

Distance Education Association of New Zealand  
Te Hunga Tatai i te Ako Pamamao

ISSN 2230-2190 Engaging with Open, Flexible and Distance Education in all Sectors of New Zealand

## STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTIONS

Teacher Coach, Pennie White, describes a recent Australian Government funded project she has co-ordinated in South Australia enabling high school students to deliver on-time results and analysis in water science and conservation

Teacher Coach, Pennie White has coordinated the seven school, student project, Country to City: Yarra River Water Quality Comparison Project, an Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM) Project funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training as a part of the Boosting Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Teaching (BISTMT) Programme.

The issue of environmental sustainability with a particular focus on water sustainability has become an increasingly important issue world-wide and has now become an integral part of school curriculums. Such sustainability

curriculum projects have been well supported by government and community organisations in Victoria, Australia. There are now a wealth of organisations and experts willing to work alongside schools to find solutions to these local and global problems.

The Country to the City Yarra River Water Quality comparison project was a student based collaborative project between seven government schools in Victoria. These seven secondary schools belonged to the Yarra Valley eLearning Community. Each of the seven schools is located near a tributary of the Yarra River. The seven secondary

“Participating in this project has been a fantastic experience”  
- Student at Lillydale Heights College



schools involved in this project were Lilydale High School, Mooroolbark College, Upper Yarra Secondary College, Lillydale Heights College, Healesville High School, Croydon Secondary College and Pembroke Secondary College. Kattagatt College in Stockholm Sweden also participated in the project and studied the Fylleån River. Results and reports have been uploaded to the website at <http://water.yvelc.vic.edu.au>

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## DEANZ MAGAZINE

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Contributions for the next issue must reach the editor by 20th January 2011. They should be sent to Nick McGuigan and Thomas Kern at the above address.

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## From the Editors

The DEANZ magazine providing you with up-to-date news on all things related to open, flexible and distance education.

The Deanz Magazine brings you a special issue this quarter focussing on open, flexible and distance education within the Schooling Sector. You will find an array of excellent contributions from educators passionate about improving educational opportunities in New Zealand and Australian schools.

This issue's cover story comes to you from across the ditch, by Teaching Coach Pennie White, who reviews the topical issue of Water Conservation and its importance on the Australasian schooling curriculum. Pennie discusses her recent success in an Australian Government funded project which uses distance learning techniques to enable students to interact with industry in the science profession. We share examples of best practice through University of Canterbury researcher, Jiliane Johnson who investigates the powerful use of film media in New Zealand schools (p. 10), Lawrence Walker who discusses the enhanced "Pod" based classroom (p. 20) and Keryn Pratt with her University of Otago based team who are using video technology to bring about enhanced learning outcomes for school students (p. 15).

President of DEANZ, Niki Davis, provides an update on recent DEANZ

activity, a usual review of research related material is provided by Andrew Higgins, Director of Flexible Learning at AUT and our DEANZ Executive profile focusses this quarter on Keryn Pratt.

We have an update and call for submissions from the recently re-established TeLRG supported by the Ministry of Education and Ako Aotearoa (p. 16). Never a dull minute in the world of education and research, and the DEANZ "Distance Education Snippets" section is a full page this issue packed to the brim with activities and conferences to keep you off the beach and behind the computer this summer!

As we write this we see that Christmas is just 23 sleeps away! What better way of saying Merry Christmas to a loved one or cherished colleague than a membership to DEANZ for 2011 (p. 20).

On behalf of the DEANZ Executive we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to working with you all in 2011.

We would like to hear from you. If you know of something interesting happening at your campus let us know.

Get in contact. Email: [nicholas.mcguigan@gmail.com](mailto:nicholas.mcguigan@gmail.com).

Nick McGuigan and Thomas Kern



**Keep in touch with news from DEANZ**

[www.deanz.org.nz](http://www.deanz.org.nz)

**We would like to hear from you. If you have an idea of what you would like to see in our quarterly newsletter or would like to submit a contribution please get in touch us. Contact details to the left.**

## Student Sustainability Solutions ....

continued from page 1...

The students worked hands on with scientists from Waterwatch and Monash University throughout the project testing at their local waterway. Waterwatch is an Australian, "national community water quality monitoring network that encourages all Australians to become active in the protection of their waterways". For further information see their website at <http://www.waterwatch.org.au/>

We wanted to create an engaging collaborative project for students across seven schools incorporating working with scientists and the wider community. Our aim was for students to study the water quality of the catchment by investigating the pollutants that impact the water quality. Our students made a contribution by raising awareness through water testing and presentations about these natural and man made pollutants and how we can improve our water ways.

The Yarra River is one of Victoria's largest tourist attractions as well as having a huge cultural significance; it supports many industries and it is also provides habitat for numerous native fauna and flora. It is important to test the water for certain qualities (eg. pH, Dissolved Oxygen and Phosphate) so we can identify the effects that these qualities have on the river and its surrounds. The Country to the City project has organised many trips so that students could assess the different areas of the Yarra River.

Students and Teachers worked with scientists to test the water quality. Students worked together in person and online with classmates and peers from other schools. Students looked at the local environmental factors affecting the waterways and compared these with results

submitted online from students at other schools. Students also participated in joint excursions and presented at conferences.

Our students presented at the Melbourne Water River Health Conference and International River Health Conference, Canberra. These high profile conferences are run on the 'kids teaching kids' model. Read more at: [www.kidsteachingkids.com.au/](http://www.kidsteachingkids.com.au/)

Our students also entered their project into the Stockholm Junior Water Prize competition. They prepared a fifteen page scientific report for this.

Our students have contributed to the wider community by raising awareness about these issues and have continued their work by collaborating with the local primary schools to participate in hands on environmental projects.

Illustrative quotes from project include:

"Our investigation of the Olinda Creek was a high quality, all inclusive study of a local stream ecosystem. It was a rich environmental activity, which included many different facets of the environment. Student learning was 'hands on' as well as researched based with valuable input from expert guests."

Teacher, Lilydale High School

"Working with Scientists in the field at the Advanced Water Training day has renewed my passion for science."

Teacher, Mooroolbark

For further information please contact Pennie White at [penniewhite@gmail.com](mailto:penniewhite@gmail.com)

## AADES CONFERENCE 2011



The biennial National conference of the Australian Association of Distance Education Schools (AADES) is a prestigious event for Australian and New Zealand educators.

The 2011 conference is to be held at the Wrest Point Convention Centre, Hobart, Tasmania. The conference is designed to meet the needs and interests of teachers, school leaders, education authority representatives, teacher educators and education consultants who work in virtual and mainstream schools.

The conference theme is Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries: designing, delivering and leading effective elearning.

'Borders' and 'boundaries' can both unite and divide people and places. They can be social, cultural, geographic, socio-economic, sectoral, philosophical, psychological, ideological, technological or political. While borders are usually fixed, boundaries can move. eLearning has the capacity to operate within existing borders, but also extend the boundaries of educational activity for students and teachers.

Derek Wenmoth, current vice president of DEANZ, will be a keynote speaker at this conference, sharing some of his experience and insights from work in distance education in the school sector in New Zealand.

Additional information about the conference and registration details can be found at:

<http://aadesconference2011.net.au/>



## DEANZ President's Column: Looking back and forward

Niki Davis, University of Canterbury Professor of e-Learning

The final issue in a year is a good time to reflect back and plan forward. I reflect back on my first year as DEANZ President and all the activities the DEANZ Executive have led on behalf of our membership. These include activities that are directly of value to individual members, such as our conference, and things that are less direct including the ways in which we have represented members' interests and informed government strategy plus partnerships with sister organisations. In looking forward, activities on the horizon include our project supported by Ako Aotearoa to create the first scenarios for an education system in the world to inform us all in New Zealand and exciting developments in our publications and our next conference in 2012. We also plan to engage better with under-represented sections of our membership including those in the schooling and training sectors.

