



**Starpath**

A University of Auckland Partnership for Excellence



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**NEW ZEALAND**

Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau

# The Starpath Project Annual Report 2010







# Starpath

A University of Auckland Partnership for Excellence

**Project Name:**

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**Starpath Project**

The University of Auckland  
Epsom Campus  
Faculty of Education  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland 1142

starpath@auckland.ac.nz  
www.starpath.auckland.ac.nz

**On the cover:**

The Director of Starpath, Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley (middle), with Leanne Stewart (left) and Titi Motusage (right), Year 13 students at Massey High School, one of the Auckland secondary schools working with the Starpath Project.







# Contents

Reports	4
From the Chair	4
From the Director	5
School-tertiary partnerships	6
Findings from Phase One	6
Working with schools	7
Using data to close the achievement gap	9
Longitudinal data	9
The Academic Counselling and Target Setting (ACTS) initiative	9
Sustainable ACTS (3 years on)	9
TRACTS: Transferability Research in Academic Counselling and Target Setting at the four other partner schools	10
Transitioning from school to university	12
Building effective literacy practices in secondary schools	14
Future directions	15
Project outputs	16
Project media coverage	18





# Reports



## From the Chair

The Starpath Project, a Partnership for Excellence between The University of Auckland and the Government, was established in 2005 to determine evidence-based ways of transforming patterns of educational underachievement, particularly for Māori, Pacific and low decile school students. Starpath was funded as a two-phase programme, with the Government providing dollar for dollar matching funding for philanthropic donations to the University aligned with the purposes of Starpath.

The end of Phase One has seen the culmination of five years of research into and

analysis of the progress of students in our partner secondary schools, the identification of barriers they encounter during their education, and the development of ways to remove these barriers.

Starpath and its partner schools have developed a strategy for student success that includes ways of tracking and monitoring student and school progress, and a set of related processes that use achievement data and other information to make decisions about the educational progress of students. These strategies have been trialled in all partner schools and have been shown to produce substantial performance gains within the first year. The gains are greatest for those students currently identified by the Ministry of Education as underperforming – males, and Māori and Pacific students in low decile schools. It is, however, a challenge to sustain such gains.

Five project reports have been completed in the last year and two more will be completed before December 2010. A prominent Starpath report is a longitudinal study following 29 students from the end of Year 13 through their first semester at university. Recently we launched a book from this project called *Uni Bound? Students' Stories of Transition from School to University* that provides teachers, students and parents with advice about how to make the transition between high school and university as easy as possible.

Alongside the project work, Starpath has been preparing a proposal to expand the project into Phase Two. During this phase, Starpath will work with the Ministry of Education and clusters of schools across New Zealand to introduce the practices and processes that have been shown to be effective in improving student performance in our pilot schools.

We would once again like to thank our financial partners – the ASB Community Trust, the West Coast Development Trust, The University of Auckland, the Tertiary Education Commission and individual sponsors who make the work of Starpath possible. There could be no project without our partner schools, their principals, staff and students and we trust that they see the time and effort invested in Starpath as a worthwhile contribution toward better educational outcomes for their students. The Starpath team has now worked together over a lengthy period and for several years under the direction of Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley. The Board is very appreciative of the team's commitment and the skills which they have brought to the project.

**Professor Raewyn Dalziel**  
Chair, Starpath Board



## From the Director

Welcome to Starpath Project Annual Report for 2009/2010.

Starpath is a pioneering research project focused on transforming educational outcomes for New Zealand students who are currently underachieving at secondary school and as a result are underrepresented in tertiary education.

We are funded as a two-phase programme. Later in 2010 we reach the end of our Phase One stage, which was to carry out research and analysis into the progress of secondary students, identify potential “choke points” or barriers during the students’ education, and develop pilot solutions to address these choke points. We have already successfully achieved these objectives. During Phase One, along with our partners we have developed significant strategies to address the barriers to student success.

In preparation for Phase Two of Starpath we have consolidated much of our research work and focused on testing the sustainability and scalability of the interventions developed. This work is providing the evidence base for any programme we recommend for wider rollout.

Looking back there are three key measures which demonstrate how far we have come since 2005 – stability, outputs and peer esteem. The stability of core academic staff is important to the success of any long-term research programme, and was difficult to achieve in our

formative years. However, our staffing has been very stable for the past three years and, as a result, we have become stronger in our endeavours.

