someone cope with challenges in their lives. According to the teenagers the sections on relationships, especially relationships with parents, were rated highly as being most helpful, indicating a need for skills in this area and relief to those who found this area challenging to cope with. Additionally, study skills was reported to be the section of Discovery which would also help a teenager cope with challenges in their lives. This related to the second most reported challenge in the teenagers' life. Therefore the two most reported challenges in the teens' lives were addressed in certain sections of Discovery. State changes was the third category suggested as helpful for coping and relates to the rating of it as the most useful section of Discovery. Clearly, these three sections of Discovery would be helpful in coping with challenges for a good percentage of the teenagers.

Overall, fourteen sections were stated as helpful for some of the teenagers to cope with challenges. If this is compared with the number of sections given in the LASS questionnaire, only four sections of Discovery were not stated. It is clear from this then that nearly every section of Discovery could help teenagers cope with issues in their lives by giving them skills which can be utilised in their development.

The Discovery programme therefore has the ability to positively provide the skills to avert negative trajectories similar to the psychoeducational programme investigated by Rice, Herman and Peterson (1993) and Miller, Meyer, Grund and Herman (1992).

Discovery is a programme which can provide skills for a teenagers to deal with depression. The suggestions given by the teenagers for the prevention or minimisation of depression mostly centred around Discovery's sections and activities. Many even wrote "Discovery" as their response to the question. These comments clearly reinforced the significance of Discovery in preventing or limiting depression. When asked exactly how Discovery may help an adolescent deal with depression, all but three individuals cited

specific sections of Discovery giving strength to the skills and strategies learnt at Discovery for dealing with depression. Learning skills to change one's state was important for own people who may feel down or depressed, and would aid as a prevention measure to depression. The supportive environment the staff and peers may provide for young people would also be helpful for prevention and the limitation of depression. The process of evaluating one's life and what they should be doing as in the skills associated with 30 days to live and having a goal to go for as in the commitment/goals sections were also found most useful for depression. The skills associated with blocking internal dialogue (the negative little voice) was also popular as skills which aid in depression. Overall, these were the specific sections of Discovery which provided the skill for the majority of teenagers to limit or prevent depression. Significantly, nearly all teenagers were able to give examples of such skills by naming sections of Discovery.

The responses given by the participants certainly gave an indication that certain skills learnt at Discovery would definitely help in some way to prevent or limit depression in the adolescent years. The psychological and social training provided through the Discovery programme would help to minimise depression in adolescence.

The four interviewees' (Lead Facilitator, Chairperson of the Global Youth Foundation Board, Programme Director of Discovery NZ22, and Discovery graduate and Core Staff Member) thoughts on Discovery's influence also reflected a positive influence on depression in adolescence. This was asked in the interview of the four people (see Question 14, Appendix V). All response to this question stated that Discovery provided skills for the teenager to choose the psychological state they are in. It was suggested that it was a stepping stone to overcoming depression by assisting the teens in understanding that they can choose to be happy and by providing the skills to achieve this state.

### Summary

The development of teenagers in New Zealand could well be enhanced by the participation in the Discovery programme. In this chapter, the results were reported from the responses of the teenagers as to their perspective of Discovery and its specific sections. Communication between a parent and the teenager was also reported as to the changes that took place.

According to the 117 teenagers most sections of Discovery would help them in their development, with the popularity of skills being related to the control of one's own life as well as interpersonal relationships. The academic lives of these young people were also enhanced and the four main study skills presented at Discovery were reported as improved or newly acquired and something which would be most useful in their lives.

Communication between the participating parent and teenager showed a perceived improvement for just over half of the participants. For those who perceived no improvement, or perceived a negative perspective, may well have been learning new ways of communicating that is necessary in the healthy development of a young person.

Overall, the teenagers gained confidence and "belief in oneself" as well as their social skills being enhanced through the participation in Discovery which therefore strengthened their identity through the sense of self they acquired and the social skills learnt.

The limitation or prevention of depression was also reported as something which Discovery could assist a young person in. The teenagers also reported that the ability to cope with challenges in their lives would be enhanced and named such sections as state changes and relationships skills as being most helpful with these issues.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Discovery is a programme for teenagers aged between 13 to 18 years old. Over 1500 New Zealand teenagers have participated in Discovery since its introduction into New Zealand in 1991. It is a programme which is designed to help teenagers build healthy lifestyles for themselves by providing the skills necessary in their development as an adolescent. This chapter presents a discussion on the necessity of skills-training for adolescents and the role it plays in education of the young person. Recommendations which have emerged from this research are also discussed.

