Authentic Learning through Te Aho o te Kura Pounamu (TCS)

Taking (some of) the distance out of distance education

Te Kura has responded to international and national evidence that twenty-first century learners are seeking learning relevant to them and their context.

An approach that places our students firmly at the centre of their own learning, within their own context.

Through consideration of evidence from within New Zealand and Internationally, and looking at current best practice within Te Kura alongside focussed leadership from our Chief Executive, we have developed an approach to teaching and learning which places our students firmly at the centre of their own learning, within their own context, in collaboration with businesses, NGOs and community groups. We have called this "Authentic Learning".

Te Kura is the distance education provider for the compulsory education sector nationally, with a roll on any one day of approximately 15,000 students. Each fulltime student has a Learning Advisor providing pastoral support and working with the student and their whanau/family to develop relevant and appropriate learning pathways to support the student's interests and passions.

Processes and supporting documentation have been developed to assist each Learning Advisor to support each student as they move along our Authentic Learning Continuum towards an Internship within their own community.

At Te Kura we are just over a year into this strategic direction.

Introduction:

Te Kura, New Zealand's national distance education provider for the compulsory school sector offers the national primary and secondary curriculum to students unable to attend local state schools. Recently, Te Kura identified issues relating to student engagement and achievement in a wider context of youth unemployment as priorities demanding further consideration. Reflection by the Chief Executive and staff also identified difficulties in terms of making a real difference for our student population, many of whom are directed back into education by agencies, having failed to reach their potential in face-to-face schools. Of course, we are not alone with these problems as evidenced by PISA (OECD) reports (2000-2010) which show excellent achievement at the same time as a large "tail" of underachievement across New Zealand schools. From 2006 we began considering ways we believed could make such a difference, by looking internally within Te Kura and by researching systems and evidence nationally and internationally.

Article continued on page 3.

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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.

It is hard to believe that Christmas is nearly upon us and what a busy and successful year it has been for DEANZ. DEANZ President Niki Davis provides us the latest report (p. 9) from the executive outlining a number of challenges DEANZ faced through the year and the many successes for DEANZ through 2011. Our cover story this issue provides a remarkable account of authentic learning that is occurring at Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu. Written by one of our DEANZ Executive members Jen McCutcheon, Manager of Authentic Learning at Te Kura.

In this issue Andrew Higgens provides us with a research update on areas of Distance Learning on p. 8, while we celebrate DEANZ Journal Editor Mark Nichols research success at Routledge. Leah de Wijze, Senior Instructional Designer at the Open Polytechnic provides an update on a collaborative space for instructional designers.

The DEANZ Conference planning is well underway with information provided on p. 16 with the theme of Shift Happens: Resilience, Relevance and Reform. The DEANZ Award applications are due by 17th February 2012 and the winner will be announced during the conference.

Maybe something to think about through the summer period. Do not forget to check in to the DEANZ website www.deanz.org.nz to keep up-to-date with upcoming events and membership events including recent updates on the DEANZ conference 2012.

We provide you with a number of upcoming events held nationally and internationally, long-standing DEANZ Executive member Bill Anderson is profiled this issue (p. 12) and Derek Wenmoth's, DEANZ Vice President, blog updates discussing ways around the difficulties of technologically reluctant colleagues (p. 13).

The DEANZ 2016 research project (p. 17) is calling for your input so make contact and assist in the shaping of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning in New Zealand's future.

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We would like to hear from you. If you know of something interesting happening at your campus, articles of interest, items to include or what you would like to see in the DEANZ magazine then let us know.

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Nick McGuigan and Thomas Kern

Keep in touch with news from DEANZ

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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.

Authentic Learning through Te Aho o te Kura Pounamu

Many teachers at Te Kura are skilled at personalizing student's programmes of learning. As a distance provider we have the "luxury" of having no school timetables to consider or any of the other practical constraints faced by other schools. Programmes can be multi-level, modular, integrated and adaptable. Of course distance education also has its challenges.

Like other secondary schools in New Zealand we have both Secondary/Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) and Gateway[1.] resourcing for our students, and evidence from these programmes of increased student engagement through exposure to them. Such evidence provided a stimulus for our thinking.

