

COURSE CODE: MUSA780

Performing Arts Level 7 Research

Final Report

Josiah Dayo

Tutor: Lee Borrie

Introduction

The research question I am pursuing is “How music can be used and implemented into modern Youth Work practices for New Zealand teenagers.” I will define Youth Work, its purpose and how one might deliver a Youth Work service. My report will provide some examples and ideas for using music as a form of Youth Work and identify skills one should acquire in order to successfully carry out a Youth Work service. To define the age group I have used in my research, the word ‘youth’ or ‘young people’ will refer to teenagers aged 13-18.

I have chosen this particular topic to research because I have a strong interest in working with young people as well as teaching music. I selected the field of Youth Work because it’s a field that is increasingly growing in New Zealand and is becoming more recognised as a profession. Youth Work can help provide alternative approaches that are considered outside of mainstream society when working with at-risk youth. I believe Youth Work practice is a valuable and universal skill which can be applied to many different contexts as well as different age groups. Youth Work something I plan to continue being involved in that focuses on music elements for creative development of adolescents in New Zealand. This research report is relevant to anyone who works with young people as part of their job or voluntary role as it will indicate the importance of Youth Work to a young person’s life.

My primary research required active engaged in Youth Work based activities which included planning, running and evaluating a programme targeted at youth. My report will contain examples of music based programmes and activities I have developed and established. In order to deliver good Youth Work practices in my primary research,

my secondary research required a study and understanding of Youth Work practices from various contexts. My literature review helps to understand common Youth Work practices, what Youth Work is in general and provides some skills for working with youth. There are several quality sources I have come across in my secondary research found in books such as *The Invisible Table* by Lloyd Martin which refers many Youth Work skills and practices in the context of New Zealand, and *Response Ability Pathways* by Larry Brendtro and Lesley Du Toit which discusses Youth Work practices based on the Circle of Courage model. These two books are very helpful when applying Youth Work theory into practice and I will use them to discuss their importance in my selected field.

My argument I have chosen to focus on is that the quality of relationships built between a Youth Worker and young person are more effective and important than the quantity of young people involved in a Youth Work programme. My report will show how investments made in quality based relationships are more productive and reliable than quantity based relationships. I will also suggest that Youth Workers should focus on achieving quality based relationships and that quantity based relationships are a means for attracting young people to other Youth Work services and programmes.

What is Youth Work?

Youth Worker is the job title given to a person who works with young people ranging from 5-24. Their job involves a variety of services depending on their placement in a community or targeted youth. People often mistake Youth Work for Social Work;

although both social workers and Youth Workers have similar roles provided in their service, a Youth Worker's job should not be confused with that of social worker.

Martin (2003, p. 15) explains that Youth Work is not just a single skill set but a variety of skills to suit an activity which allows Youth Work to be used in a wider context. Mark K. Smith agrees that it is easier to think of Youth Work in many forms rather than common characteristics of other organisations that also work with youth. Examples of this include Youth Workers with an educational role to teach youth or an outdoor experience environment to build confidence (Smith, 2002, para. 1). In my context of research I am able to use music as the main form of delivery of Youth Work by either teaching an individual how to play guitar, or teach a group of young musicians how to play in a band.

Martin (2003, p.15) suggests that relationships built between the youth and Youth Worker is what defines Youth Work. "It is the place of relationships that defines Youth Work. Other professionals will build a relationship in order to effectively deliver a service. A Youth Worker will offer a service in order to build a relationship" (Martin, 2003, p. 15). A Youth Work service is primarily activity based to allow young people the opportunity to learn about themselves and society. This is all done under the safety of Youth Workers and youth organisations by using enjoyable learning activities to engage with youth. According to the National Youth Agency (2013) formal and informal practices of Youth Work are used to assist a young person's social and personal development. "The relationship between Youth Worker and young person is central to this process" (National Youth Agency [NYA] 2013, para. 1). Running a weekly band rehearsal for young people as a service will allow

relationships to build as the group journeys together. According to these reading the same result can be expected if one were to provide instrument lessons as another form of Youth Work service.