#### **Discussion**

Discovery has shown many attributes which were similar to the lifeskills training programmes reviewed in the literature. Through its own uniqueness, Discovery has contributed towards the development of teenagers by providing skills necessary for personal growth and development. The changes in self-concept, reported at various times in this study, enabled the development of an integrated identity which, according to Erikson (1963) and other psychosocial theorists, is important to achieve during the period of adolescence. Self-understanding was fostered through activities which invited individuals to participate in explaining their point of view as well as keeping an open mind to alternative perspectives and learning from these views. The staff and Facilitators of Discovery provided guidance and support by serving as roles models and by challenging the young people to consider new options to their problems in the general functioning of their lives. The interaction with adults in the learning environment, according to Vygotskian theory, is critical to the development of the young person. The support process of the staff toward the teenagers throughout the seven day programme was also reminiscent of the scaffolding technique discussed by Wood, Bruner and Ross

(1976) and which traditionally took place as the teenager moved from school to the workplace.

The perceived improvement and enhancement of their lives gave the opportunity of competence and success which gave them a sense of self-esteem and confidence. The involvement of parents in the programme provided communication skills for both parents and teens and therefore incorporated both angles of the relationship, enhancing the support mechanisms and dynamics within the adolescent family. Overall, Discovery contributed considerably to the development of the participating teenagers and families.

Discovery provided skills and experiences necessary for the healthy development of a young person. Overall, the teenagers psychological and social health was enhanced by the participation in the Discovery programme.

Certain skills offered at Discovery were more useful for some teenagers than others and those skills related to the developmental tasks detailed in the psychosocial theories of adolescence. Depression and coping with challenges in adolescence were issues in which, from a teenage perspective, would be positively influenced by the participation in Discovery. It was clear that the teenagers' view on coping with challenges for someone their age was positively related to Discovery. More teenagers than not were able to cite the direct contribution of Discovery in coping with challenges in adolescence. Discovery was reported to have the potential to also effect depression as a number of sections and experiences related to Discovery were reported to be influential in the prevention or limitation of depression.

Discovery undoubtedly helped to increase the confidence, the belief and perceptions about the self. Perceived changes in interpersonal skills and their general outlook on life were also enhanced.

Study skills were also enhanced for the teens participating in Discovery. Speed reading was the most useful study skills for the teenagers with either new or improved study skills reported.

Discovery also contributed to the parent-teenager relationship by enhancing communication between the pair. Both parents and teens perceived an improvement in communication after Discovery although some parents and teens were less enthusiastic about their communication patterns. Training in communication skills were especially effective for male teens and families whose teenage participant was the first-born.

The programme, Discovery, has provided the forum for teaching skills to adolescents which are necessary and important in their development. Discovery was a time where the teenagers had the opportunity to learn, practise and integrate the skills necessary for their own personal development in accordance with society's expectations. It has been a kind of seven day initiation into adulthood, with a passing of knowledge, skills and "lore of the tribe" observed in many "rites of passage" ceremonies. The supportive and nurturing environment provided such opportunities for the young people to explore their roles as adolescents, as male and females, and as a member of the peer group, family and society.

The education the teenagers received through Discovery has not only been at a personal level but also at a group level as the very act of bringing a group of teenagers together undoubtedly provided the foundation of friendships and support within their peer group. As parents were also involved in the one day skills-training, Discovery provided the opportunity for both the peer group and parents to be educated about the teens newly pronounced status of a "becoming adult". Therefore the participation in Discovery signalled to those in the environment of the teenager that changes have been made that has propelled the teenager toward adulthood. Although collectively the teenagers had

acquired skills for adolescence, the essence of the changes are individual and it is up to the social environment of the teenager to understand and work with these.

Due to the evolution of our society, the family has a lesser capability of educating the child on future roles and so educational programmes have progressively taken up this responsibility. Programmes for teenagers which provide the training in lifeskills now, and for their future, are essential. The need for sound, teenage-focused programmes which address developmental stages and the skills for becoming an adult is advised if the loop hole of skills-training is to be addressed.

The ability for Discovery to provide the stage for an initiation into adulthood is pleasing, as the education in skills necessary for the healthy developmental of teenagers is being met. Essentially, Discovery has provided the opportunity for young people to be educated in the skills necessary for their development, just like the “rites of passage” ceremonies offered in other cultures.