Our project outputs have been high in 2009/10 with the completion of several published technical reports. These reports include the Stumbling Blocks or Stepping Stones study, which followed individual students through the crucial transition phase from school to university; Targets and Talk, an evaluation of the ACTS programme at Massey High School (MHS); and three quantitative studies. As our annual report goes to press we are completing two further evaluations of the implementation of the Academic Counselling and Target Setting (ACTS) programme. One report focuses on the sustainability of ACTS in Massey High School three years on, and the other report centres on the transferability of the ACTS programme to four more schools. This body of work has added significantly to our understanding of the complexity of NCEA, and its impact on success rates for groups of students. We can now confidently claim to have made a significant contribution to this area of educational research.

This in turn is demonstrated by the peer esteem in which the project is held. Considerable credibility has been gained for the research we have produced. The Starpath team receives numerous invitations from the academic and wider educational communities to speak at conferences, publish work, host visiting academics and be associated with other projects. We have come to be seen as an authority on equity in education in New Zealand. Our reports are raising issues that need to be debated in the public arena, and we continue to be at the forefront of this debate.

Two staff members have notably completed postgraduate qualifications in 2010, Dr Samantha Smith and Marianna Deynzer. Sam is the first Starpath researcher to complete a PhD in affiliation with the project. Sam’s PhD, completed in the Faculty of Education, investigated the unique target-setting initiative aspect of the ACTS programme. Sam is helping other Starpath partner schools learn how to implement the ACTS initiative to raise achievement. Marianna Deynzer, who was a research assistant with the project, graduated with a Master of Arts in Development Studies

after completing her thesis on the transition of Pacific students from school to university, as part of the wider Starpath transitions project.

We have had some staff changes in the last 12 months as we have needed to downsize in preparation for Phase Two. Several fixed term agreements for Phase One have ended, which saw the departure from the project of qualitative researcher Seini Jensen, research assistant Marianna Deynzer, quantitative research assistants Meisong Li and Johnson Yuan, and Administrator Yoshiko Kawasaki. Dr Satomi Mizutani has joined the team as a quantitative research assistant. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the team members for their significant contributions to the project during 2009/2010.

The next six months are a crucial time for the project as we move into our preparation for Phase Two. It is our wish to engage further with educational agencies and the Government in extending our work throughout the country. I wish to thank all our partners, both educational and financial entities, who have made our Phase One journey possible.

**Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley**  
Director, Starpath Project

# School-tertiary research partnerships

## Findings from Phase One

Working with partners in the secondary school system and the tertiary sector has been crucial to helping Starpath identify the barriers for Māori, Pacific and low decile school students' progress through secondary education and to tertiary, especially degree-level study.

Starpath has developed methods of using, analysing and understanding longitudinal educational data, enabling the achievement of individual students and groups of students to be tracked over time. These data and the student tracking provide a sound evidence base for setting student targets and guiding student achievement.

The key findings in Starpath Phase One research include:

- At present, secondary schools make variable use of educational data to track the achievement of students over time, whether as individuals or groups;
- In order to address current patterns of underachievement, schools tend to turn to an array of initiatives which are additional to their core teaching and learning programmes;
- While the flexibility of NCEA is appreciated by students, teachers and parents, the complexity of the qualification creates significant barriers for groups of underachieving students and their parents;
- The transition between secondary school and tertiary institutions poses many risks for students from these groups;
- NCEA is a significantly better predictor of success in the first year of university than the more traditional, alternative qualifications;
- Leadership is a key determinant of improvement throughout the school and its success;
- The move for schools from collecting data to identifying issues in student learning and formulating solutions requires further focus on capacity building among staff.

Starpath uses data to develop interventions which are effective in overcoming these barriers. By putting in place the capability to collect, manage and systematically interpret evidence, improved student and teacher outcomes can be gained. These include accelerated gains in student literacy outcomes; improved gains in NCEA levels and credits; improvement in the quality of subject/coursework guidance for students navigating NCEA; enhanced teacher expectations based on specific and individual student targets; and the development of teacher inquiry about their teaching.

As a result of work undertaken in the first phase of Starpath, the following have been identified as achieving step changes in the current patterns of educational underachievement.

- The development of longitudinal databases to track the achievement of students through secondary and tertiary study.
- A suite of related processes designed to use the information held on the database to make evidence-based decisions about the educational progress of individual students. These include:
  - Target setting
  - Academic support meetings with students
  - Parent-student-teacher Review Meetings
- Using data effectively to change literacy practices of teachers across the curriculum (with the Woolf Fisher Research Centre).







## Working with schools

Lifting NCEA achievement is, arguably, a major aim of every secondary school. Exactly how principals and teachers do that is the focus of much Starpath research. The Academic Counselling and Target Setting (ACTS) initiative is being rigorously trialled and tested by Starpath as an initiative to ensure those most at risk – Māori and Pacific students, and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds – stay on track to university.

Based on five years of research, ACTS was developed at Massey High School. Since ACTS was developed a select group of high schools have joined Starpath as “partner schools” to allow further trials of the intervention.