A common issue is that there is no actual definition for Youth Work. One might think that each country has its own definition, which is true, but all need to better define a global understanding of Youth Work. Barwick (2006 p. 23) believes New Zealand's challenge is to support Youth Work services and training instead of restricting the diversity.

The Purpose of Youth Work and Youth Workers

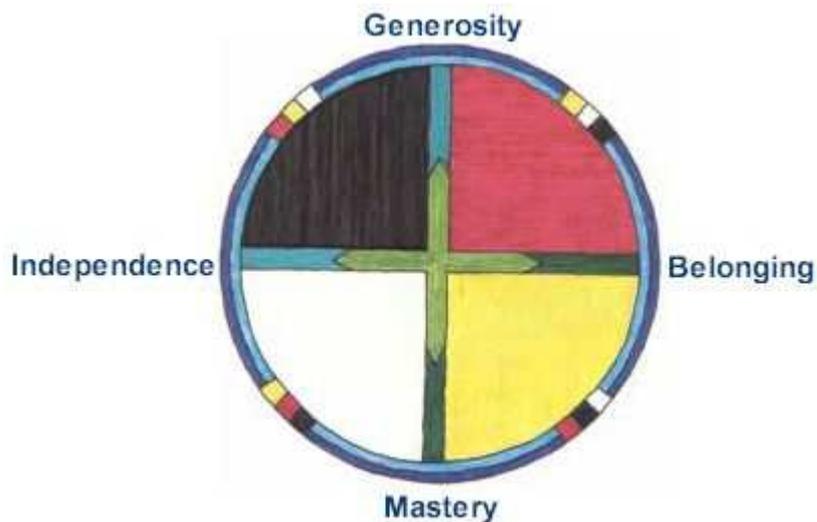
It's a common mistake for parents to believe that once a child enters adolescence, they are no longer considered a child and the guidance of parents are no longer required (Wheal, 1998, p. 46). A Youth Worker will help bridge the gap between parent and youth to allow guidance to continue. According to Buchroth and Parkin (2010, p. 28) a Youth Worker's purpose is to assist a young person achieve a good quality of life. It's true that social workers and counsellors play a similar role to that of a Youth Worker in order to achieve the same result for the individual, however Martin (2003, p.129) argues that a Youth Worker's purpose is to build relationships and that the service provided within the context by the Youth Worker are ways of building relationships (Martin, 2003, p. 129). A teacher will often build a relationship with a young person over the course of time to allow the teacher to do their job. "For Youth Workers, the relationship *is* their job" (Martin, 2003, p. 116).

Youth Work often involves a variety of programmes and activities to promote a sense of belonging. This 'belonging' is important to a young person's development as it helps youth to respect and contribute to society. If belonging is not felt by the young person, they will often seek out other groups such as gangs to find this sense of belonging (Hensley, Israel, Jordan & Place, 2007, para. 6). New Zealand studies indicate that young people need a sense of belonging and culture as part of self-identification. This serves a purpose for young people to acquire knowledge and skills, enabling them to take up opportunities (Ministry of Youth Development [MYD], 2002, para. 1-5). A young person that participates in recreational activities encourages personal growth. Youth Work provides an avenue for these activities to allow young people to master new skills, socialise, network and develop closer relationships with their peers (MYD, n.d., para. 1-2).

The Circle of Courage

Suggested methods to help a young person achieve a good quality of life is to either change society or allow young people to be involved in opportunities provided by society (Buchroth & Parkin, 2010, p. 28). However, there is tension in Youth Work between meeting the needs of young people and meeting the needs of society (Barwick, 2006, p.23). The Circle of Courage is a philosophical model that can be used in Youth Work. By focusing on resiliency principals, Youth Workers can help achieve a balance of individual needs and society needs for a young person. There was a time when the words *risk* and *resiliency* were brought into everyday use. If growth needs are met, young people can turn risky behaviour into resiliency. Alder preferred to use the words *courage* and *discouragement* instead. He believed that courage is used to surmount to difficulties faced in life and that courage only comes

from experiencing a state of hardship or misfortune. Youth need people in their lives to help them gain courage to overcome these difficulties. Young people experience discouragement when they become overwhelmed with problems and lack support (Brendtro & Toit, 2005, pg. 13).