Looking back the most memorable and most effective event for DEANZ in 2010 is undoubtedly our bi-annual conference that was held in Te Papa in April. I know I gained heaps professionally and at times I was furiously taking notes and capturing digital images of key slides. Feedback on the conference chaired by Mark Brown of Massey University shows that our members also found it engaging and valuable. The full papers remain accessible on our web site at <http://www.deanz.org.nz/2010Programme>. The eight full papers include those with relevance to all sectors (e.g. MacCallum on adoption theory to understand the integration of m-learning) schools (e.g. Davis et al. on virtual schooling), training (e.g. Kovacic & Green on automated assessment) and higher education (e.g. Roberts on library support for online learning communities). Although challenging times with the restructuring of most universities in these more austere times has delayed the planned uploading of presentations, our website editor, Kathryn MacCallum, remains hopeful that many will be added to the conference web site in 2011. Looking forward to our next conference I can now announce that the December meeting of your Executive will decide on whether to accept a bid to hold DEANZ 2012 in Christchurch managed by CORE Education, whose exemplary experience includes the annual ULearn conference each October in Christchurch Convention Centre. So please make a note against April 2012 now and we will announce the dates and venue as soon as possible.

DEANZ flagship scholarly refereed journal led by editor Mark Nichols and has undergone major changes in 2010,

including the appointment of Ben Kehrwald as co-editor. In 2009 it was called The Journal of Distance Learning and in 2010 it became *The Journal of Open Flexible and Distance Learning*. Mark Nichols (2010: 2) noted in his introduction that "More than anything, this change reflects the various interests of DEANZ members – many of whom are likely to identify with flexible learning more than distance learning." Ben has provided the extra energy and expertise to move the journal online and they are pioneering JOFDL as the first of Ako Aotearoa's online journals. Your Executive agreed some additional support in October to enable my e-Learning Lab to assist this move online by uploading volumes 1-14. As we work through each issue I am learning more about the history of Virtual Schooling (school students' blended and distance learning). For

example, the first paper in the most recent issue by Winkelmann, Anderson and Barbour (2010) describes the journey from correspondence to online delivery in British Columbia, Canada. I hope that older stories of New Zealand experiences will be updated in our journal before long because I have students and other colleagues who are keen to learn more about open, flexible and distance learning in New Zealand and our new format of our journal has increased visibility and access. Looking forward to 2011, JOFDL will increase the visibility of DEANZ members' scholarship and it will do so with support of a revitalised Editorial Board, which I will join thanks to an invitation from the editors. You are invited to submit a paper to JOFDL for review and to volunteer as a reviewer. Given the move to two issues per year, there is also more space for articles and more reviewing to do. Members involved in the research assessment exercise (cheerily known as the PBRF) should note that reviewing is an acknowledged research service activity and DEANZ will be happy to provide evidence of your reviewing service.

The DEANZ Newsletter has been revamped in 2009/10 into a professional magazine, led by editors Nick McGuigan and Thomas Kern. The magazine has received an ISSN number and is now archived by the National Library of New Zealand (provided to members online and through email).

Article continued on page 5.

Niki Davis reflects on the first year in her role as DEANZ President

Article continued from page 4.

We see this as a key vehicle for dissemination to our members profiling national and international events, updating members on relevant activity within the field and providing case studies, articles and exemplars of best practice all relating to open, flexible and distance education in all sectors of New Zealand. We are very pleased to bring you this special issue of the DEANZ Magazine this quarter profiling articles of interest for the schooling sector. I encourage you to send any items of interest that you may have to the editors of the DEANZ Magazine @ [nicholas.mcguigan@gmail.com](mailto:nicholas.mcguigan@gmail.com).

The DEANZ web site and mailing list are also key services to our membership, thanks to the leadership of Kathryn MacCallum in EIT Hawkes Bay. In addition to the public information and resources our DEANZ member's section enables you to share [Your Profile](#), see the [Membership List](#) and join in [DEANZ Forums](#). I think we have yet to capitalize on the social networking aspect of DEANZ online and DEANZ needs to go to where our members like to 'hang out' online and use those locations to enhance our online activity within our web site. For example, despite my passionate interest and leadership in Virtual Schooling I did not find the time to engage in the Forum discussion led by Rachael Roberts (2009) following her publication in the DEANZ journal in 2009. However it is nice to be able, as a member, to see that discussion still online now and I am tempted to add a posting. At the same time I know that the discussion would be more engaging and visible in another site designed for social networking. If you have ideas and/or service to contribute to DEANZ to support such a development of social networking, then please let us know!

Let me just give you a flavor with this Forum thread, which will be useful to members with interests in teacher education and those working in schools. It followed close on the heels of an influential literature review and meta-analysis of blended and online learning led by Barbara Means in the USA (Means et al, 2009), which indicated that even for school students online learning was better (marginally) than face-to-face and that blended learning was most effective. This thread followed the publication of Roberts (2009) in our journal:

DEANZ member Forum thread: V.C. A New Zealand Schools' Perspective

Rachael: When I graduated from Teachers College through Massey University's first Distance Learning Bachelor of Education programme, I had thought it would be wonderful to be a 'virtual teacher' just as I had been a virtual student. I was given a wake-up call when applying to teach at the Correspondence School was told the position was based in Wellington ... I went on to teach ICT in a local secondary school for a few years and then became a facilitator for a Primary Schools ICTPD

cluster. I have been involved in the TaraNet eLearning cluster for the last four years, the last two as full time ePrincipal. In that time the number of students enrolled in our classes have grown from 4 to over 120 with many more involved in other eLearning activities. I have always been passionate about the potential value of ICT to be able to make learning more accessible and engaging for our students. Thanks to the people who have shaped my thinking in this area: Bill Anderson & Mary Simpson without who I wouldn't have had the opportunity for a university education, they were fantastic role models for online teaching, learning design and community building; also Derek Wenmoth for bringing the vision of a virtual learning network to us and being the voice of eLearning that I have paid the most attention to; and to all the ePrincipals working in schools throughout New Zealand, without you many of our students would not have the choice and opportunity that they now enjoy and schools would not have the compass to point them into the 21st Century.

My article sets out to tell the story of the Virtual Learning Network Community. Clusters of NZ schools that have collaborated to extend and enrich the curriculum of our students, primarily through our Video Conferencing network but also with other technologies, such as Adobe Connect & Moodle. Though technologies have afforded us to work in this way, it is not the technology that is so important but how we can further develop our understanding of distance learning pedagogies, continue to offer diverse learning opportunities for all our students (not just the chosen few – the best and the brightest) and to make our communities sustainable beyond the cycle of Ministry of Education contestable funding rounds.

Bill Anderson: Hi Rachel, Enjoyed your article and thought that the comments you make in your conclusion need some careful reading and consideration. It seems to me that the approach to learning and teaching that you are talking about in your article is likely to take a lot of teachers and schools beyond their comfort zone - the pedagogical shift that you say is important is something that demands a lot of people.

Are we preparing people for this new form of teaching adequately? You suggest that a new national network will provide professional growth for e-teachers, who I presume are teaching currently. What about beginning teachers? Is there a role for teacher education institutions?

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It is interesting to me that just as you are claiming the benefits of e-learning in schools, the New Zealand Teachers Council seems to be demonstrating concern about distance delivered teacher education programmes and online delivery methods. How far do you think we still have to go in recognising the acceptability of such teaching and learning in schools?

Rachael: Hi Bill, It is not just eTeachers that need to make a pedagogical shift but all classroom teachers and yes for many it is a big intrusion on their comfort zone. For many years it has been a challenge to not only get a shift in thinking but to translate this into practice.