The initiative teaches schools how to mine the rich data they already keep on NCEA students to create in-depth academic profiles for every student. Schools learn how to set individual and whole-school academic targets using these data, and how to track each student’s progress against their capabilities and aspirations. This is combined with one-on-one academic counselling sessions and parental involvement.

Two of the schools which have introduced their own version of ACTS are Tikipunga High School in Whangarei and Southern Cross Campus Senior School in Mangere.

Although ACTS is still in its early days, both schools have praised the initiative for improving their NCEA results; for creating clearer goals for their students; and helping teachers to better understand individual student achievement. Both schools are particularly thankful for Starpath’s support in implementing the programme, and for being able to access academic expertise that would otherwise not be available to them.

“With Starpath we are able to access this incredible expertise. They’ve already done the hard work in other schools and can bring that to us, and it means we don’t have to work in isolation,” says Robin Staples, Principal of Southern Cross.

Starpath has given Tikipunga High School in Whangarei a “hard-nosed edge”, says Principal Peter Garelja, “by enabling us to manage success based on solid data and evidence.

“We were drowning in data. Now we are swimming in evidence.”





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# Using data to close the achievement gap

Starpath has uncovered an urgent need to develop databases in schools. Keeping longitudinal data on student participation and performance is essential in order to monitor student achievement and design initiatives to help students succeed.

This section provides an update on the significant body of research Starpath has completed in the trialling and evaluation of data tracking in schools.

An Academic Counselling and Target Setting (ACTS) programme has been in place at Massey High School since 2007.

In the past 12 months Starpath has focused on two major research projects to further evaluate and trial the ACTS initiative:

1. Sustainable ACTS: Sustainability of academic counselling and target setting at Massey High school (three years on)
2. TRACTS: Transferability Research in Academic Counselling and Target Setting at the four other partner schools.

## Longitudinal data

One of the important early findings from Phase One was that there is a lack of longitudinal data kept in schools.

While schools collect and store a great deal of data about student attendance, performance and achievement, Starpath found it was not used longitudinally or to track student achievement. Without longitudinal tracking, it is difficult to determine if student potential is being realised or when groups of students underachieve.

Starpath identified a fundamental need for accurate, detailed and well-documented longitudinal databases to be established so that patterns of progress and achievement can be monitored and used by schools for instructional purposes. Starpath has been working with schools to establish longitudinal data.

## The Academic Counselling and Target Setting (ACTS) initiative

At Massey High School, the establishment of a comprehensive longitudinal student achievement database has formed the basis for an Academic Counselling and Target

Setting (ACTS) programme that has been in place since 2007. This initiative was designed to increase the school's academic performance through a systematic, whole-school approach to student achievement; to improve communication between the school and parents/caregivers about their child's learning; and to provide appropriate advice to students on academic pathways based on their academic achievement records and aspirations for the future. The target setting aspect of the ACTS programme was the subject of a PhD thesis "Academic Target Setting: Formative use of achievement data" carried out by Massey High School teacher, Dr Samantha Smith.

In the last reporting period the first Starpath evaluation of the ACTS programme was completed. The evaluation was based primarily on interviews and questionnaires with stakeholders (teachers, parents and students). It found high levels of support for the initiative from these groups, and revealed a comprehensive picture of how the initiative was working in practice.

In November 2009 the evaluation was made public. The full report, titled *Targets and talk: evaluation of an evidence-based academic counselling intervention*, was made available on the Starpath website and to the media. In doing so Starpath was able to report on the educational gains students had made one year on from the introduction of the ACTS intervention. One of these educational gains was an increase of 10 percent in final-year NCEA completion. The biggest gains were made by Māori and Pacific students, with 16 percent more Māori students and 20 percent more Pacific students achieving NCEA in the vital areas of Level 1 Numeracy and Literacy.

## Sustainable ACTS (3 years on)

A follow-up evaluation was undertaken by Starpath in early 2010, three years after the ACTS programme's introduction. Its focus was on the sustainability of the ACTS programme and its effects.

Changes in student achievement rates were tracked from 2006 (the year before the ACTS

intervention) through to 2009, and the Massey High School (MHS) results compared with national averages (all secondary schools) and result averages from reference decile schools. This was combined with qualitative data collection, in the form of focus groups and individual interviews.

Roll-based, whole-school data indicated a rise in students' success rates between 2006 (pre-intervention) and 2007 (the first year of the ACTS programme). In the two further years (2008 and 2009) we found:

- The ACTS programme has continued to be effective for all students.
- Pacific students are showing improved success rates at all three NCEA levels but University Entrance (UE) success rates have been more variable.
- Māori students' success rates showed initial improvement in 2007 at all levels of NCEA and in University Entrance, and there was further success in 2009 at NCEA Level 2.
- The disparity of outcomes between European/Pākehā students and Pacific students at NCEA Levels 1 and 2 is reducing.