The Circle of Courage begins with belonging which is developed through opportunities of human attachment, allowing a young person to understand they are important to someone. Mastery gives young people the opportunity to solve problems and meet goals for personal achievement, allowing them to know they can solve problems. Independence allows responsibility to grow and understanding of control over one's life. Generosity is demonstrated through opportunities to show acts of kindness and humility so that young people understand they are considerate to others. When Belonging, Mastery and Independence are met for meeting the needs of a young person, Generosity is used to teach young people how to give back to society.

Skills and Common Practice of a Youth Worker

Ann Wheal (1998, p. 32) strongly suggests that anyone working with youth will need to have exceptional listening and communication skills and being able to empathise with a young person. Body language, attitude, culture and self-care are all factors on how a young person responds to a youth worker (Wheal, 1998, pp. 32-44). When emphasising the voluntary participation and relationships involved in youth work, Jeffs (as cited in Smith, 2002, *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education [INFED]*) says “Young people have, traditionally, been able to freely enter into a relationship with workers and to end those relationships when they want” (para. 22). A Youth Worker will attempt to maintain this relationship with the youth by continuously developing programmes to attract young people to their youth agency or extend their services to the location that the young people are in (Smith, 2002, para. 22). Youth Workers need to be aware that their actions and how they respond to a young person will affect the result greatly. The boundaries of a relationship between a young person and Youth Worker are often tested. Reactions outside of a professional role are what young people use to decide if someone can be trusted (Martin, 2003 pp. 121-122).

Reflective Practice is an effective learning tool and skill for Youth Workers which is what I used as part of my research. One type of reflective practice model uses Reflection-in-Action/Knowing-in-Action created by Schon (as cited in Buchroth & Parkin, 2010, p. 115). More commonly known as thinking on your feet, Schon’s model requires subjects to carry out their job without a great deal of conscious thought which is usually based on intuition, established skills and techniques. After the event, a Reflection-On Action/Knowledge-On-Action takes place allowing subjects to reflect on their quick decision making and how the job went overall. This

allows subjects to have an informed method for future events similar to that of which have just occurred (Buchroth & Parkin, 2010, p. 115).

Another type of reflective practice model is one by Kolb (as cited in Buchroth and Parkin, 2010, p. 115). Kolb's model uses a four stage model for the process of learning: Experience, Reflection, Generalisation and Testing. After a direct experience, Kolb encourages subjects to reflect on events that have occurred. Examples of this reflection can include "What just happened and why?" Subjects are to generalise from their first reflection by understanding what they have learnt and how their new knowledge can be applied. The last stage is to test the newly acquired knowledge and approach. In return this will provide subjects with a new experience allowing the reflective process to repeat (Buchroth and Parkin, 2010, p. 116). My preferred method of reflective practice in my research is Schon's model by using journal entries found in Appendix A.

Amplify Project

The Amplify Project is a series of music based programmes for teenagers that I have developed and established through an agency called Youth Alive Trust which has been running since March to October 2013. These programmes acted as experiments to observe the effects of Youth Work practices and to see if music based activities are a viable method of delivering a Youth Work service. The programmes include Instrument Lessons, Youth Band and Rock Band. Each programme has a different variable in terms of number of students attending these programmes.

Instrument Lessons is an after-school programme that runs weekly on Fridays for half an hour with students aged 13-17 in a one-on-one teaching environment. The purpose of this programme is to teach young people how to play guitar and offer affordable music lessons. Over the course of this experiment I have had five students attending lessons with me.

Youth Band is an after-school programme that runs weekly on Fridays for two hours with students aged 13-17 in a band rehearsal environment. Students have the opportunity to perform at the end of each term at an organised youth event. The purpose of this programme is to teach young people how to play in a band, how to have effective band rehearsals and how to perform on stage. It also grants young people the opportunity to participate in a band for learning and social interaction with their peers. In this experiment I have directed a band of six members.