It is really important that teacher education programmes should have a focus on educational technologies for all students (compulsory like literacy & numeracy requirements) but also offer courses for online teaching specifically given that there are now many more opportunities for teachers to teach an online class within the VLN. In fact you could take that further to align teacher education courses with other current school wide PD projects for example numeracy & literacy. It used to surprise me to meet teacher trainees on practice in schools who had no idea what professional learning was taking place within schools.

I think in some schools, eLearning is recognised as being acceptable because it is the only choice students have to follow a course of study. Some schools though, are beginning to understand that eLearning provides the opportunities to address the vision of the curriculum to develop "young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, life long learners." All schools participating in the VLN have a greater stake in the success of elearning because they are involved in a collaborative way (having their own eTeachers teaching) & not just having a service provided to them from outside the schooling sector. For eLearning to move from the boundaries to become more 'mainstream' we need to ensure we offer learning opportunities that are relevant, engaging and of a high standard making the best use of technologies available to us and underpinned by sound pedagogies. This will require us to work together nationally to set & maintain high standards, and to provide ongoing professional development & support for teachers, students & schools. Not an easy task when this is run on no financial resourcing from the MOE.

The work of the VLN is not going unnoticed in educational circles. The PPTA is an active supporter sees their conference paper "Connected Schools" and the VLN Community is forming an association that has formed working parties to address various issues that pertain to elearning in schools. For instance submissions to the Rural Broadband consultation.

eLearning leadership (the role of the ePrincipal) has been key to the gains we have made in the last couple of years. Again the sustainability of this is under threat simply through lack of funding. A little more support from the MOE would go a long way to ensure NZ students continue to have access to eLearning.

In 2011 the DEANZ Executive are planning to have more activities and more engagement online and we would welcome volunteers from among our membership to support these activities. In early 2010 we had a few online webinars including *Case studies of e-learning in the UK: What evidence exists as to the effectiveness of formal online learning outside the classroom?* by Prof. Cathy Lewin director of Manchester Metropolitan University Centre for ICT, Pedagogy and Learning, UK, who was hosted by Profs Niki Davis and Bridget Somekh in the University of Canterbury e-Learning Lab. We were very fortunate to have Carol Cooper-Taylor was the leader for DEANZ webinars. Carol is now focusing on her consulting role with Cooper-Taylor Training <http://cooper-taylor.com>. In 2011 DEANZ webinars are planned with our new sponsor [Webqem in Adobe Connect](#) including Dr Scott McLeod who will challenge school principals to lead e-learning or risk becoming dangerously irrelevant. Scott who is known internationally for his work with school leaders and the Blogs he leads called [Dangerously Irrelevant](#) and [Virtual School Meanderings](#), is a Canterbury Fellow sponsored by the University of Canterbury visiting the e-Learning Lab for the first term in 2011. Scott will also be teaching in our digital technologies and leadership programmes. DEANZ members are encouraged to suggest and volunteer to host a webinar. Carol Cooper-Taylor was the leader for DEANZ webinars and we are currently seeking a replacement, so please let DEANZ secretary Anna Weatherstone and I know if you are interested in exploring this role.

Representing DEANZ members' interests is also a vital activity of the Executive as well as providing a wider view. We have reported on a few of these in this year's issues of this DEANZ Magazine, including:

- State of the distance nation by Bill Anderson (August 2010, p. 4)

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- Participation in New Zealand distance education programmes by Bill Anderson (August 2010, p. 6)
- Letters and responses to Minister Steven Joyce to raise awareness of the potential reduction in access to education arising from changes to student funding by Bill Anderson (February), Niki Davis (June)
- Response to the Ministry of Education regarding the way in which access to tertiary courses is reported in the Single Data Return (SDR) by Niki Davis (October)
- Membership of the reconstituted TeLRG (Tertiary e-Learning Reference Group), Niki Davis (November 2010, p. 14)
- Ako Aotearoa national network proposal to create the '2016 Ako Scenario Guide to effective tertiary education in New Zealand' (to be announced in 2011)

DEANZ has also undertaken significant partnership activities with national and international organisations during 2010 and many of them signal ongoing partnerships that aim to enhance benefits for members. Immediately following the DEANZ 2010 conference, Derek Wenmoth and I negotiated my leadership of an inaugural Research Strand in the annual Ulearn 2010 conference and it went so well that the stream may well turn into a river for 2011! That collaboration extends to the online journal *Computers in New Zealand Schools*. I was supported by my University of Canterbury colleagues, Nicki Dabner, Sonja Bailey, and Jilaine Johnson to name a few. Some of the long abstracts of research presented at Ulearn and published in its proceedings can be accessed from <http://www.core-ed.org/ulearn/research-stream-programme> may be developed into full papers where relevant for this Magazine and our journal JOFDL. Our preface Ulearn Proceedings described the range of papers as follows:

These proceedings contain many aspects of educational research and a particular strength is online learning in teacher education, e.g. Brooks, Gikandi, Mackey, Roberts, and Tull. Other aspects of e-learning include networked learning and film. In addition to the school sector the proceedings raise the profile of adults with special needs including those with literacy, e.g. Davis, Johnston, Nicholas and Walker. These are relevant to schools because such adults are important partners in children's learning. The breadth of these proceedings also includes learning communities

and arts education, e.g. Dabner, Fickel, Haines, and White.

International partnerships that have been consolidated or have emerged in 2010 include. Your liaisons are negotiating shared member benefits:

- ACODE – liaison Gordon Suddaby
- ICDE – liaison Niki Davis
- ODLAA and the DE Hub and the related Education Summit 2011-2021 15-18 February 2011 – liaison Niki Davis

There is no doubt that 2011 will bring increased challenges with potential for more economic restraint and threats of instability. However, as we have seen with the 2011 'quake in Christchurch (see article p. 7) we can respond with flexible online and distance education and we have a strong association to support us in New Zealand with many international links. I urge you to renew your membership and to engage more with us as a professional community. We can do so much more together to benefit our learners, colleagues and organisations as well as ourselves! The [Australasian 2010 Horizon Report](#) identifies that open content is ripe for adoption over the coming 12 months in 2011 and your collegial community in DEANZ is part of that future.

*E rau rangatira mā, ngā mihi nui ki a koutou*

Warm greetings to all esteemed DEANZ colleagues, past present and future!

*Niki Davis*

*President of DEANZ*

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## Learning remains online despite closure of Canterbury schools and colleges due to earthquake damage

Flexible, open, and distance learning were stepped up a notch or two in September 2010 when the Darfield 7.1 earthquake resulted in the closure of many Canterbury schools and colleges for some weeks. This success story is not widely known. Most, if not all, e-campuses remained open and continued to serve learners and their teachers with virtual classrooms, e-libraries and meeting places. Many of my colleagues in the college of education found our students supporting one another in our online forums. Staff made special provision when home or work disruptions caused by the 'quake took students' focus away from their studies. Our e-campus made it much easier to personalise that support too and the senior management team led by VC Rod Carr and PVC Sue McKnight urged colleagues to provide additional support and resources through our Moodle Learning Management System and e-library, and they and our librarians did a superb job!

In fact the resources donated resulted in unprecedented access to global learning resources with the formation of the largest e-library in the world hosted from the University of Canterbury! Alongside a picture of a section of the 10 floors of collapsed bookshelves The Chronicle's 24<sup>th</sup> September issue proclaimed:

"The University of Canterbury can, for the remainder of this year, boast it has the best online resourced library in the world, thanks to the generosity of national and international suppliers. More than a dozen online publishers and agents have offered free access for UC staff and students to tens of thousands of e-books, online journals and global databases potentially worth millions of dollars. Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning Resources) Professor Sue McKnight said vendors had been motivated by the impact of the 4 September earthquake on the University's Central Library. The collapse of book stacks on all floors means it will not be available for accessing books for the remainder of this semester. ...