### **Recommendations**

This study certainly highlighted the developmental tasks and skills applicable to participants of the Discovery programme in the New Zealand context. These tasks were particularly applicable to the earlier tasks of Havighurst (1972) and the tasks outlined in Newman and Newman's (1995) “early adolescence”. Examples of emotional development, peer group membership and acceptance, sexual relations and autonomous relations were particularly noticeable in the responses given by the teenage participants.

The Discovery programme has provided some of the necessary skills for adolescent development. Many of the skill required by the participants were able to be connected to the psychosocial theories of adolescence. Therefore, one recommendation from this research would be that the developmental tasks and crises which the theories of adolescence have defined are still relevant today although the emphasis and new tasks

(e.g. technological proficiency), do come with societal change. As the conditions of society may have changed over the years, the same developmental milestones are necessary for the healthy development of an identity as they were a few decades ago.

From all accounts the Discovery programme made a positive impression on the teenage participants therefore one recommendation would be to ensure the Global Youth Foundation continues to make the Discovery programme available to all New Zealand adolescents.

The writer also recommends that the Discovery programme includes more about the topic of sexual relations and autonomous behaviours, such as independent living skills, as this was one topic which the participants thought they would like to know more about and a topic which is reflective of the age group Discovery is aimed for. In terms of study skills, more information on memory skills, how to deal with study and exams needs to also be highlighted.

The results of this study raised other questions for future research. These were based around the need for further research on teenage programmes and their contribution to the teenage development.

One further recommendation for future research would be to understand the longitudinal effects of an educational programme such as Discovery on its participants. Research which incorporated a longitudinal study would undoubtedly provide valuable information maintenance of certain skills as well as the changing needs of teenagers during adolescence.

Each Discovery programme has a different combination of participants determined by a variation in ages, cultures, backgrounds, staff dynamics, ratios of gender, reasons for the teenagers to participate, and perhaps the different geographical areas the teenager came

from. Each of these contributes to different dynamics in each programme and therefore different results to the present study's may be found in other programmes. Therefore, future research which compares results between programmes is recommended.

There is a need for health and education to work more closely together to promote the healthy physical, mental, social and moral development of young people. The new Health and Physical Education curriculum instated in schools suggests a closer liaison with between the two fields and hopefully will help promote studies from a bi-disciplinary approach. Further research which incorporates a more holistic approach to adolescent development is recommended.

Lastly, the constraint of all case study research is the restriction in generalisation of the findings. The focus of this study was NZ22 participants and therefore the findings are not generalisable to all Discovery participants. However the information gathered from NZ20 and NZ21 participants provided some support for the results.

It has been both a necessity and an enlightenment to explore the Discovery programme and the contribution it has on its teenage participants' development. With such findings of this research mostly affirming the necessary skills it offers New Zealand teenagers, it is hoped that Discovery continues to evolve and train young people in the skills required for taking a valued role in adult society.

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## APPENDIX I

### Lifeskills and Study Skills Questionnaire (LASS)

On the following paper is a series of questions asking your thoughts on certain aspects of Discovery and what it offers teenagers. There are no right answers to these questions as everyone has different experiences of Discovery. The questionnaire is aimed toward understanding your own personal experiences of Discovery as well as giving valuable information to the Global Youth Foundation about Discovery. Please take your time and read each question, then answer it according to your own thoughts.

All responses are confidential so no name is needed. The only details required are your age and gender. Please place these next to the questions below.

**This is a voluntary questionnaire which if you do not want to fill it out then please sit quietly for others to finish. Thank you.**

Please fill out the following if you choose to participate:

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle whether you are male or female.      Male      Female

Which ethnic group/s do you identify with? Please tick the appropriate box/es for your ethnic group/s.

- NZ European/Pakeha/European \_\_\_\_\_
- NZ Maori
- Pacific Islands. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Chinese
- Asian, other than listed above. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Indian
- Other , please specify \_\_\_\_\_

*Discovery consists of lifeskills and study skills. Questions 1 to 5 relate to the lifeskills sections of Discovery. (These sections were facilitated by Michael).*

*Listed below are the lifeskills sections of Discovery.*

|                          |                             |                        |                              |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>a good look</i>       | <i>juggling</i>             | <i>30 days to live</i> | <i>peer relationships</i>    |
| <i>team work</i>         | <i>agreements</i>           | <i>autobiography</i>   | <i>noughts &amp; crosses</i> |
| <i>ropes day</i>         | <i>state changes</i>        | <i>communication</i>   | <i>addictions</i>            |
| <i>initiative run</i>    | <i>act as if...</i>         | <i>great moments</i>   | <i>me/we</i>                 |
| <i>commitments/goals</i> | <i>parent relationships</i> |                        |                              |

1. Which parts of the lifeskills' sections of Discovery did you find most useful and why? (You can include other sections not written above)

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continue on the back of the page if you need to

2. Which parts of the lifeskills sections of Discovery did you find least useful and why? (You can include other sections not written above)

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3. Where and how will you use the skills, strategies or tools learnt at Discovery in the future?