In particular, the ACTS programme has been very successful in gaining stakeholder commitment and support. Students, teachers, deans and the school leadership recognise the benefits of the programme and see it as an integral part of the school's life and culture.

- Academic counselling is seen as critically important and seen to be working well in its present model;
- Parent-student-teacher meetings are strongly supported, particularly by form teachers who see the benefits of school-family communication and engagement;
- Target setting is seen to have value by many staff but will take longer to embed due to the specialised knowledge required to understand the processes.





There is evidence that most aspects of the ACTS programme are becoming embedded in the daily life of the school. There is commitment to its continuation and further development, both for its impact on student achievement and educational outcomes, and for its contribution to job satisfaction reported by deans and teachers.

The principal of Massey High School, Mr Bruce Ritchie, suggests that the ACTS programme is a work in progress which is continually developing. Its whole-school approach is ambitious, as are its overall aims of raising student achievement and improving equity in academic outcomes.

### TRACTS: Transferability Research in Academic Counselling and Target Setting at the four other partner schools

The project investigated the scalability and transferability of the academic counselling and target setting programme (known as TRACTS), designed to improve student achievement at secondary school. The experience with the TRACTS project has allowed the Starpath team to work very closely with a number of schools and to gain insight into the most effective ways of helping schools to introduce major change into their work and everyday practices. It has provided valuable preparation for Phase Two of the Starpath Project, as well as developing

schools that might take the lead-school role in scaling up the ACTS programme to a larger number of schools in Phase Two.

Among the main successes have been:

- Increased capacity within schools to collect, manage and use student achievement data;
- Rapid (within one year) improvement in student achievement for at least some students;
- The overwhelmingly positive response of the parents/caregivers to the redesigned parent-student-teacher conferences;
- The perceived benefits of academic counselling;
- Professional growth and development among staff taking responsibility for aspects of the ACTS programme, and
- Closer alignment of the schools' strategic plans with practices designed to improve student achievement.

There have been some practical setbacks, such as a change in the Student Management System (SMS) or loss of teachers involved in project implementation. However, some of these changes are to be expected.

The TRACTS project is continuing, as each school moves to implement and refine different

aspects of the ACTS programme in its own environment and within the constraints of its resources. Some valuable insights have been gained that will assist Starpath to implement the programme in other schools in Phase Two. These insights include:

- Detailed planning is needed early in the initiative.
- Support or "buy-in" is needed from all participants (ie parents/caregivers, students, boards of trustees, principals and teachers).
- Attend to data literacy skills of all staff in accessing and using data, and increasing their understanding of the value of longitudinal student data with respect to enhancing student performance.
- Effective leadership required within the school at all levels of the intervention, including the principal and other delegated leadership positions.
- Substantial professional development is required in data collection, recording, and use; understanding NCEA qualification criteria; facilitating parent-student-teacher conferences; and providing academic counselling.
- Early successes are strong motivators for all staff.





- Work to embed the changes in teacher practice as quickly as possible.
- Be prepared for the consequences of the initiative, such as changing curriculum or investigating teacher practices.

A report is currently being prepared on the TRACTS programme.

## Conclusion

Starpeth is working toward consistent conventions across schools for the management and structure of data sets. While there will be resourcing implications for schools and funding agencies, these conventions are essential if student data are to be effectively used to track individual and group achievement and provide interactive evidence-based education.

## Case Study: Southern Cross Campus – Mangere

Southern Cross Campus in Mangere is a decile one school, with a 96 percent Māori and Pacific roll. In 2006 Southern Cross became involved in Starpath research as a Partner School, and began trialling the ACTS initiative in 2009.

Prior to 2009 the school had typically low NCEA pass rates, comparable with other schools in the same decile. As an area school, catering for pre-schoolers through to Year 13, it also faced its own unique hurdles in resourcing, and attracting highly experienced staff.

Principal Robin Staples says: “2008 was a particularly bad year, we knew our students weren’t achieving as well as they could but we were in the dark about what to do to make those big increases.

“We had to figure out how to realise our students’ true potential with a small amount of resources. We needed to do something we knew would work.”

The ACTS initiative is being introduced gradually. NCEA results have begun improving. In 2009, the number of Year 11 students passing NCEA Level 1 rose from

22 percent to 45 percent. Forty percent of Year 13 students achieved NCEA Level 3, compared with 22 percent in 2008 and 32 percent in 2007. Level 1 Literacy pass rates, which jumped from 41 percent to 83 percent – above the national average – were a standout result.