Palgrave Macmillan Online STM & Reference Manager Tamara Joyner said the publisher was pleased to be able to help minimize the disruption for students and felt it was vitally important access to quality titles was maintained. "Our ability to deliver access within such a short timeframe will ensure there is minimal disruption to readers at the University of Canterbury. Such unusual circumstances will be challenging for those employed or enrolled at the University. Providing desktop access to the 38,000 e-books in Palgrave Connect and from the Taylor & Francis, Routledge and CRC platforms secures a breadth and depth of access to materials under very trying circumstances," she said.

The University of Canterbury literally jumped onto Facebook to keep students and staff informed as we responded and pulled ourselves back together. My colleague Nicki Dabner is researching the University of Canterbury sudden adoption of Facebook in two applications. Janelle Blythe and the Communications team made superb use of Facebook to keep students, staff and alumni apprised of what was happening and how to be safe. In addition, UC student Sam Johnson and his peers mobilised over 3,500 tertiary students from the area for earthquake clean up. Sam recently met with Hilary Clinton as part of the city's acknowledgement of his contributions. Nicki's case studies aim to inform us of relevant strategies for social networking tools such as Facebook to encourage peer support of learning.

The earthquake also stimulated the production of an excellent teaching resource, one that fits the just published 2010 Horizon Report's category of technology furthest trends for 4-5 years out. Figure 1 shows University of Canterbury e-learning developer Paul Nicholls with his [Christchurch Quake Map time-lapse representation of the earthquake and its aftershocks](#). This map certainly helped many of us understand 'our place' in the continuing aftershocks and thus helped to reduce the stress. The *2010 Horizon Report: Australia-New Zealand Edition*, released as I write, also indicates such Open Source content as a major immediate trend with New Zealand's WikiEducator and Government action as leading examples in this region. <http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2010-Horizon-Report-ANZ.pdf>

Canterbury schools remained open online too! The Virtual Learning Network schools' e-campus used by CantaTech and AorakiNet e-learning cluster schools called Educo (a VLN version of Moodle) remained fully operational. In my course our online learning community for the South Central Divide Blended Learning Project continued to operate for all those with online access, and many

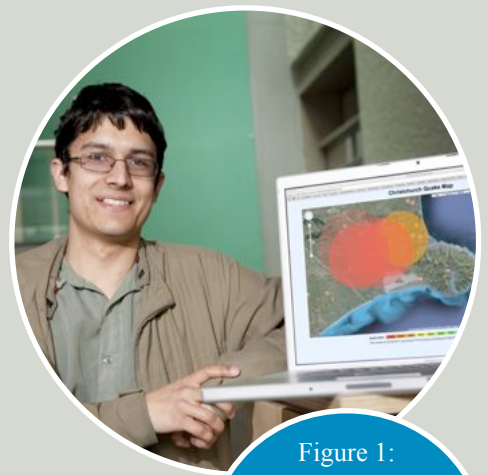


Figure 1:  
e-learning  
developer Paul  
Nicholls with his  
time-lapse  
Christchurch  
Quake Map

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teachers adapted blended learning to their changed circumstances. In Oxford, not far from the epicentre in Darfield, Mary Chisnall took advantage of the free virtual field trip donated by LEARNZ for Conservation Week led her primary students virtual schooling at home with parent support followed up with blended learning in her school. My Virtual Schooling column in the December 2010 issue of the online journal [Computers In New Zealand Schools](#) provides a description.

In October as Christchurch got back on her feet the first conference in the Convention Centre and City Hall was Ulearn'10 and what a success it was! CORE Education's super team led by CEO Ali Hughes included host teachers in 'quaked schools' such as Christ's College, pulled out all the stops for around 1800 teachers and other educators. Virtual Schooling was strongly represented including video conferencing and online learning which included Virtual Learning Network (VLN) presentations with Eddie Reich of the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

For the first time Ulearn'10 had a research strand that I directed with support from my [University of Canterbury e-Learning Lab](#) and colleagues, Nicki Dabner, Sonja Bailey, and Jilaine Johnson to name a few. It was our goal that some of the long abstracts of research presented at Ulearn and published in its proceedings that can be accessed from <http://www.core-ed.org/ulearn/research-stream-programme> will be developed into full papers where relevant for DEANZ Magazine and journal (JOFDL).

The University of Canterbury e-Learning Lab will be stepping up its outreach and community engagement

for students and staff, including a series of events in 2011. I am delighted to announce that the University of Canterbury "Canterbury Fellow" for 2011 will be award-winning Dr Scott McLeod of the Blog *Dangerously Irrelevant* that aims to provoke and support school leaders to engage more with leadership of e-learning. <http://dangerouslyirrelevant.org/> Scott will be working with me in the e-Learning Lab in the University of Canterbury from February to April and he will give a public lecture, a CORE breakfast, and a DEANZ webinar so that school leaders will be encouraged to pay attention in the shared leadership of e-learning including flexible open and distance education, or risk becoming dangerously irrelevant – in the words of Scott and his collaborating school leaders' Blog!

We've been shaken here in Canterbury and learned about a rift that could have driven us apart, but instead the challenges of the last few months have stirred increased growth and community effort that has provided a silver lining at a time of disaster. E-campuses provide essential flexibility for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and our experience in New Zealand continues to illustrate that a small country can provide an extraordinary lead on ways to increase stability in this fast changing world.

Niki Davis, Professor of e-Learning

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## Using film media and film companies' commercially produced educational activities in the classroom.

One of the most powerful teaching tools available to educators today is film. It is the connection of ideas with images and the consequent “pull” to the emotions that makes this so. There is also the universal appeal of the telling of story that can hook the most reluctant learner in. For today’s children visual media is even more pervasive than it was when their parents were students.

Many teachers are aware of the need to motivate and engage today’s students in new ways of literacy learning whether through computer and digital technologies or other visual media such as film. Reading for a literary experience has lost some of its popularity as a leisure activity among both students and adults. According to Crain (2007) this is in part because of the developments of technology with the alternative ways of communication and entertainment that these technological tools bring. These developments may in part help to explain the plateau or dip in reading achievement reported in the literature about the 9 – 13 year-old student age (for example as seen in Brozo, 2005; Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Hattie, 2007; McNaughton, Amituanai-Tolosa, & Lei, 2007; Pressley, 2006; Twist, Gnaldi, Schagen & Morrison, 2004). Teachers in New Zealand, concerned about engaging reluctant or disinterested readers, may not be aware of visual media resources that can assist them with this group of learners.

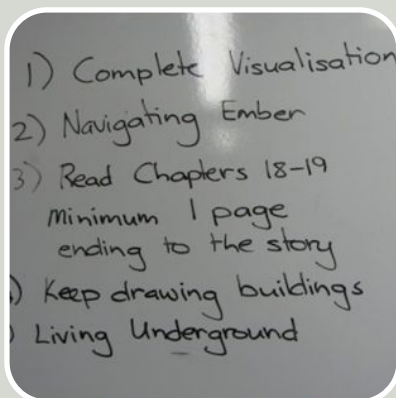
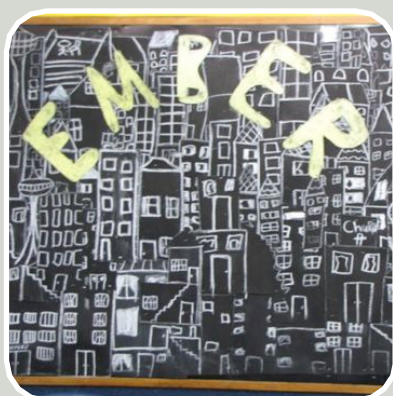
It has been argued by Mills (2009) that formal educators have, in general, been slow to realise and appreciate the role that screen-based literacy can play in classroom learning situations. The use of popular media within a classroom setting may often challenge other teachers’ and school managers’ views of what is traditional pedagogical practice and not be seen to be “as good as” the use of the written word. Mills states that many teachers regard Hollywood’s feature film list as somewhat controversial teaching tools, unlike documentaries that most educators are happy to use. Teachers resist, Mills contends, because of what she describes as “word-image binary” (p.6). Mills goes on to outline her idea of this further:

### Making use of film media to re-engage school learners

It cannot be denied that images dominate modernist and postmodernist culture. But in the mind/body split prevalent in our culture, words are widely thought to affect action. Words are sober – unlike images which are, or can be, exciting, giddy, emotional and physically affective. Underlying this connotation of unruliness is the widespread view that image is inferior to the word (p7).

