



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Learning environments and student engagement with  
their learning in tertiary settings.

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# Research question

How do institutional and non-institutional learning environments influence student engagement with learning in diverse tertiary settings?



# Research design

- Nine case studies
  - 1 community education provider
  - 1 Private Training Enterprise
  - 1 wananga
  - 4 Institutes of Technology Polytechnics
  - 2 universities



# Four phases

1. Literature review
2. Survey of students
3. Interviews with students
4. Survey of teachers



# Progress to date

- Literature review completed
- Student survey completed and analysed
- Student interviews completed and analysed
- Teacher survey
  - One institution still to complete
- Case studies are being written up
- A number of papers published



# Next steps

- Complete teacher survey
- Complete analysis of teacher survey
- Write up individual case studies
- Write final report by March 2010
- Continue publishing from data



# Research outcome

- **Conceptual organiser for student engagement:**
  - Developed from the literature review
  - 6 strands to student engagement
  - Each strand has suggested indicators for what practice might look like



# Conceptual organiser for student engagement

## 1. Motivation and agency

Engaged students are intrinsically motivated and want to exercise their agency

- *Provide opportunity for students to work autonomously*
- *Provide experiences for students to develop relationships with others*
- *Foster students' sense of competence*



# Conceptual organiser for student engagement

## 2. Transactional engagement

Students engage with teachers

- *Provide experiences that challenge academically*
- *Ensure that learning is active and collaborative inside and outside the classroom*
- *Enable constructive student-teacher interactions*
- *Provide enriching educational experiences*



# Conceptual organiser for student engagement

## 3. Transactional engagement

Students engage with each other

- *Provide active and collaborative learning inside and outside the classroom*
- *Foster positive, constructive peer relationships*
- *Encourage students to use social skills to engage with others*



# Conceptual organiser for student engagement

## 4. Institutional support

Institutions provide an environment conducive to learning

- *Maintain a strong focus on student success*
- *Have high expectations of students*
- *Invest in a variety of support services*
- *Value diversity*
- *Seek continuous improvement*



# Conceptual organiser for student engagement

## 5. Active citizenship

Students and institutions work together to enable challenges to social beliefs and practices

- *Teach students to make legitimate knowledge claims*
- *Encourage students to engage effectively with others including the 'other'*
- *Foster a firm sense of self*
- *Teach in ways to make learning participatory, dialogic, active and critical*



# Conceptual organiser for student engagement

## 6. Non-institutional support

Students are supported by family and friends to engage in learning

- *Assist family and friends to understand the demands of study*
- *Recognise the impact on learning of non-institutional influences*
- *Encourage family and friends to create space for study commitments*



# Publications to date

- Leach, L., & Zepke, N. (2009). *Engaging first year students: A conceptual organiser for student engagement*. Paper presentation at the First Year in Higher Education Conference, Townsville, 29 June - 1 July.
- Zepke, N., Leach, L., Anderson, H., Butler, P., Henderson, J., Hoffman, J., Isaacs, P., Ross, C., Russell, B., Slater, G., Solomon, K., Wilson, S., Wiseley, A. (2009). *Improving Student Engagement in Post-School Settings: an Annotated Bibliography*. AKO Aotearoa  
<http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/ako-aotearoa/resources/pages/improving-student-engagement-post-school-settings-annotate>
- Zepke, N., Leach, L., & Butler, P. (2009). *Student motivation and engagement in learning*. Refereed paper presented at the 32nd Annual International HERSDA conference, Darwin, 6-9 July.



- Zepke, N., Leach, L., & Butler, P. (2009) Engaging tertiary students: The role of teacher student transactions. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 44(1), 69-82.
- Zepke, N., Leach, L. & Butler, P. (in press, 2010) Student engagement in post compulsory education: Learner motivation and action. *Research in post compulsory education*, 15, (1)
- Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (in press, 2010) Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 11, (3).