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4. Are there any other lifeskills not offered through Discovery that you suggest would be beneficial to people your age? Please list below.

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5. Is there anything you would personally like to add or comment on about the lifeskills section of Discovery?

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6. Did you notice a change in yourself over the week?      Yes      No      (circle one)  
If yes, what change/s have you noticed? If no, please list why.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

continue on the back of the page if you need to

7. What was the biggest personal breakthrough for you?

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*Questions 8 to 13 discuss the study skills sections of Discovery. (These were facilitated by Trish).*

*Following is a list of the study skills given to you during the academic part of Discovery.*

8. Which study skills will be most useful for you in the future?  
To answer this please circle which part of the scale applies to you for each study skill.

**a) Study Skill: Mindmapping**

very useful      quite useful      somewhat useful      fairly useful      not very useful

**b) Study Skill: Speed Reading**

very useful      quite useful      somewhat useful      fairly useful      not very useful

**c) Study Skill: Multiple Intelligences/Learning Styles**

very useful      quite useful      somewhat useful      fairly useful      not very useful

**d) Study Skill: Memory Techniques**

very useful      quite useful      somewhat useful      fairly useful      not very useful

9. Which of the study skills in question 8 were new to you at Discovery? You need only write the corresponding letter a, b, c, or d.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. If you had already known about some of the study skills before you came to Discovery, which one/s have you learnt **more** about this week? Again, you need only write the letter a, b, c, or d from the study skills in question 8.

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you think your study skills may be different from now on?      Yes      No  
 If yes, how? If no, please explain.      (circle one)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Are there any other study skills that you may have learned at Discovery which may not be on this list?  
 If yes, please explain what they are and how or where you got them?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are there any other study skills not offered through Discovery that you suggest would be beneficial to people your age? Please list below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions according to a person your age. These questions are aimed for better understanding of some of the issues in teen years. It will take approximately 7 minutes to complete.

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please take your time to read each question and answer it according to your own thoughts.

#### Depression

14. In your own words what is depression?

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15. What things do you think would contribute to depression?

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16. What things would help someone your age to stop becoming depressed?

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17. Is there anything that someone your age may have learned from Discovery that can be used to limit or prevent depression?  
If yes, please explain what? If no, please explain.

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#### Coping Strategies

18. What are some situations that someone your age may find it challenging to cope with?

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19. What are some strategies or skills that are helpful for someone your age to help to cope with situations?

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20. Is there anything Discovery offers that may help teenagers cope with issues in their lives? If yes, please explain.

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21. Is there any other comments that you may want to offer about **any** part of the Discovery programme? Please explain.

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## APPENDIX II

### Covering Letter for PACS 1 & 2

*(PACS 1 - Parent)*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

On the back of the next page are questions asking you about communication between you and your teenager. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions as each relationship is individual and has its' own meaning. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and can be completed at your convenience over the next 10 days.

#### **The Purpose**

The purpose of these questions is to understand how Discovery contributes to parent-teenager communication. You, and your teen's responses are valuable in understanding this. This is why we ask for your responses to the questionnaire now (before Discovery) and again two months after Discovery so some comparison can be made. The second questionnaire will be sent to you at the appropriate time.

#### **Confidentiality**

You do not need to give your name as an individual code of initials and other letters will be asked for. The responses to these questions will be looked at by one person only who does not have access to any names, addresses or other details of the participants. In this way every precaution is taken to ensure your privacy.

This questionnaire is completely voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any given time. If you have any questions please refer them to the Cathy McGachie at (03) 352 0677 or the Global Youth Foundation Office (04) 384 5890.

#### **Which parent/guardian completes the form?**

- ◆ We ask one parent/guardian who will be present on the last day of Discovery to complete the questionnaire. Either parent/guardian can fill out the form but ensure that only one does and they intend to be present on Saturday, 18th July. This same parent/guardian will be asked to complete the follow-up questionnaire two months after Discovery also.

***To make it clear who completes the form, the following points help explain this. Choose the one that applies to you.***

- ◆ As some teenagers may have two parents/guardians present on parents' day, for simplicity of the research we ask that only one parent/guardian completes the form. If only one parent/guardian is participating in the last day of Discovery then we ask for that parent/guardian to complete the form.