Dooley (2007) agrees with Mills that in a world of increasingly diverse populations with variant home backgrounds, abilities and wider access to technological advances which allow the development of broader interpretations of innovative text forms within “literacy”, traditional school styles of literacy learning has privileged certain approaches to teaching. These have advantaged groups of students but marginalised others (see also Parkhill, Bates & Johnson (2010). Even teachers who are aware of the benefits of using popular culture and new technologies to engage their students, according to Kerkham and Hutchinson (2008) may not incorporate these into literacy programmes unless the decision to do so can be justified from sound pedagogical underpinnings. In spite of this reticence by teachers at large there are many initiatives in place in classrooms around the world where digital technologies are being used in powerful ways to enhance the learning of students. Mills (2009) cites programmes in New South Wales, Australia, where students “read” and “write” from the screen. Reports indicate that this has worked particularly well for students with low literacy achievement. This has also been indicated in a paper reporting on the use of movies, subtitles and specifically designed literacy- learning activities within the continuing AVAILL research project by Parkhill and Johnson (2009). Alverman, (2002), Guthrie & Wigfield (2000) and King (2002) have also reported a positive correlation when students are actively engaged with learning tasks with a consequent rising level of academic achievement.

Article continued on page 11.



... article continued from page 10.

I first became interested in using movies or children's TV series in the classroom while teaching in an intermediate school (medium – low decile) in 1988. Most classes were large (38 students the norm) and challenging to teach as the school had a policy of establishing accelerate classes in both Year 7 and 8. Many classes were imbalanced as regards gender and this gave teachers an additional challenge. It was when my class consisted of 24 boys (only four of whom showed any desire to learn) and 14 girls (who were open to learning) that I began to explore ways of using film to engage these male students in literacy activities. I videotaped a six part children's TV series - *The Gemini Factor*, bought six copies of the novel written to go with the series and then spent many hours devising language focus questions and activities for the students. It was a great success. The mystery surrounding the dreams affecting the protagonists, the haunting images and powerful storylines hooked; completing the reading and writing work for each episode was no problem. The students were eager to continue the series. I then bought videos and depending on the storyline would choose a reading or writing focus and create a language unit. But this took hours of planning. I often needed to view a film more than six times noting vocabulary, concepts, challenging questions and would jot down ideas for written language exploration. The boys in particular pestered me for a new unit every fortnight. The boys' attitudes towards writing in particular changed and their increase in understanding of vocabulary and story elements was worth all the work. Disruptive tactics and avoidance issues vanished.

Film companies such as Walden Media and Disney, cognisant of the power of visual media, are seeking to involve teachers and students in film studies by preparing educator guides or resources for teachers. The companies have these available for download on their websites. A positive for teachers is that the majority of films are based upon novels written for children or young adults thereby lending an added dimension to learning using film: comparisons and analyses of the book and the film's presentation of the story. Having discovered some amazing resources on these sites, in Term 4 of 2009 I initiated an action research project where a teacher used educational activities produced by the commercial film company Walden Media. These educational activities had been designed to support teachers using the movie *The City of Ember* based on the novel by Jeanne Duprau. I observed the selected teacher working successfully with her class on the AVAILLL research project earlier in 2009 and had been impressed with how she worked to the students' needs, was knowledgeable in literacy theory and putting strong programmes into place. (AVAILLL is a programme that uses movies, subtitles and literacy activities that target fluency, comprehension strategies, vocabulary building and visualisation – see [www.availll.com](http://www.availll.com)). When approached the teacher was most interested in taking part in the case study.

The teacher was provided with the novel, the DVD, a class set of the downloaded activities that the researcher collated into student booklets and a variety of science experiment materials such as magnets, diodes, hammers, nails, copper wire etc. It was up to the teacher to implement the unit based around *The City of Ember* as best suited the needs of her

students. The teacher's class was one with divergent needs from ESOL students with little English through to students referred to Social Welfare (CYPHS) and two with such severe behavioural issues that stand-downs and expulsions occurred. Not an easy group to teach.

As the researcher I investigated whether as part of a novel and film study within one classroom these commercially produced educational activities were perceived by the teacher to be a "valuable" learning addition to the teacher's normal planned unit of work. I then analysed the perceived value of such learning activities in the area of student motivation and engagement. Qualitative research methods were dominant and included audio interviews, a survey, my "researcher" observations and interactions within a group learning activity.

Initial responses from student surveys and interviews were positive with most students articulating interest and engagement. The novel was partly read by the teacher and partly by the children in pairs. Reading the book was enjoyed by 92% of the students. While all the students liked watching the movie when asked for their preference between movie and the book, 45% stated the book over the movie. Some of the reasons given for this were the book gave greater detail, allowed the students to picture things in their minds and get to know more about characters. These students thought the movie was too short and left out parts they felt were crucial to the story. The educational activities in the booklets that the students completed were received positively with 92% liking them either "a lot" or finding them "OK" while 8% did not like them much at all. As the book and film depicted a group of people who had lived underground for over 230 years the students were challenged to think about whether they could cope in such a world. Many students enjoyed the practical construction activities where they built structures using spaghetti, marshmallows, jellybeans and toothpicks. Some activities like the waterwheel (see photo) were very difficult to build and students faced challenges getting the diodes to function properly. Other favourite learning activities included exploring Blackouts, Time Capsules and Secret Messages.

The teacher's response was overwhelmingly positive as to the "perceived value" of the activities but tempered with a thoughtful critique of how best to use them to maximum effect were she to use the unit of work with another class of students. The teacher involved in this research project articulated clearly in the interview what she perceived as an over-simplification of some activities and that to maximise learning considerable pre-teaching in some science areas in particular would be essential. She iterated that much more research by a teacher intending to use these resources within a classroom unit would be necessary to allow independent inquiry by the students to be successful. The teacher found the novel study a success and thought that the potential for a comparative study between the book and the movie would be valuable.

Article continued on page 12.

... article continued from page 11.

I aim to report the findings of the whole project in a detailed paper in 2011. It is my hope that more teachers will be inspired to motivate reluctant learners in particular, to engage with interesting literacy activities provided as a support within film studies, and through this have these students become more interested in reading for pleasure.

An illustrative list of Walden Media's teacher educator guides is listed below:

Romano and Beezus – Margaret Cleary  
Because of Winn Dixie – Kate Di Camillo  
Charlotte's Web – E.B. White  
The Waterhorse – Dick Kingsmith  
Narnia Series: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe & Prince Caspian – C.S. Lewis  
I Am David – Ann Holm  
Bridge to Terebithia – Katherine Paterson  
Hoot – Carl Hiaasen  
Nim's Island – Wendy Orr  
Journey to the centre of the Earth – Jules Verne  
The Seeker: The Dark is Rising - Susan Cooper

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## CREATING CLASSROOMS WITHOUT BORDERS

The Virtual Learning Network (VLN) supports the concept of classrooms without walls, where students and educators have the flexibility to connect with their classes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Where a rich and diverse range of courses, programmes and activities, from early childhood through to tertiary, are offered by New Zealand based educators.

