

Future Research and Development Issues

Our earlier research and the findings reported here offer strong support for the validity of student self-ratings of motivation orientations in predicting achievement two years into the future. These predictions add information independent of what schools, teachers and even parents might know about their children based on previous achievement results. A simple, short screening measure such as the one developed here could be used in the development and validation of positive interventions designed to enhance student motivation orientations and their achievement. An approach to intervention that highlighted intrapersonal motivation orientations could add significant value to the more traditional approach of academic remediation only; Martin's work in Australia provides an excellent example of this (Martin, 2008). Such meta-cognitive strategies could, of course, add value to any future endeavour undertaken by secondary students. Student self-awareness about how *Doing My Best* actually applies to particular tasks and recognising how to avoid *Doing Just Enough* could give students strategies useful in a variety of contexts with multiple challenges.

The results from the Teacher and Peer Affiliation subscales provide strong support for initiatives directed to improving the relationships of students with their teachers and also for enhancing opportunities for students to support one another's achievement (Bishop et al., 2007). By adding a measure of these interpersonal influences such as access to positive support from teachers and others, the motivation screening measure may reflect better the values of more collectivist cultures as opposed to individualistic perspectives typically of traditional motivation measures. The highly significant relationship we found between perceptions of teacher caring and positive motivation orientations to learning and the NCEA is an important finding, indicating that interpersonal factors also play an important role in student achievement. Our findings support the need for further intervention research focused on the teacher's role and how teachers can communicate to young people that they are interested in their achievement.

Our research has also highlighted how attributions are related to student achievement outcomes. In addition to rating the four most commonly cited attributions of ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck, we asked students to rate the influences of the teacher, family/whanau and friends on their best and worst marks in any subject. We found strong relationships between various attributions and achievement outcomes, and there were interesting gender and ethnic patterns as well. The inclusion of social relationship attribution items is a promising strategy for assessing interpersonal influences.

We discussed earlier in this report how the design and development of the NCEA has been guided by the potential for an assessment system that could encourage student motivation, autonomy and personal responsibility as well as academic achievement. Along these lines, Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) argue that different assessment systems will have an important impact on "learning identities and dispositions as children become young adults" (p. 472), hence affecting their lifelong career as learners. What this means is that an assessment system—whether this be the NCEA or any other—has a powerful influence on the socialisation of our youth. The NCEA through its various components and elements enables young people to shape their own futures—to some extent. At

the same time, however, the NCEA is itself an instrument that shapes how students think about their learning and what they do as learners. Clearly, it is crucial that we base the design of qualifications and assessments on evidence of the impact of these systems on student learning and study behaviour. Our research has been guided by this principle.