- ◆ For whatever reasons, if the teenager does not have any parent or guardian participating in the last day of Discovery then you need not complete the form.
- ◆ In the case where two or more teenagers of one family are participating in Discovery, the same instructions in the first point applies for each teenager. In the case of one parent/guardian present on Day 7 then this parent/guardian is able to two forms corresponding to each teenager separately.

### What do you do when you complete the form?

A blank envelope is provided to enclose your completed questionnaire in it. It is attached behind the questionnaire. Your teenager also has a questionnaire to fill out so we ask you to enclose it again with your teens envelope (with the completed questionnaire in it) and return it in the self-addressed envelope. *If it is more convenient for both parties, then please address an envelope to Cathy McGachie, Global Youth Foundation, P. O. Box 9413, Wellington.* **Please ensure the questionnaire is in the mail before the first day of the teenagers' Discovery programme - Sunday, 12th July.** Thank you.

### Please tick the following statements as they apply to you.

- I am intending to partake in the last day of Discovery (18th July).
- I fully understand the purpose of the research and I am willing to complete the questionnaire
- I understand that I may ask questions at any time.
- I understand that I am participating in this activity of my own free will and that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time.
- I understand that my child's participation in this activity of his/her own free will.

Use the prompt underneath the squares to make your code. This will be your code for the questionnaire now and two months after Discovery. This will be prompted again then also.

Use the instructions below to place one letter in each square. Please write in block letters.

|                                   |                                   |                                            |                                             |                                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
|                                   |                                   |                                            |                                             |                                             |
| ↑                                 | ↑                                 | ↑                                          | ↑                                           | ↑                                           |
| your gender<br>M=male<br>F=female | 1st letter<br>of your<br>1st name | 1st letter<br>of your<br>teen's<br>surname | 1st letter<br>of your<br>teen's 1st<br>name | your teen's<br>gender<br>M=male<br>F=female |

**For example:** A parent who has the name John Doe and has a daughter Sarah Doe, will have the

code

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | J | D | S | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|

On the back of this page are questions which you answer by placing the appropriate number on the line. See over the page for what the numbers 1 - 5 correspond to. Here is an example of a completed question:

I can talk to my child about anything.

*(PACS 1 - Teenager)*

Dear Teenager,

On the back of the next page are questions asking you about communication between you and your parent. The purpose of these questions is to understand how Discovery contributes to teen-parent communication. A similar questionnaire will be sent to you two months after Discovery also. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions so please answer them as it is for you. It has no impact on what you do at Discovery and is only looked at by one person after Discovery.

This questionnaire is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any given time. If you have any questions please phone Cathy McGachie at (03) 352 0677 or the Global Youth Foundation Wellington Office (04) 384 5890.

**Who is filling out the questionnaire?**

Every teenager going on Discovery is being asked to voluntarily fill out the questionnaire. Also, one of your parents or guardians will be completing the "parent" form. It would be a good idea if you ask which parent or guardian will be filling out the questionnaire (it will one of your parents/guardians who will be picking you up on the last day of Discovery). Refer to this parent/guardian when you are making the code below.

**Please tick the following statements as they apply to you**

- I know which parent/guardian will be present on the last day of Discovery (18th July) and I will refer to them when I am forming the code below.
- I fully understand what the questionnaire is for and I am willing to complete it questionnaire
- I understand that I may ask questions at any time about the research.
- I understand that I am participating in this activity of my own free will and I can withdraw my consent or discontinue my participation at any time.

**Privacy**

You do not need to give your name as a code of initials and other letters will be asked for. In this way the person looking at the questionnaire will not know who has written it.

### It is time to make your code

Use the smaller print under each square to make your code. This will be your code for the questionnaire over the page. You do not need to memorise it for Discovery.

Use the instructions below to place one letter in each square. Please write in block letters.

|                                                                                  |                                   |                                  |                                               |                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                  |                                   |                                  |                                               |                                               |
| ↑                                                                                | ↑                                 | ↑                                | ↑                                             | ↑                                             |
| your gender<br>M=male<br>F=female                                                | 1st letter<br>of your<br>1st name | 1st letter<br>of your<br>surname | 1st letter<br>of your<br>parent's<br>1st name | your parent's<br>gender<br>M=male<br>F=female |
| (These apply to your parent who will be filling out the parent's questionnaire). |                                   |                                  |                                               |                                               |

**For example:** A teenager who has the name John Doe and has a mother Sarah Doe, will have the

code M J D S F

### What do you do when you complete the form?

A blank envelope is provided to enclose your completed questionnaire in it. Your parent/guardian also has a questionnaire to fill out so we ask you to enclose it again with your parent's envelope (with the completed questionnaire in it) and return it in the self-addressed envelope. *If it is more convenient for both parties, then please address an envelope to Cathy McGachie, Global Youth Foundation, P. O. Box 9413, Wellington. Please ensure the questionnaire is in the mail before the first day of the Discovery programme-Sunday, 12th July.* Thank you.