VLN creates a social learning community where teachers, learners, school leaders and facilitators connect, join virtual programmes/projects, share experiences, and develop new ways to support learning using ICTs.

Recent examples of projects include;

- Students from several schools collaborating to explore a global issue and find a local solution (e.g. bullying, global warming, urban wastelands etc.)
- Virtual field trips to areas of interest
- Gathering data from a variety of sources to develop big picture trends and patterns.
- Connecting with authors and illustrators for a virtual 'book week'.



## DEANZ AND SCHOOLS

For many years the emphasis in DEANZ has been on the developments in distance education in the tertiary sector, as this is where the majority of activity and research has been spent. But for a number of years now there has been a quiet revolution growing in the schooling sector, focusing mostly in rural and remote secondary schools where the use of video conferencing and other online technologies have been used to allow teachers in one location to teach groups of students in other schools. This momentum has continued to grow with the development of the Virtual Learning Network (<http://www.virtuallearning.school.nz>) which currently offers a brokerage for nearly 300 courses each year that are being offered by participating schools. This year the Ministry of Education have commissioned the updating of a handbook (first published in 2002) that provides guidance for school leaders and teachers considering adopting distance education practices to accommodate the needs of their learners.

These developments are opening up exciting opportunities for DEANZ. We have had teachers from these schools attend our conferences in the past few years, and several are now members of DEANZ - there is even a recent journal article (JOFDL) written by one teacher and ePrincipal - Rachael Roberts. The quality of the work being done by teachers in these schools, often with no formal preparation in instructional design or distance education pedagogy, is quite remarkable. In addition, they are using many of the same technologies and addressing many of the same issues as their counterparts in tertiary institutions. The context is ripe for research and for the recording of case studies to document what is being learned and exemplars of effective practice.

In addition, the spread of this sort of activity is about to expand, with the roll-out of ultra-fast broadband (UFB) in urban areas, many more schools are beginning to consider the potential for exposing students to learning opportunities beyond the immediate school environs. This may involve school-to-school exchanges as is happening in the rural areas, but may also involve contributions from tertiary providers into schools, particularly at senior secondary levels, where the opportunity to entice students to particular courses of study has appeal.

DEANZ is keen to increase its support for the schools sector and is working to develop a special group/organisational membership for a cluster of schools. Increased support for the school sector includes a DEANZ webinar by Scott McLeod in February 2011. The DEANZ conference in April 2012 will have several strands of particular relevance to schools and their partners. We are keen to hear from service providers, teachers and school leaders who wish to engage in national leadership in association with DEANZ, please contact myself and/or our DEANZ President Niki Davis.

However you look at it, the time is ripe for greater involvement of teachers, researchers and leaders at the school level in DEANZ so more may benefit from the support of a community of distance education practitioners, and can contribute to that community in ways that help it expand its breadth of understanding and experience of the field.

Derek Wenmoth, DEANZ Vice President

## BLENDED LEARNING: THE IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL AND DISTANCE LEARNING INITIATIVES ON STUDENTS' SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

*Keryn Pratt with Ken Pullar, John Buchanan, Lyn Cooper, Linda Miller, Andrea Robertson and Ann Trewern*

Since 2002, a group of Otago schools has been using videoconferencing to teach each other's students. The small size of the schools meant that these schools were only able to offer a limited number of senior secondary subjects, with some courses taught by non-specialist teachers. Students who wished to do other courses either left the school, or took lessons from Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School. The teachers involved believed that neither of these options was ideal. They felt students were performing at a lower level in the paper-based correspondence courses than their face-to-face classes, and were concerned that specialist teachers were finding themselves unable to teach in their area.

The approach was developed by this group of schools involved using the specialist teachers in each school to teach students from across the group of schools. Students who wished to take a specialist subject that was not available in their own school now had the option of taking it through another school in the region. The distances involved meant it was impractical for either students or teachers to travel, and as paper-based courses were seen as less than satisfactory, other solutions were discussed. The outcome of these discussions was the decision to utilise videoconferencing. The Community Trust of Otago provided funding for the initial setup costs, with additional support from the Ministry of Education and Telecom New Zealand Limited. One videoconference class was scheduled for each subject for each week, with students working more independently the remainder of the time. The videoconference sessions were augmented by a range of supports, including online material, workbooks, additional 'tutorial style' videoconference sessions, and some face-to-face visits. The OtagoNet group is now in its ninth year of using videoconferencing to deliver classes to students across the regions, includes several more schools from the region, and has been joined by 14 other clusters. Where a local cluster does not offer a subject, or the

class is full, students are able to take classes from other clusters.

As schools are increasingly being called upon to meet the needs of diverse students, they are augmenting their subject options – and their delivery options – further. As well as utilising the videoconferencing networks, hundreds of schools are involved with programmes involved in workplace learning, and are taking advantage of courses offered by polytechnics and universities. The range of learning opportunities available to secondary students enables them to tailor a course of study to their own particular needs. Many students are taking advantage of these opportunities, with over 80% of students in one Otago area school receiving lessons from more than one provider (Pullar & Brennan, 2008).

Using  
blended learning  
approaches to  
enhance high school  
learning  
outcomes

The new opportunities available to students means that their experience of school, typified by some form of blended learning, is very different to a traditional face-to-face model. Taking videoconference classes and participating in workplace learning requires students to miss their timetabled class. It would seem that being involved in blended learning requires students to manage themselves and their time to a greater degree than traditional face-to-face classes. A group of researchers from the OtagoNet schools, alongside researchers from the University of Otago College of Education, is currently working to explore the experiences of students involved blended learning both within their 'classes' and outside of them, as well as their learning outcomes, their needs, and the impact this new form of learning is having on them, their teachers, schools, and communities. This one-year research project, funded through the Tertiary Learning Research Initiative, is designed to answer the question: what are the effects of undertaking blended learning (that is, courses delivered in a variety of modes, from a number of providers) on students' learning and skills?

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continued from page 14.

This question incorporates a number of sub-questions:

1. What is happening? What non-classroom forms of learning are occurring and how common are they? What support systems are in place?
2. What are students' experiences of this blended learning?
3. Does blended learning impact on students' achievement or progression in terms of learning and study skills?
4. How equitable is this form of learning? Do effects on learning and study skills differ between different groups of students?

We are using a mixed methods approach to answer these questions. At the beginning of the year, students from ten of the OtagoNet schools completed questionnaires that asked about the learning and study skills, as well as their experience and expectations of taking blended learning classes. At the end of the year, students will again complete questionnaires, allowing us to compare their responses, to determine how students taking blended learning options perform in terms of learning and study skills and achievement compared to their peers taking traditional face-to-face classes. We will also look to determine whether different groups of

students (such as those who have received certain types of levels of support, or doing certain types of classes, or who had certain skills prior to taking blended learning classes) perform differently from their peers. In addition, a small number of students from four of the schools have been interviewed at the beginning and middle of the year, and will be interviewed again at the end of the year, to provide a richer picture of their experiences. The information from students is being augmented by information from their teachers. A teacher and/or employee of each of the students being interviewed is also being interviewed, to provide their perspective on the effect taking blended learning classes is having on the students. Teachers at the ten OtagoNet schools are also being asked to complete questionnaires with regard to how they believe offering blended learning opportunities is affecting them, their students, and their school.

While we know that senior secondary students can be successful at studying at a distance, little is known about the effects on students of taking subjects through a combination of classroom, distance and workplace learning approaches, or of working with multiple providers. This research will provide insight into how successfully students are balancing the needs of their classes and the demands of multiple providers, and the kinds of support that appear to help them be successful at this.

For further information please contact Keryn Pratt at [keryn.pratt@otago.ac.nz](mailto:keryn.pratt@otago.ac.nz).