The research, thinking and discussion within Te Kura evolved into the development of strategic directions, key elements of which are to support student engagement and achievement through "creation of authentic and engaging learning experiences for students" alongside increasing regionalization/localization of staff. (Te Kura Strategic Plan 2010-2012).

Strategy - Authentic Learning:

Authentic learning is a personalised ("one student at a time") approach to teaching and learning which enables the student to ground their learning in a "real world context". It is achieved by teachers actively engaging with each student in their learning group, to create a programme of learning that evolves from rich conversations and relationship development focussed on identifying student's interests and passions (or supports them to explore and identify these), engages the student's wider circle of influence (whanau, supervisors, support persons) in their learning, enables students to learn in a real world context by completing meaningful work for an organisation or workplace (through an Internship) and then present their findings. Such explorations complement and support the New Zealand Curriculum in fostering the development of the core competencies.

The strategy aligns with both the existing TEC funded Gateway programme and the government's desire to create greater vocational opportunities, including access to Youth Apprenticeships and Trades Academies, and the developmental Youth Guarantee policy work with its' emphasis on the creation of wider pathways for student achievement. Youth Guarantee includes as an objective "making the education system more responsive to their (students') needs." In informing our thinking Te Kura drew upon Big Picture ideas coming out of the United States and Australia, and various other sources.

What we have called "Authentic Learning" is based on international and national research and accepted best practice approaches to teaching and learning, which focus on the learner/student in their context and places the student firmly at the centre of their learning. Internally, within Te Kura, we have many experienced and supportive Learning Advisors (teachers). All teachers have a teaching load of their subject specialisms, alongside a Learning Group (in a face-to-face school these may be known as Form Groups); up to sixteen students for whom they have pastoral responsibility. Work has been on-going from 2005 to underpin any developments with the importance of the relationship between Learning Advisor and student and the Authentic Learning development builds on that earlier work.

Evidence from New Zealand research linked back explicitly to relationship development as important for engagement and achievement for student's feelings of connectedness and self worth, and we looked closely at the work undertaken by Russell Bishop (2001, 2005), Bishop, Berryman, Powell and Teddy (2007, 2008) and John Hattie (1999, 2003).

Looking further afield we focussed on researching and visiting Big Picture schools in both the United States and Australia. In late 2008 the Chief Executive attended a conference at the Met (the founding Big Picture School), Rhode Island and interacted with the founders of Big Picture USA; Dennis Littky and Elliot Washor. Both Littky and Washor have publications supporting their innovative thinking and evidence of success with their approach to teaching and learning; articles, blogs, podcasts outlined in the references. The philosophies, and practical applications of them, underpinning Big Picture thinking are outlined in "The Big Picture: Education is Everyone's Business" (Littky and Grabelle 2004). Littky and Washor challenge traditional thinking about education and systems and place each student at the centre of their learning i.e., "start with the student, not the subjects or classes."

A manager was seconded into the position of Project Manager (Authentic Learning) within Te Kura to develop and adapt the concepts to our context and lead the development of Authentic Learning across the school. Staff at Te Kura were encouraged to read Littky and Grabelle's 2004 publication as a step in thinking about "school" in a different way and challenging our own thinking. Further ideas were considered from publications by Levine with his focus on one student at a time (2001), Evans (The Human Side of School Change (2001)) and in late 2009 further participation by Te Kura in a Big Picture study tour leading to further development of relationships with Big Picture Australia founders (Viv White and John Hogan) and other teachers leading Big Picture development in their schools.

The philosophies underpinning Authentic Learning at Te Kura have evolved further as more evidence of the success of ideas and programmes emerge. The development is further informed by Wheatley on systems theory (2006/7), the TED series of videos with Sir Ken Robertson (2009, 2010) and Cisco publications (Leadbetter and Wong 2010). An article by Lombardi (2007) supports the philosophies underpinning both Authentic Learning and Big Picture as learning focused on real-world complex problems and their solutions, significantly identifying community participation as "the" important factor.

A literature review undertaken by Shiu (2010) identifies entitled wider work on student disengagement and looks at interventions internationally, concluding the need for strong collaboration and networks between government agencies, communities, families, schools, young people and employers, with mentors identified as a key factor to the success of current initiatives. Nationally, there is also synergy between the research identifying linkages needed for successful employment outcomes for young people Dalzeil (2010) and New Zealand employment statistics (BERL, Department of Labour, June 2010). This work also supports the concept of Authentic Learning as we develop it within Te Kura.