Rock Band is an in-school programme that runs weekly on Monday lunchtimes for one hour with students aged 13-17 in a band rehearsal environment at Marian College. The purpose of this programme is assisting the school with lunchtime activities that allows young people to freely engage in rehearsals regardless of music experience. The programme is open invite where any student may freely attend, participate or observe. Students are taught how to rehearse songs together and perform them. The experiment had approximately 10-15 students attend each week over the course of this experiment.

My hypothesis is that the smaller the group, the more effective it is for developing quality relationships with young people than that of a larger group. I also

hypothesised that young people will attend these programmes due to the nature of its content being music based activities. I expect to find young people having a sense of belonging to their group and an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence.

I used surveys to collect data from young people attending these programmes to see how they responded to the activities. To discover the effectiveness of music as a tool for youth work, I used a numerical scale within surveys to measure four things:

- 1.) A young person's enjoyment of the activities
- 2.) A young person's sense of belonging
- 3.) A young person's self confidence
- 4.) A young person's skill and knowledge of music

Instrument Lessons

Young people attending this programme were mostly beginners. Parents said their children had applied for lesson in school but were put on a waiting list because junior and NCEA music students had priority which makes it difficult for non-music subject takers to receive an instrument lesson. According to the 2006 census, the New Brighton area had a lower than average income which meant parents could not afford private lessons for their child outside of school.

When carrying out lessons, young people were quiet at first but after several weeks of lessons, young people were more open to discuss music related topics. When demonstrating an exercise for the student to learn, they began asking questions to clarify technique such as tempo, rhythm, how to hold a pick, finger positioning and strumming. After ten weeks of weekly lessons, young people were now openly

discussing more than just music related topics such as events currently happening in their life both positive and negative. Topics included friends, family, pop culture, school and music. An example of a discussion was based around a student's desire to play music but because they did not attend year nine and 10 music in high school they were unable to attend year 11, 12 or 13. This meant that after high school they wouldn't be able to attend tertiary study in music. The student said they had not expressed any interest in music until they turned 15 years old. This would assume that from the first years of high school, not all young people know what they want to be studying. It is only after several years into high school do they express interest in a particular subject but are unable to attend due to prerequisites in the school curriculum.

After two terms of instrument lesson, young people were improving significantly on their instrument but also expressed more feeling based discussions and topics regarding negative events in their life or some form of stress they are experiencing. One particular youth was finding it difficult to cope with school and friends. The young person told me they were seeing counsellors and psychiatric treatment but not on their own will. The young person said they would be telling counsellors and doctors the same story each week and found it annoying. When I asked this young person how they felt about telling me all this personal information, the young person said they didn't mind because I was listening and I didn't ask questions that they didn't want to talk about and that they felt in control over the topics that they could talk about during lessons.

I discovered in this programme that one-on-one instrument lessons can teach young people how to play an instrument and also act as a form of mentoring and allow tutors to be positive role models. Young people enjoyed these lessons and have improved in skill and theory on their instrument. After continuous lessons with a young person, a rapport was built. Young people slowly tested boundaries to see how I would respond and once trust was established, they began to express themselves more. There were times where an instrument lesson didn't have any teaching or music element involved. Instead the young person was happy to talk about what they have been doing during the week. This shows that sometimes young people just want to express their thoughts and feelings without being forced to do so. When a young person asked for advice, it was more effective to ask them, "What do you think?" and allow them to solve the answer for themselves, rather than to give them an answer based on what I think.

Youth Band

The band was made up of young people at different levels of musicianship from beginners to experienced. They rehearsed a number of songs of different genres and were given the opportunity to perform these songs at the end of each term. During the early stages of rehearsals, the band members were shy and didn't know each other. I directed the band to allow rehearsals to take place. Very few of them spoke during discussions and would formally raise their hands to answer a question. The band usually faced their own music stands and rarely look at each other. After several weeks of rehearsals they slowly began to show more expression in their playing.