### Please answer the following question

Q. Where are you in order in your family (for example, are you the 1st child (eldest), 2nd child, 3rd child...) \_\_\_\_\_

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On the back of this page you answer the questions by placing the appropriate number (1-5) on the line. See the questionnaire for what each number means

### Here is an example of a completed question:

\_\_\_\_\_ I can talk to my mother/father about anything.

*(PACS 2 - Parent)*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As you may remember we asked the parent who was participating in the last day of Discovery to complete a questionnaire. It has been approximately two months since your teenager graduated from Discovery and we now ask for your time to complete the questionnaire again.

We ask for the parent who completed the first questionnaire before Discovery to complete this form also. This was one of the parents or guardians that was present on the last day of Discovery for teenagers. This is to ensure that the information we receive is consistent with the first questionnaire's information.

### **The Purpose**

The purpose of these questions is to understand how Discovery may have contributed to parent-teenager communication. You and your teen's second response to the questionnaire is very valuable in understanding this.

Remember there are no right or wrong answers to these questions.

### **Confidentiality**

Privacy will be ensured by using the same code you gave in the first questionnaire. The same prompts as last time will be asked for again so that a match can be made and confidentiality assured.

It will take approximately 15 minutes for you to complete the questionnaire and can be completed at your convenience over the next ten days. **If you did not complete the first questionnaire (before Discovery) then you need not respond this time.**

*This questionnaire is completely voluntary. If you have any questions please refer them to Cathy McGachie at (03)352 0677, or the Global Youth Foundation Office (04)384 5890.*

### **What do you do when you complete the form?**

A blank envelope is provided to enclose your completed questionnaire in it. It is attached behind this page. Like last time, your teenager also has a questionnaire to fill out so we ask you to enclose it again with your teen's envelope (with the completed questionnaire in it) and return it in the self-addressed envelope. *If it is more convenient for both parties, then please address an envelope to Cathy McGachie, Global Youth Foundation, P. O. Box 9413, Wellington.* **Please ensure the questionnaire is in the mail before Monday, 28th September 1998.** Thank you.

**Please tick the following statements as they apply to you.**

- I am the parent/guardian who completed the previous questionnaire.
- I fully understand the purpose of the research and am willing to complete the questionnaire.
- I understand that I may ask questions any time.
- I understand that I am participating in this activity of my own free will.
- I understand that my child's participation in this activity of his/her own free will and can withdraw at any time.

These are the prompts used for the last questionnaire. Please use the same prompts underneath the squares to make the same code.

Use the instructions below to place one letter in each square. Please write in block letters.

|                                   |                                   |                                            |                                             |                                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
|                                   |                                   |                                            |                                             |                                             |
| ↑                                 | ↑                                 | ↑                                          | ↑                                           | ↑                                           |
| your gender<br>M=male<br>F=female | 1st letter<br>of your<br>1st name | 1st letter<br>of your<br>teen's<br>surname | 1st letter<br>of your<br>teen's 1st<br>name | your teen's<br>gender<br>M=male<br>F=female |

**For example:** A parent who has the name John Doe and has a daughter Sarah Doe, will have the code

M | J | D | S | F

(PACS 2 - Teen)

Dear Discovery Graduate,

As you may remember we asked you to complete a questionnaire before you went to Discovery. It has been approximately two months since you graduated from Discovery and we now ask for your time to complete the questionnaire again.

The purpose of these questions is to understand how Discovery may have contributed to your communication with your parent/guardian. You and your parent's/guardian's second response to the questionnaire is very valuable in understanding this.

Remember there are no right or wrong answers to these questions and every precaution is taken to ensure your privacy. This is why a code is made which is the same code as you would have used for the questionnaire before Discovery. You can use the instructions under each square to make the same code.