## DEANZ CONFERENCE

Planning for the 2012 DEANZ Conference is currently underway with an unstoppable bid coming from the quake stricken Garden City.

The DEANZ Executive is currently putting together the organising and Scientific Technical Committee in

order to bring another quality conference for 2012.

As always we will keep you up-to-date through our magazine, web updates and email alerts. So keep checking at [www.deanz.org.nz](http://www.deanz.org.nz).

So start planning for future call for papers out next year.



Tertiary  
e-Learning  
Reference Group  
back in Action



### Tertiary e-Learning Reference Group

The Ministry of Education and Ako Aotearoa have re-established the Tertiary e-Learning Reference Group (TeLRG) to advise them on inform national strategy. As President and with the unanimous support of the Executive Niki Davis has become a member to represent DEANZ.

The other members who joined the first meeting on 15th November 2010 in Wellington at Ako Aotearoa's headquarters are listed below. An urgent need for Wānanga, Pasifika and learner representatives was noted and actions planned to assist recruitment.

**Dr Peter Coolbear**, Chair (Director, Ako Aotearoa)

**Oriel Kelly** (Executive Committee, Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE). NB Oriel also provides an Institute of Technology/ Polytechnic perspective for the group)

**Dr Philippa Gerbic** (Executive Committee, ASCILITE.)

**Gordon Suddaby** (President, Australasian Council of Open and Distance Learning (ACODE)

**Dr Stanley Frielick** (Higher Education Research and Development Society Executive Committee)

**Selena Fox** (Chief Executive, NZ Tertiary College –New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers, NZAPEP).

**Elizabeth Valentine** (Chief Executive, Aviation, Travel and Tourism Industry Training Organisation – Industry Training Federation)

**Peter Guiney** (Ministry of Education, TeLRG Secretariat)

**Roger Smyth** (Ministry of Education, co-sponsor of the TeLRG)

The key foci of the Terms of Reference are twofold. The first and most important of these was to provide advice to the Ministry's new tertiary policy group (which includes the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) policy function). The second was to leverage the limited funding available to maximise return on investment and value for money of existing and planned e-learning projects.

One of the key questions was what would the group expect to have achieved by the end of 2011? Providing advice to Government on the tertiary e-learning priorities and widely disseminating advice and information to support this (as

well as organisations and infrastructure investment and decisions) were seen as critical. The TeLRG could also actively align with or support relevant wider government strategies e.g. the digital strategy.

It was expected at this early stage of the TeLRG that the members would represent their executive committee views and use their existing networks to inform the wider membership about TeLRG activities, actions and outcomes. Over time it is anticipated that these wider networks will increasingly inform TeLRG activities as well as being informed by them. Ako Aotearoa will also assist with the dissemination of TeLRG activities, actions and outcomes through its website and other networks. DEANZ can play a key role in informing and being informed by the schooling part of their association to better place e-learning in the transition from school to tertiary education and in training contexts.

The ITO representation also allows this to occur in the transition between school/ tertiary and work.

The TeLRG adopted an overarching framework suggested Peter Coolbear for the work plan based on three categories: 1) Policy Advice function, 2) Organisational Advice function and 3) Infrastructure/Regulatory advice function. Some of the work would be direct i.e. the TeLRG would do it as a group (or as individual members/working groups). Other work would be indirect e.g. coordinating existing work or promoting it more widely. Unpacking the particular work that would sit in these categories would allow members to identify areas of interest and bring their expertise/ experience more directly to bear on them.

In a discussion that aimed to provide an environment scan I was minuted as indicating "Need to advise agencies of unanticipated outcomes of wider policies. Need to ensure all learners (including the so called 'digital natives') have the requisite literacies to effectively engage in e-learning. Need to envision future. Need increased Wānanga, Pasifika and learner representation. Using ICT to capitalise on research strengths and increase sectoral (school/tertiary) linkages."

The next meeting date was proposed for March 2011. Niki Davis will be happy to receive feedback and other relevant information from DEANZ members to take to this meeting.

TeLRG  
sets new goals  
for the  
enhancement of  
e-learning  
investment





## Derek's Blog

Derek Wenmoth, DEANZ Vice President updates us on online learning reports ... through his blog “musings on the use and impact of technology in education, and of the future of education in general” <http://blog.core-ed.org/derek>

### Online learning reports...

I've just had a look at some reports released this week at the [iNACOL Virtual School Symposium](#). Each report provides some interesting perspectives on what is happening at the school level, and the tertiary level in the US. While the context is different, there are some clear messages here that we can be taking notice of in NZ (see my note at the bottom of this post).

The first report is from iNACOL itself, titled “[A National Primer on K-12 Online Learning](#)” which suggests the biggest emerging trends in online learning include the growth of (US) district-led online schools, the expansion of blended (or hybrid) learning, and the acceptance of mobile learning.

In talking about blended learning, the report describes two approaches. The first is defined as a “buffet model,” where a student takes traditional face-to-face course and also enrolls in one or more online courses. The second is an “emporium model” in which face-to-face courses that implement elements of online learning. Both models are growing according to the iNACOL report.

The second report is from the [Sloan Foundation](#). Titled [Class Differences: Online Education in the United States, 2010](#), it is their eighth annual survey of online education in colleges and universities. According to the survey, 2010 showed the largest ever year-to-year increase in the number of students studying online, with nearly thirty percent of all college and university students now take at least one course online in the US. Other report findings include:

- Almost two-thirds of for-profit institutions now say that online learning is a critical part of their long term strategy.
- The 21% growth rate for online enrollments far exceeds the 2% growth in the overall higher education student population.
- Nearly one-half of institutions report that the economic downturn has increased demand for face-to-face courses and programs.

- Three-quarters of institutions report that the economic downturn has increased demand for online courses and programs.

The third report is published by the [Evergreen Education group](#), and is titled, [Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning – an annual review of policy and practice](#) (PDF download). There's plenty of good reading in this report – but I couldn't help but note for my blog entry here the following quote which parallels the situation here in NZ where we've been experiencing considerable growth in online learning at the school level which has been driven from the 'bottom up', and where the greatest obstacles to progressing further lie in the lack of robust and future-focused policy work at a national level.

*Despite the growth of online and blended learning, policy and access barriers still exist for many students who wish to take an online course or attend an online school, and for many educators who seek to start an online program. A continuing need exists for policymakers to develop a framework to allow and encourage online and blended teaching and learning to enhance, expand, and transform learning. Online learning has proven to be meaningful to students, igniting their passion for learning using real-world applications, stimulating their creativity and innovation, and communicating on the global stage—taking teachers and students beyond the class walls and beyond the class period in order to open new possibilities for both teaching and learning.*

Reading these reports suggests emphatically that:

1. online and blended learning is now gaining considerable traction in our schools, so schools need to be taking seriously the opportunity for engaging with this, and
2. some serious work is required that involves knowledgeable people to create the supporting policy frameworks to allow this growth to continue.

## RESEARCH ACTIVITY IN DISTANCE, FLEXIBLE, ONLINE AND E-LEARNING

As a result of the increasing impact of "Taking the Lead, Strategic Management for E Learning, A number of institutions in the Christchurch area expressed interest in a meeting with senior management teams.

### 1. University of Canterbury.

We met with the Vice Chancellor and the senior management team to discuss some of the issues arising from the Report in the E Learning context as it is emerging at the University. Both Tom Prebble and I were fortunate to be given more than one hour with the team. Our thanks go to Niki Davis for organising our time.

### 2. Lincoln University

We met first with the flexible learning initiative team from the Faculty of Commerce where we discussed issues related to flexible learning. This was followed by a meeting with the advisory panel that work with the flexible learning initiative under the management of the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic). During the course of an interesting debate we canvassed many of the strategic issues facing an institution exploring these kinds of e learning initiatives. Our thanks go to Helen Gilmore and Ian Macdonald for their assistance in organising the meeting.