According to Robin it was clear the intervention had a direct impact on his students’ results: “We had stunning results last year. Starpath has been terrific.

“As a principal I’m now acutely aware of how we are doing as a school, and how individual students are doing along the way, instead of at the end of the year when it’s too late to do anything with that knowledge.”



# Transitioning from school to university

Starpath has discovered that the transition between secondary school and tertiary institutions poses many risks for Māori and Pacific students and those from low decile schools.

In the 2009 Annual Report, Starpath reported on major research about to be released on this process of transitioning.

The full-length study titled *Stumbling blocks or stepping stones?* Students' experience of transition from low-mid decile schools to university was released publicly in March 2010.

The prospective, longitudinal, qualitative study followed 44 students from their final year of high school to attending university the following year. Twenty-nine students remained in the study until its completion.

The study found:

- Students have high aspirations and ability but are at high risk of failing to achieve entry because they have poor advice about what is required for the tertiary programmes of their choice;
- The choice of unit standards for academic subjects, the failure to meet the formal requirements for University Entrance, and the lack of knowledge of the specific courses and subjects required for admission to tertiary programmes with selective entry, pose significant barriers;

- Students often experience difficulties with university study because of limited experience of external testing and examinations;
- The summer before entry to tertiary institutions, and the first weeks after entry are times of self-doubt and a loss of focus, and can lead to a decision not to continue with tertiary study.

Better guidance for students, teachers and parents, clearly designed pathways to tertiary study and targeted support over the summer and in the early months of tertiary study, can significantly reduce current disparities in access to and progression in tertiary study.

The findings, which were also made available to the media, showed that a good transition from school to university can have a significant impact on whether Māori or Pacific students succeed at university.

## UniBound – book launch

The Transitions study culminated in the release of a book of stories written by some of the students who took part in the research. The book is titled *Unibound? Students' Stories of Transition from School to University*. A book

launch was held for the student authors at The University of Auckland's City Campus in July 2010.

The book is made up of 15 stories, written by the students as they look back on their individual journeys from school to tertiary education. The contributors come from rural and urban schools, located mostly in economically disadvantaged communities, and many are the first in their family to embark on university studies. The authors reflect the ethnic mix of Aotearoa New Zealand today – with Māori, Pacific, European/Pākehā, and other groups. The students share their experiences, and lessons learned along the way, providing a glimpse of what it is like to leave the security of school, family and community and become a university student.

The transition process can be particularly challenging for students with little previous contact with universities. It is hoped the book will inspire secondary school students who are planning to go to university, and those wondering if they should. The book will be distributed to schools and universities as a resource for other students making the transition.







## Feature: Masters thesis by Marianna Deynzer

The transition to university of Pasifika Students from low and mid decile schools.

Marianna Deynzer, who identifies as Tongan/Palagi, completed her thesis on the transition of Pacific students from school to university, as part of the wider Starpath transitions project.

Marianna followed the transition from school to university for a group of Pacific students from low and mid decile schools. A longitudinal qualitative approach was taken to investigate their experiences, tracking them from the end of their final year of high school, through the summer break and until the completion of their first semester at university. The study revealed the transition process for participants was one of negotiating a series of “disconnections”.

Disconnection is present for all school students entering a much larger and very different learning environment but, for those in the study,

facets of their educational, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds gave rise to more pervasive and numerous disconnections which compounded one another.

Despite the disconnections, participants managed to connect socially with other Pacific students, usually through networks which had been established previously such as family, church or a university mentoring programme they were involved in at school.

The findings from this study showed that the support given by schools and universities was not as effective as it needs to be. The data suggest that students need to be identified, given guidance and helped to aim for university much earlier in order to be adequately prepared academically for degree-level study. The period between the end of school and starting at university was a time when support and guidance were often needed. The findings also illustrate that a lack of clear goals in relation to why students are attending university hinders the transition process.

# Building effective literacy practices in secondary schools

The Woolf Fisher Research Centre (WFRC), Starpath Project research associates, is currently conducting an innovative large-scale research and development programme in collaboration with seven secondary schools on the West Coast (South Island).

Its overall aim is to raise achievement, particularly in literacy, in these schools within which 16 percent of the students are Māori. The first phase of the intervention was reported in the 2009 Annual Report.