I organised a performance for the band at the Papanui Youth Development Centre after term one. As the performance date grew closer, I noticed the band dynamics starting to change. Experience band members would help the novice band members in rehearsals by giving them suggestions and performance tips. The band started working together but they were still shy on their instruments. A debrief session was held a week later after the performance to allow the band to reflect on their playing. During this debrief the band were able to identify several things to improve on to make their next performance better and their rehearsals more productive. On stage communication, moving around on stage, and more self-practice are some of the things the band were able to come up with and discuss.

In the third and fourth term I no longer needed to direct the band entirely. Instead I assigned a weekly band leader which would rotate each week. The band leader would have the responsibility to direct the band and help make final decisions. I noticed that this technique allowed an opportunity for the young people to speak out more on a leadership platform especially for youth that were quiet in nature. I started noticing the band communication was improving and they were able to look at each other while playing. Discussions in rehearsals began to flow naturally and rehearsal became somewhat of a social gathering. Monthly pizza nights were put into place, an idea brought together by the band. Pizza nights were used to establish goals for productive rehearsals which shortly followed after eating pizza.

A survey was carried out with questions for the band to rate on a scale of zero to five, zero being the least/none at all and five being the most/a lot. These are the results as an average form all given scores:

| | |
|---|-----|
| How much you enjoy Amplify Youth band? | 4.8 |
| How much sense of belonging you feel being part of Youth Band | 4.6 |
| How much has being part of Youth Band increase your self-confidence | 3.8 |
| How much has being part of Youth Band increased your skills in music | 4 |
| How much has being part of Youth Band increased your knowledge in music | 3.4 |

See Appendix B.

The data shows that the young people responded positively to the Youth Band programme. Enjoyment and belonging scored significantly high which according to MYD, Hensley, Israel, Jordan and Place is important to a young person's development. Survey answers include young people liked pizza, gaining experience, trying new instruments and playing in a band with other people and that they wanted more practice/rehearsals and more pizza. The quality of relationships built in this programme was very good. This particular programme is ideal for small group activities where building trust and team work are crucial to the development of quality relationships, involvement and belonging.

Rock Band

The young people involved in the lunchtime Rock Band at Marian College had different levels of musicianship from beginners at a year nine level, to intermediate and advanced at a year 13 level. It offered free choice to the students as to whether or not they wanted to participate on a weekly basis or drop in casually which made the programme less intimidating. At the end of each term the students would perform rehearsed songs at a lunchtime concert open to all students and teachers to attend.

Students that were musically experienced would attend regularly and played on their main instrument with the few occasions of switching to a new one. The students that preferred to watch the band rehearse were not as consistent in attendance but were still attending. I would frequently ask non-participating students if they would like to have a turn on an instrument but some would still only prefer to watch their peers rehearse and make comments and offer suggestions.

Behaviour in these rehearsals was harder to control due to the higher numbers but it provided a good dynamic to work with. Students often clashed with difference of opinions about songs but were able to solve these conflicts using a voting system. If any of these disagreements went out of hand or went on for too long, I had to make a final decision.

As I continued to observe student behaviour of attending rehearsals but not participating, it is apparent to me that it didn't matter whether or not these students enjoyed playing music or even shared an interest to play music, but it was more that they felt accepted and had a place to belong to during lunch time at school. Their

sporadic attendance would suggest that they were sometimes searching elsewhere on school grounds for other activities where they could feel a sense of belonging. I also observed that because the Rock Band was free choice and there were no sign up sheets, students were able to leave, knowing that they are always allowed to return on their own free will.

A survey was carried out including questions for the young people to rate on a scale of zero to five, zero being the least/none at all and five being the most/ a lot. These are the results as an average from all given scores:

| | |
|--|-----|
| How much you enjoy Rock Band? | 3.8 |
| How much sense of belonging you feel being part of Rock Band | 3.8 |
| How much has being part of Rock Band increase your self-confidence | 3.7 |
| How much has being part of Rock Band increased your skills in music | 3.7 |
| How much has being part of Rock Band increased your knowledge in music | 3.5 |