*This questionnaire is completely voluntary. If you have any questions at any time please refer them to Cathy McGachie at (03)352 0677, or the Global Youth Foundation Wellington Office (04)384 5890.*

**Who else is filling out the form?**

The same questionnaire has been sent to all graduates of Discovery NZ22. Within your family, the parent/guardian who completed the first questionnaire before Discovery has been asked to complete the parent form also. This was the same parent/guardian who filled in the questionnaire before Discovery NZ22. To refresh your memory it would be a good idea if you ask which parent or guardian will be filling out the questionnaire also. Refer to this parent/guardian when the code is being asked for.

### It is time to make your code again

Please make the same code again by using the instructions below each square.

Use the instructions below to place one letter in each square. Please write in block letters.

|                                   |                                   |                                  |                                               |                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   |                                   |                                  |                                               |                                                                                                                                         |
| ↑                                 | ↑                                 | ↑                                | ↑                                             | ↑                                                                                                                                       |
| your gender<br>M=male<br>F=female | 1st letter<br>of your<br>1st name | 1st letter<br>of your<br>surname | 1st letter<br>of your<br>parent's<br>1st name | your parent's<br>gender<br>M=male<br>F=female<br>(These apply to your parent<br>who will be filling out the<br>parent's questionnaire). |

*For example:* A teenager who has the name John Doe and has a mother Sarah Doe, will have the code

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | J | D | S | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Please tick the following statements as they apply to you.

- I fully understand the purpose of the research and am I willing to complete the questionnaire.
- I understand that I may ask questions any time.
- I understand that I am participating in this activity of my own free will and can withdraw at any time.

### What do you do when you complete the form?

A blank envelope is provided to enclose your completed questionnaire in it. It is attached behind the first page. One of your parents also has a questionnaire to fill out so we ask you to enclose it again with your parent's envelope (with the completed questionnaire in it) and return it in the self-addressed envelope. *If it is more convenient for both parties, then please address an envelope to Cathy McGachie, Global Youth Foundation, P. O. Box 9413, Wellington.* **Please ensure the questionnaire is in the mail before Monday, 28th September 1998.** Thank you.

## APPENDIX III

### Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale

Place your code from the previous page here.

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

#### Parent Adolescent Communication Scale

#### Parent Form

Howard L. Barnes & David H. Olson(1982)

| RESPONSE CHOICE      |                        |                               |                     |                   |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2                      | 3                             | 4                   | 5                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Moderately<br>Disagree | Neither Agree<br>Nor Disagree | Moderately<br>Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**Please answer the questions as it applies to you and your teenager.**

- \_\_\_ 1. I can discuss my beliefs with my child without feeling restrained or embarrassed.
- \_\_\_ 2. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my child tells me.
- \_\_\_ 3. My child is always a good listener.
- \_\_\_ 4. I am sometimes afraid to ask my child for what I want.
- \_\_\_ 5. My child has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid.
- \_\_\_ 6. My child can tell how I'm feeling without asking.
- \_\_\_ 7. I am very satisfied with how my child and I talk together.
- \_\_\_ 8. If I were in trouble, I could tell my child.
- \_\_\_ 9. I openly show affection to my child.
- \_\_\_ 10. When we are having a problem, I often give my child the silent treatment.
- \_\_\_ 11. I am careful about what I say to my child.
- \_\_\_ 12. When talking with my child, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid.
- \_\_\_ 13. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my child.
- \_\_\_ 14. My child tries to understand my point of view.
- \_\_\_ 15. There are topics I avoid discussing with my child.
- \_\_\_ 16. I find it easy to discuss problems with my child.
- \_\_\_ 17. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my child.
- \_\_\_ 18. My child nags/bothers me.
- \_\_\_ 19. My child insults me when he/she is angry with me.
- \_\_\_ 20. I don't think I can tell my child how I really feel about some things.

Place your code from the previous page here.

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

**Parent Adolescent Communication Scale  
Adolescent Form**

Howard L. Barnes & David H. Olson(1982)

| RESPONSE CHOICE              |                                |                                       |                             |                           |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1                            | 2                              | 3                                     | 4                           | 5                         |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Disagree</b> | <b>Moderately<br/>Disagree</b> | <b>Neither Agree<br/>Nor Disagree</b> | <b>Moderately<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> |