The school-wide literacy and inquiry focus has continued in 2010, adding a further strand of professional development to the targeted professional development in the area of content-specific literacy. This additional strand involves English and mathematics teachers from the region learning how to identify and address the unique literacy demands of their subject area. The main rationale for this additional strand is that while most literacy professional development in secondary schools is cross-curricular in focus, an increasing number of researchers argue that such generic approaches are inadequate and that a more content-specific focus is needed. This need was identified through the first phase. Results from the second phase include:

- Student attainment of NCEA Level 1 has increased significantly. The probability of a West Coast student passing before the intervention was 49.6 percent and pass rates were on average 8.9 percent below the national averages. There was a marked jump in percentage pass rates for West Coast students in 2008 which was maintained by the 2009 cohort. Using simple logistic regression modelling this increase to a 60.5 percent probability of passing represents a significant change. A student from the post-intervention group had 1.54 times the odds of passing NCEA Level 1 compared to a student from the pre-intervention group. While both national pass rates and West Coast pass rates trended upwards over time, the pre-intervention difference was more than halved to 3.9 percent.
- The pass rate in Achievement Standard 90057: Read Unfamiliar Text has increased

significantly. The overall difference prior to 2008 between West Coast pass rates and the national pass rates was large; 20.4 percent fewer students passed on the West Coast. There was a marked change in the level of pass rates in 2008 that has been maintained in 2009. The mean difference between national and West Coast pass rates after the start of the intervention was almost halved to 11.6 percent. A student from the pre-intervention group had a 38.3 percent probability of passing the NCEA standard 90057 and a student from the post-intervention group had a 61.6 percent probability. A student from the post-intervention group had 2.56 times the odds of passing this standard compared to a student from the pre-intervention group. [Note: This standard is chosen because it is the closest in form and content to the reading comprehension requirements of the asTTle Reading test and is externally examined.]

Further analyses will make corrections for changes in the national pass rates which fluctuate across time. Further modelling of both these and other pass rate data will examine the patterns for Māori students and for other aspects of literacy achievement.

Further shifts in student achievement and beliefs will be evaluated through repeated measures including asTTle reading, NCEA achievement data across content areas, and a student questionnaire. Changes in teacher knowledge, beliefs and practices are being evaluated through repeated measures including a literacy pedagogical content knowledge tool, questionnaires, observations and interviews.







# Future directions

Over the next 12 months Starpath will move from the end of Phase One (December 2010) into Phase Two.

The last six months of Phase One will consolidate research in preparation for Phase Two.

In Phase One we can confidently state that Starpath has gained significant insights into how to enhance academic achievement among secondary and tertiary students from under-represented groups. Starpath has also gained substantial experience in how to implement and manage a multi-faceted educational research and development project.

Starpath has carried out research and analysis into the “choke points” that impede students’ academic progress throughout their education. It has published extensively on its findings which have received both national and international attention. Starpath has piloted solutions which have seen measurable improvements in the educational outcomes for students.

Phase Two will launch the components of Phase One nationally. Our additional work has shown that these solutions are scalable, sustainable and transferable.

From 2011, Starpath plans to draw on its experience to:

- Work with clusters of schools to develop their data collection and literacy as the basis for effective interventions with individual students and whole school performance and achievement;
- Promote effective inquiry, problem-solving skills among teachers and greater capacity in schools to sustain changes through:
  - The systematic, interactive use of evidence-based data in schools to improve student achievement
  - The development of teacher skills in data literacy, inquiry and problem-solving, and evaluation
  - Encouraging research leadership in these areas in schools through targeted graduate and doctoral training
  - Contributing to enhanced secondary teacher education programmes and in-service teacher development.
- Implement effective intervention strategies by working alongside our current partner schools and tertiary institutes, and new school clusters, to deliver high quality educational outcomes for groups of under-represented students from low-decile schools;
- Increase the participation, retention and completion rates of students from under-represented groups in degree-level study;
- Promote research into the issue of educational diversity and equity from a range of discipline bases.





## Project outputs

(1 July 2009 – 30 June 2010)

### Technical reports

Madjar, I., McKinley, E., Deynzer, M., & van der Merwe, A. (2010). *Stumbling blocks or stepping stones? Students' experience of transition from low-mid decile schools to university*. Auckland: Starpath Project, The University of Auckland. 113pp

Madjar, I., McKinley, E., Deynzer, M., & van der Merwe, A. (2010). *Beyond the first hurdle: Student persistence beyond the first semester of university study*. Auckland: Starpath Project, The University of Auckland. 28pp

Turner, T.R., Li, M., & Yuan, J. (2010). *The impact of a revised UE criterion upon certain subgroups of students*. Auckland: Starpath Project, The University of Auckland. 47pp

Yuan, J., Turner, T.R., & Irving, E. (2010). *Factors influencing University Entrance success rate*. Auckland: Starpath Project, The University of Auckland. 28pp

### Books

Madjar, I., & McKinley, E. (Eds.). (2010). *Uni bound? Students' stories of transition from school to university*. Wellington: NZCER Press. 144pp

### Journal papers

Jensen, S., McKinley, E., & Madjar, I. (in press). NCEA subject choices in low-mid decile schools: What schools and parents need to know about the university pathway. *SET: Research Information for Teachers*. Wellington: NZCER Press.