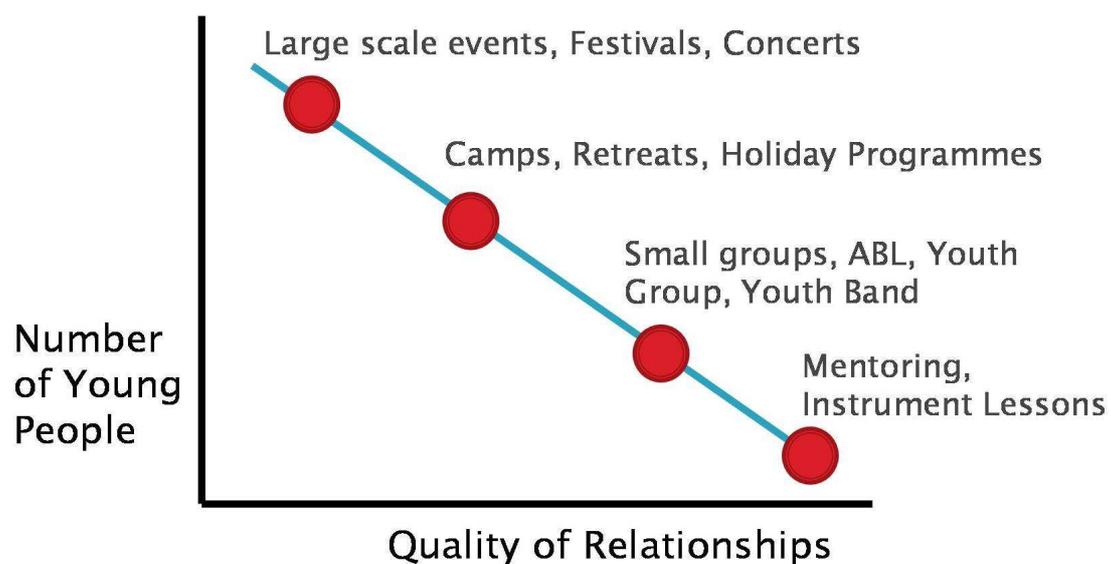
See Appendix C.

The data shows that the young people responded in a positive way to the Rock Band programme with an above average score. Enjoyment and belonging scored 3.8 which would suggest that students felt accepted in this group of peers regardless of their participation in playing music or by watching from the side. The quality of

relationships were harder to form in this particular programme for several reasons, one of which included the programme based in an all-girl school with a male Youth Worker running the programme. I predict the quality of relationships would be better with a female youth worker. I also think that it was harder to form quality relationships due to the larger numbers of young people attending. Dividing efforts and time to establish relationships with all students equally was difficult and more youth workers are needed to help assist the programme. Other survey answers given by the students included that they liked being able to play with friends and have that opportunity while others disliked the different skill levels of some students and found it hard to work with which suggests that this programme may need several bands to compensate for more experienced musicians.

Quality vs. Quantity

I have created a visual representation of quality versus quantity of Youth Worker to young person relationships based on observations and survey results.



Activities with larger groups are harder to establish quality relationships because Youth Workers will need to divide time equally for each young person or run programmes with more Youth Workers. Large events are usually one offs and don't happen frequently which makes it harder for Youth Workers to follow up on the relationships established, but it also creates a less intimidating event for young people to attend.

Smaller group activities such as Youth Band and Instrument Lessons provide more time for Youth Workers to establish relationships where the number of young people attending is limited. Youth Workers have a higher chance of building quality relationships to implement the Circle of Courage model so that young people can re-enact the same Circle of Courage model to their peers outside of the group. The result is that of a ripple effect where Youth Workers can be a positive role model to only a few young people and empower them to express the same positive role modelling to their peers.

Conclusion

My report shows that it's possible to deliver a Youth Work service based around music for New Zealand teenagers and that different programmes will work depending on the context. My report also shows that programmes can be made to suit small and large groups with different outcomes in the quality of relationships and the sense of belonging. There is proof that young people will attend a programme regardless of participation in the activities in order to feel belonging to the group. Young people have thoroughly enjoyed the programmes and are attracted to the idea of playing in a band with friends. My report shows that music isn't the only element in the

programmes that young people enjoyed the most, but suggests that the social interaction between young people and their peers are just as effective and enjoyable to the young person.