*Please answer the questions as it applies to you and the participating parent.*

- \_\_\_ 1. I can discuss my beliefs with my mother/father without feeling restrained or embarrassed.
- \_\_\_ 2. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my mother/father tells me.
- \_\_\_ 3. My mother/father is always a good listener.
- \_\_\_ 4. I am sometimes afraid to ask my mother/father for what I want.
- \_\_\_ 5. My mother/father has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid.
- \_\_\_ 6. My mother/father can tell how I'm feeling without asking.
- \_\_\_ 7. I am very satisfied with how my mother/father and I talk together.
- \_\_\_ 8. If I were in trouble, I could tell my mother/father.
- \_\_\_ 9. I openly show affection to my mother/father.
- \_\_\_ 10. When we are having a problem, I often give my mother/father the silent treatment.
- \_\_\_ 11. I am careful about what I say to my mother/father.
- \_\_\_ 12. When talking with my mother/father, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid.
- \_\_\_ 13. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my mother/father.
- \_\_\_ 14. My mother/father tries to understand my point of view.
- \_\_\_ 15. There are topics I avoid discussing with my mother/father.
- \_\_\_ 16. I find it easy to discuss problems with my mother/father.
- \_\_\_ 17. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my mother/father.
- \_\_\_ 18. My mother/father nags/bothers me.
- \_\_\_ 19. My mother/father insults me when he/she is angry with me.
- \_\_\_ 20. I don't think I can tell my mother/father how I really feel about some things.

## APPENDIX IV

### Interview Consent Form

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As you may be aware I am conducting research with the Global Youth Foundation on the Discovery programme. This is done through Massey University and is toward my Masters of Education. I am pleased to be able to work with you on this project.

Part of the information I would like to gather for this research involves reporting what Discovery is about. Your experience and involvement with Discovery is very valuable and this is why you have been chosen to provide assistance in this study. You are not required to partake in the interview, it is on a purely voluntary basis. Your responses are confidential and will be recorded and used collectively with the other people I interview. Your comments are confidential and used only for the purpose of this study.

I am taking this opportunity to organise a time you are available for an interview should you choose to be interviewed. Please send back the following page suggesting a time suitable for me to call you in the next two weeks. The questions should take approximately 25 minutes to answer and I will ring you on the day, time and phone number you request. Either day or night interviews are convenient for me.

Please indicate, on the following page, what day and time it would be most convenient to call you and at what phone number you can be contacted at. I have provided a self-addressed envelope for ease of return. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Cathy McGachie.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick one of the following two statements:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to participate in a phone interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am **not** willing to participate in a phone interview.

If you have ticked the second sentence then please enclose the letter in the self addressed envelope provided and post it on to me. You need not continue with the other questions.

Thank you for your time.

*Please remember to sign at the bottom of the page.*

-----  
Please write the day and time you will be available to be interviewed by telephone.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 1998

Approximate time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Contact phone number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Another convenient time(if needed): \_\_\_\_\_ 1998

Approximate time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Thank you for your time. Please sign at the bottom of the page, enclose this page in the self-addressed envelope provided and post it back to me.  
Thank you.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX V**

### **Interview Format**

#### **Introduction**

As you may be aware I am conducting research with the Discovery programme. This is done through Massey University and is toward my Masters of Education. The Global Youth Foundation Board members are in agreeance with this study and I will be updating them on the progress throughout the year.

As you have been involved with Discovery for many programmes, I would like to ask you some questions about the programme. Please answer them according to your own thoughts. As I ask you the questions I will write your answers down as best as I can. After each questions I will reflect back your words from what I have written so you can confirm or change the comments should you feel you need to.

Do you have any questions at this stage?

## Interview Questions

**Name of Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mode of Interview:** face-to-face/telephone

**Gender:** male/female

### OWN ROLE

1. What is your involvement with Discovery?
2. How did you get involved with Discovery?
  - i) How long have you been with the programme? (by no. of programmes and/or other involvement)

### HISTORY

3. How did Discovery develop? For example, when was it brought to New Zealand, etc.

### PROGRAMME

4. In your own words what is Discovery?
5. What is the philosophy and objectives of Discovery?
6. In your own words explain the content of the programme?
7. Who is Discovery for and how is it made available to them?

### PERSONNEL

8. What is the structure of Discovery's staff?
  - i) Is a broad or specific range of staff required? That is, the ratio of graduate teen staff, ages of staff, gender ratio?

## **TEENAGE ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENT**

The following questions ask about your comment on how Discovery may contribute to certain teenage issues. Please answer them according to your own thoughts.

9. To what extent do you think Discovery may contribute toward teenagers' lives?
  
10. What contribution do you think Discovery makes to parent-adolescent communication? That is, those parents and teenagers who have participated in Discovery.
  
11. Given that depression is prevalent during the teenage years, how do you think Discovery addresses this problem?
  
12. What contribution do you think Discovery makes toward coping with challenges in adolescence?
  
13. Are there any other comments you would like to make? Please explain.