Jensen, S., Madjar, I., & McKinley, E. (in press). Students and NCEA course choices and allocations. *SET: Research Information for Teachers*. Wellington: NZCER Press.

### Journal papers (in review)

Millward, P., & Turner, R. (in review). Retention and success of students traditionally under-represented at undergraduate level study. Submitted to the *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*.

Turner, R., Shulruf, B., Li, M., & Yuan, J. (in review). University admission models that address quality and equity. Submitted to *Studies in Higher Education*.

### Invited keynotes

Madjar, I. (2009, August). *Towards university: Navigating NCEA course choices and making the transition*. Paper presented to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Wellington.

Madjar, I. (2010, April). *University bound? NCEA course choices and transition challenges*. Paper presented to the University of Auckland Link Conference, Auckland.

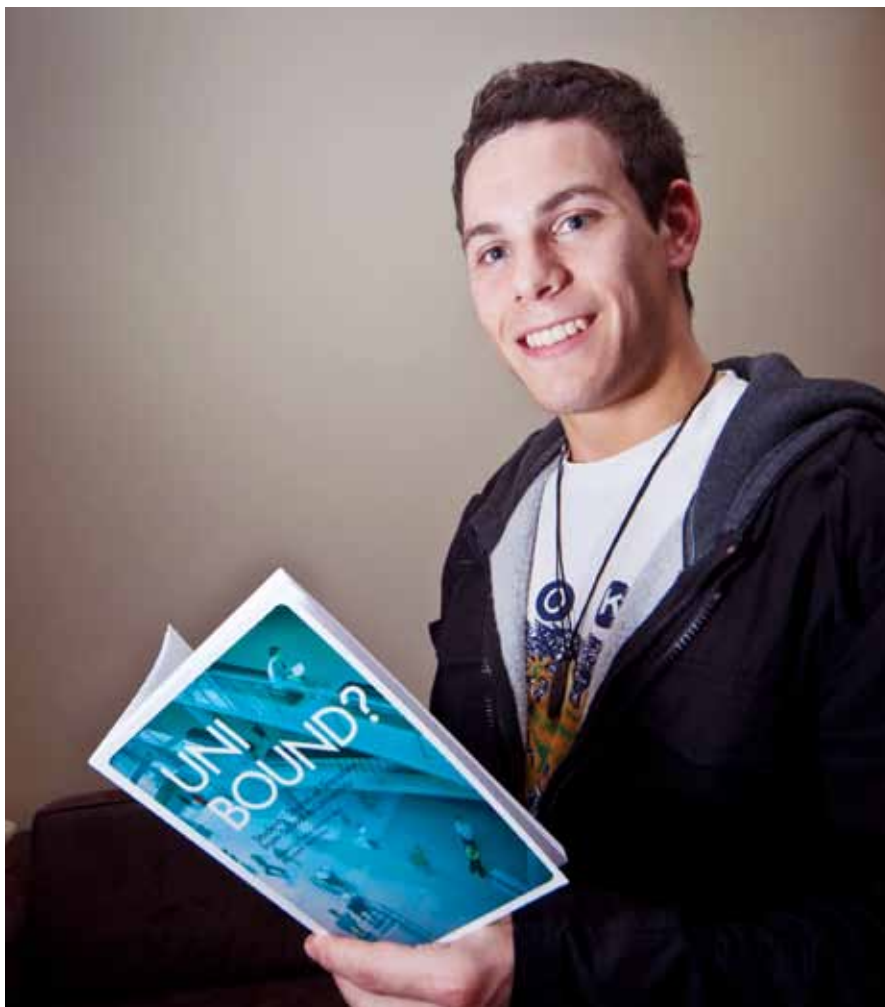
Madjar, I. (2010, May). *Not forgetting the research: Stumbling blocks or stepping stones? Students' experience of transition from low-mid decile schools to university*. Paper presented to the "Enhancing Māori and Pacific Pathways to University" Conference, Auckland.

McKinley, E. (2010, April). *Measuring equity in our schools*. Paper presented to the First Time Principals Conference, Auckland.

McKinley, E. (2010, May). *Research on Māori student pathways and achievement*. Paper presented to the Otago University Health Sciences Research Symposium, Dunedin.

### Research theses

Deynzer, M. (2009). *The transition to university of Pasifika students from low to mid decile schools*. Unpublished masters thesis. The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.