As discovered in literature, the definition of Youth Work is very broad mainly due to the diversity that one can apply Youth Work practices. The existence of Youth Work helps to serve parents, teachers, social workers and counsellors by providing a service outside of what may be considered the mainstream of society. Youth Work aims to increase a young person's sense of belonging through the services, allowing opportunities and contributions to society to grow.

My experiments show that large groups are effective for first initial contact between Youth Worker and youth and should use that opportunity to invite young people to smaller groups to build relationships. I have found that smaller group based activities allow the Circle of Courage model to be implemented. Young people displayed improved behaviour, more social interaction and increase in confidence with quality relationships. The quantity based relationships showed young people were able to freely engage in activities while still maintaining a belonging and acceptance status to the group.

I believe one-on-one instrument lessons is a valuable method of mentoring and providing young people with skills which could be very appealing to schools with at risk youth or alternative education system. I believe the results collected are still in the early stages and are continuously developing which suggests that the programmes must be long term to allow relationships to grow. While helping the young person to

improve their quality of life is considered important, this cannot be done unless a positive relationship is built between the youth and Youth Worker which is where I believe my research stands and that further study is required for another year or two to observe how these relationships develop and if young people can complete all four stages of the Circle of Courage. If further study were to continue, I would then focus more on the relationship aspects to measure the effectiveness of Youth Work just as Martin said “The effectiveness of a Youth Work service will be measured by the quality of relationships that are established through it” (Martin, 2003, p. 15).

References

- Barwick, H. (2006). *Youth Work Today: A Review of the Issues and Challenges*. Retrieved from Ministry of Youth Development website: <http://www.myd.govt.nz/documents/resources-and-reports/publications/youth-work-today/youth-work-today-a-review-of-the-issues-and-challenges-pdf.pdf>
- Brendtro, L., & Toit, L. (2005) *Response Ability Pathways: Restoring Bonds of Respect*. Cape Town, South Africa: Pretext Publishing Ltd.
- Brooks, L. (2012). *Youth Worker Job Description* [Website]. Retrieved June 10th, 2013, from Prospects website: http://www.prospects.ac.uk/youth_worker_job_description.htm
- Buchroth, I., & Parkin C. (2010). *Using Theory in Youth and Community Work Practice*. Exeter, Devon, UK: Learning Matters Ltd.
- Hensley, S. T., Israel, G. D., Jordan, J. C., & Place, N. T. (2007). *Quality 4-H Development Program: Belonging* [Website]. Retrieved June 17th, 2013, from Journal of Extension website: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2007october/a8.php>
- Martin, L. (2003). *The Invisible Table: Perspectives on Youth and Youthwork in New Zealand*. South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Ministry of Youth Development. (n.d.). *Youth Statistics: A Statistical Profile of Young People in New Zealand* [Website]. Retrieved April 10th, 2013, from <http://www.youthstats.myd.govt.nz/indicator/recreation-and-leisure/index.html>
- Ministry of Youth Development. (2002). *Youth Statistics: A Statistical Profile of Young People in New Zealand* [Website]. Retrieved April 10th, 2013, from <http://www.youthstats.myd.govt.nz/indicator/happy-and-confident/index.html>
- National Youth Agency. (2013). *What is Youth Work?* [Website]. Retrieved June 10th, 2013, from <http://nya.org.uk/about-nya/what-is-youth-work>

Smith, M. (2002). *Youth Work – An Introduction* [Website]. Retrieved June 10th, 2013, from The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education website:
<http://www.infed.org/youthwork/b-yw.htm>

Wheal, A. (1998). *Adolescence: Positive Approaches for Working with Young People*. Dorset, England: Russell House Publishing Ltd.

Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia. (n.d.). *What is Youth Work?* [Website]. Retrieved June 10th, 2013, from <http://yacwa.org.au/youth-workers/policies.html>

Appendix B

Youth Band Survey

By Josiah Dayo

Appendix C

Rock Band Survey

By Josiah Dayo