### 3. CPIT

CPIT arranged a meeting for staff about the findings in Taking the Lead. Kay Giles' attendance added weight to this meeting. This was followed by one with the flexible learning and library staff lasting for most of the afternoon in which a range of both operational and strategic issues took place. Thanks go to Nikki Page for organising the meeting.

### 4. Agribusiness

Agribusiness staff from Wellington, Christchurch and Invercargill assembled for this meeting. Distance education issues came to the forefront early. The organisation is gearing up for an expansion in activity in 2011 and sought comment about some of the matters in Taking the Lead.

### Summary

The meeting in Christchurch demonstrated that there is considerable interest in institutions about both e learning and distance education. Participants gleaned a variety of messages from the Taking the lead documents and commentary both Tom Prebble and I were able to give them.

Andrew Higgins- Director of Flexible Learning AUT



## PROFILING DEANZ EXECUTIVE



Keryn Pratt

Keryn is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Otago College of Education, teaching online in the areas of Research Methods and ICT in education. She is a member of the Centre for Distance Education and Learning Technologies, located within the College of Education, and for much of the last two years has been Acting Director of this Centre. Keryn has been researching in the area of distance education since 2000, when she began working for the then Faculty of Education, and has been teaching online since 2000.

In addition to her position on the executive of DEANZ, Keryn is a member of the Distance Learning and Teaching Forum at the University of Otago, and of the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) Special Interest group on virtual schooling. She is a member of editorial boards and review panels for several journals and conferences, including Computers in New Zealand Schools, Australian Educational Computing, Technology Pedagogy and Education and Computers in Education.

As an active researcher in the area of online education, Keryn is interested in both the tertiary and secondary levels. She is continually conducting research into her own online teaching at the University of Otago. In addition, Keryn has been involved with the OtagoNet videoconference cluster since its inception in 2001, conducting research related to virtual schooling. She is currently working on a collaborative project with teachers from OtagoNet that is exploring students' experiences of taking courses in multiple formats from multiple providers.

## Distance Education Snippets

Scouring the world wide web in order to bring you the latest news in distance education related events, conferences, seminars, workshops and book reviews.

### Upcoming Events

#### Global Time

Global Conference on Technology, Innovation, Media and Education  
22 - 24 February 2011  
Online  
[www.aace.org/conf/gtime](http://www.aace.org/conf/gtime)

#### SITE 2011

Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference  
7 - 11 March 2011  
Nashville, TN, USA  
<http://site.aace.org/conf/>

#### Global Learn Asia Pacific 2011

Global Conference on Learning and Technology  
28 March - 1 April 2011  
Melbourne, Australia  
<http://aace.org/conf/glearn/>

#### ED-MEDIA 2011

World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications  
27 June - 1 July 2011  
Lisbon, Portugal  
<http://www.aace.org/conf/edmedia/>

#### E-Learn 2011

World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare and Higher Education  
17 - 21 October 2011  
Honolulu, HI, USA  
<http://www.aace.org/conf/elearn/>

24th ICDE World Conference on Open and Distance Learning  
2 - 5 October 2011  
Universitas Terbuka, Bali, Indonesia  
<http://www.ut.ac.id/icde2011/>

14th Cambridge International Conference on Open, Distance and e-Learning  
Internationalisation and Social Justice: the role of open, distance and e-Learning.  
25 - 28 September 2011  
Maddingley Hall, Cambridge, United Kingdom  
<http://www2.open.ac.uk/r06/conference/>

18th International Conference on Learning  
5 - 8 July 2011  
University of Mauritius, Mauritius  
[www.LearningConference.com](http://www.LearningConference.com)

IADIS International Conference Mobile Learning 2011  
10 - 12 March 2011  
Avila, Spain  
<http://www.mlearning-conf.org>

World Planning Schools Congress 2011  
4 - 8 July 2011  
Perth, Western Australia  
[www.wpsc2011.com.au](http://www.wpsc2011.com.au)

9th International Conference on Education and Information Systems, Technologies and Applications  
19 - 22 July 2011  
Orlando, Florida, USA  
[www.2011iisconferences.org/eista](http://www.2011iisconferences.org/eista)

2011 International Conference on Data Engineering and Internet Technology  
15 - 17 March 2011  
Bali, Indonesia  
<http://www.irast.net/conferences/DEIT/2011>

6th International Conference on e-Learning  
27 - 28 June 2011  
University of British Columbia, British Columbia, Canada  
<http://academic-conferences.org/icel/icel2011/icel11-call-papers.htm>



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you  
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## Doing more with less – interactivity in larger groups

The University of Canterbury, College of Education's Innovative, Interactive teaching space gives students access to 21st century learning technology.

Accommodating 81 students, the room is arranged into nine pods, each with three circular tables in a cloverleaf pattern. Each circular table seats three students who can work together accessing a networked computer. Computers are seen more as a resource accessible to groups within the room. Work created in groups of three can be shared quickly with the whole class using three high definition projectors and the 19" computer screens. The lecturer wears a wireless microphone so that no matter where students are sitting they can clearly hear the lecturer's voice and related audio output through high quality ceiling speakers. The locus of the room can quickly shift to any one of the student groups with a touch of the controller screen, projecting the computer screen and audio to all in the room. This way groups can share their work in progress easily or present artefacts to the larger group.

The space allows small group interactions within a large group environment. SMS allow interactions within and off campus with the class. The screens from the 27 computers can be shared with the whole class via the teaching station and projected in high definition, one at a time and the content of one screen can be displayed on all the other 26 screens if desired. The circular table surface is large enough so students can write or draw on paper and this output can also be shared with the whole class via the document camera. The personal touch is still maintained

as the lecturer can move about the room talking with groups and individuals while they engage in a task.

A group of academics and technical personal worked closely with UC audiovisual experts developing the room to ensure the teaching space reached its maximum potential. Every detail of the room had been closely examined to ensure the optimum learning environment was provided with maximum flexibility to accommodate different lecturer preferences. Computers are dual boot offering Apple and Window environments. A key feature is flexibility as demonstrated by a lecturer presenting a traditional lecture using overhead transparencies in the room using the projectors and document camera. Others have utilised iPads, iPods, DVDs, two computer sources and audio to provide a rich learning environment for students to interact with. The strength of the space is in the students' collaborations on tasks and being able to share these in real time as they progress through a task.

Professor Niki Davis noted that the ability to connect with external participants is particularly useful. The computer system has full internet access and video conferencing facilities allowing distance students to participate in lectures, overseas academics to lecture classes, and remote staff to sit in



Obtaining interaction in groups through innovative "pod" use

at staff meetings. At a recent professional development meeting for the second year running we had a lecturer from Rotorua join and interact virtually with the 50 or 60 people who were physically in the room as though she was physically there. She was able to share her research investigation with all in the room and interact with everyone. The interactive teaching space allows all to hear, see, and engage with each other be it physically or virtually present in a synchronous way.

Has the space allowed us to explore new pedagogies and andragogies that support teaching and learning? Yes, and we are continuing to evaluate the affordances and constraints of our 21st Century interactive teaching space.

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College of Education  
University of Canterbury

Photo Source: Ann McGrath

### DEANZ MEMBERSHIP

As a member you will be joining a growing national and international distance and open learning community.

DEANZ provides you with three types of publications a year. These include: the Journal of Distance

Learning, an international, refereed, high quality journal published annually; the DEANZ magazine, published quarterly, keeping you up-to-date with national and local activities and developments; and a biennial membership directory.

As a member you will be eligible to apply for the DEANZ Award, find out first about the DEANZ biennial

conference and attend various DEANZ seminars and workshops held annually.

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