Smith, S.L. (2010). *Academic target setting: Formative use of achievement data*. Unpublished PhD thesis. The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

## Conference presentations

- British Education Research Association (BERA) Conference, Manchester, 1-5 September 2009 (E. McKinley, S. Smith).
- New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE) Conference, Rotorua, 30 Nov - 4 Dec 2009 (E. McKinley, I. Madjar, S. Jensen, M. Deynzer).
- New Zealand Statistics Association (NZSA) Conference, Wellington, 2-3 September 2009 (R. Turner).

## Academic visitors

- Dr Christina Wikström, Department of Educational Measurement, Umeå University, Sweden. December 2009 – February 2010

## Other presentations and seminars

- Professor Ben Levin, OISIE, University of Toronto (Friday 19 March 2010).
- Dr Avis Glaze (Ontario's first Chief Student Achievement Officer and founding CEO of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat and Melvin Kaplan (Tuesday 25 May 2010).

## Ministerial meetings and visits with Starpath

### Government

- Mr David Lambie and colleagues, Ministry of Education (8 July 2009).
- Dr Karen Poutasi, Chief Executive, NZ Qualifications Authority (8 July 2009).
- Mr Sam Lotu-liga, MP for Onehunga (7 August 2009).
- Hon. Anne Tolley, Minister of Education (2 October 2009).
- Mr Darren Gammie, Group Manager Māori, Ministry of Education (5 October 2009).

- Samoan Delegation, Samoan Ministry of Education (28 October 2009).

- Ms Apryll Parata, Deputy Secretary Māori Education, Ministry of Education (30 October 2009).

## Project partner institutions

- Partner Institutions Day was attended by at least one representative from all partner schools. Peter Gareja (Principal) and staff from Tikipunga High School, Whangarei. William Tailby (Principal) and staff from Kaitia College. Bruce Ritchie (Principal) and staff from Massey High School, Waitakere City. Robin Staples (Principal) from Southern Cross Campus, Manukau City. Richard Thornton (Principal) from Manurewa High School, Manukau City. Starpath Board members also attended (30 July 2009).

## Meetings – other

- The second Starpath Newsletter was sent in July 2009.
- Visits and presentations to Birmingham/ Wolverhampton local education authority and local secondary schools using target setting.
- Ms Lorraine Menz, Springboard Trust CEO
- Ms Audrey Trotman, Senior Policy Analyst, Te Puni Kokiri
- Mr Anthony Ford, General Manager and Mr Paul Cook, Chair for the FIRST Foundation.





# Project media coverage

(1 July 2009 – 30 June 2010)

Media coverage following the media release of Starpath report, *Targets and Talk: Evaluation of an evidence-based academic counselling programme*

Media	Date	Details/Headline
NZPA	9 Sept 09	Academic profiling helps students reach NCEA targets study
Radio Live	10 Sept 09	Interview with Liz McKinley aired on hourly and half-hourly news bulletins
Gisborne Herald	10 Sept 09	Profiling helps students reach NCEA targets
Hokitika Guardian	10 Sept 09	Academic profiling helps students reach NCEA targets
Daily Post	10 Sept 09	Profiling, targets boosts NCEA results

Additional media coverage following the media release 10 June 2009 of Starpath report, *Towards University: Navigating NCEA Course Choices in Low-Mid Decile Schools*

Te Kuaka Magazine	Issue 2, 2009	Navigating NCEA well
Tearaway Magazine	September 2009	NCEA myth-busting
Sunday Star-Times	16 August 10	Help get your child into uni (advice from Starpath)

Media coverage following the release of the Starpath report, *Stumbling blocks or stepping stones? Students' experience of transition from low-mid decile schools to university*

Media	Date	Details/Headline
Radio 531 PI	26 March 10	News item on Transitions study
Radio NZ Checkpoint	29 March 10	Interview with Liz McKinley on Transitions study
Radio NZ Morning Report	30 March 10	Interview with Liz McKinley on Transitions study
Radio Waatea	30 March 10	Interview with Liz McKinley on Transitions study
Northern Advocate	19 April 10	Northtec confident it caters well to students (in response to Transitions study)

General media coverage on equity issues

NZ Herald	6 July 10	Opinion piece by Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond: Open entry for Māori a near-miss
Māori TV, Native Affairs	6 July 10	Feature reports on the levels of university education for Māori. Interview with Liz McKinley
NZ Herald	9 April 10	NCEA results show gap is closing
Hawke's Bay Today	9 April 10	Māori, Pacific students make gains









# Starpath

A University of Auckland Partnership for Excellence

## Contact

### Starpath Project

The University of Auckland

Epsom Campus, Faculty of Education

Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142

[starpath@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:starpath@auckland.ac.nz)

[www.starpath.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.starpath.auckland.ac.nz)