Teachers have a history of personalizing student learning at Te Kura, to greater or lesser degrees. Authentic Learning builds on best practice, and best evidence, and sharpens that focus. Through 2010 professional consultation, discussions and training were undertaken with all staff across our three wahanga. 2010 was identified as an up-skilling and piloting year, and Authentic Learning was trailed in two of the four Te Kura regions which are based on the Ministry of Education regions, i.e. Northern, Central North, Central South and Southern. Of these Central North and Southern regions piloted focussed Authentic Learning. Some other staff in the other two regions also trailed ideas with one or more of their students. In May 2010 a whole school forum, attended by over five hundred of our staff, showcased our own teachers, other staff and students on an Authentic Learning journey of learning, and featured keynote speakers from Big Picture USA (Elliot Washor), Big Picture Australia (Viv White) and the Manakau Institute of Technology (Dr Stuart Middleton).

In 2011 the focus has broadened across regions and staff, but as the underpinning idea is 'one student at a time in a community of learners' not all teachers and students will be involved. Although our cumulative roll over a year is approximately 25,000 students, the focus for Authentic Learning is on our fulltime Year 11-13 students and a group of second-chance learners aged 16-19 enrolled as Young Adults. From a target group of approximately 6,000 students we are looking to involve as many as are interested, but realistically up to 300 students; some as individuals, some within Advisories[2].

Authentic Learning sitting alongside the strategy of regionalization/localization has empowered staff in our regional offices (and wider, in local areas) to begin to develop Advisories. Staff attached to regions but located in Wellington may prove to be working more with individual students or with virtual (or blended) Advisories, or in support of their students who may be in a position to attend in-region group meetings.

In order to facilitate the process for staff, in 2010 we developed an Authentic Learning Continuum designed to scaffold students and teachers towards developing student self-awareness as they move through the steps towards Internships. This continuum is the basis for the work in 2011 and progression along the continuum will be a factor for all, but not all will progress through to the Internship level.

The Authentic Learning Continuum outlines the steps in a linear way, but this is not a linear process. Rather it is one including:

Article continued from page 4.

1. Initial discussion/rich conversations
2. Exploration and goal setting
3. Research/careers and personal learning style exploration
4. Further goal setting/ adaptation of learning programmes
5. Scaffolding each student towards interest-based learning; to support re-engagement and achievement
6. Attendance on STAR courses (secondary/tertiary interface)
7. Re-setting goals/maybe further course adaptation
8. Informational Interviews/ Shadow Days
9. Internships or Gateway placements

The Authentic Learning Continuum is central to authentic learning. Activities as developed for each step along the continuum are easily worked through in a supportive face-to-face environment. Our challenge is to work with students and whanau either by distance methods or in-region face-to-face opportunities and ensure that the 'journey' involves all with an interest in the student: the student, their whanau, the Learning Advisor and the wider community where an Internship with a mentor with similar interests to the student helps ground the student's learning through Te Kura in a real world community context.

Each identified step is supported by documentation including student worksheets (on-line and hard copy), and links to other areas of exploration for the student. The Toolbox provides comprehensive and practical support for each step the student may go through e.g., there is stepped support for a student to work through before an Informational Interview is undertaken at a workplace or other community group.

Before a student embarks on an internship there is the expectation that some steps have been completed. A formal contract between the student, whanau (family), and community placement (mentor) is required before an internship can be undertaken. However, many of our students are already in part time work. We recognize, however, that this may or may not be where the student intends to be, in one, five or ten year's time. The Learning Advisor will therefore also go back and revisit goals and steps along the continuum e.g., encouraging the student to undertake further careers exploration work to identify that student's actual interests and strengths.

As outlined, other valid steps towards Internships include student attendance at exploratory STAR courses and some of our students are also involved in Gateway, where students gain industry credits.

Examples of Emerging Authentic Learning in Regions:

While staff across the school are currently working through the Authentic Learning continuum with their students, staff in the regions have different sets of opportunities:

1. In the Northern Region, for example, teacher s in their teams have invited students in to preliminary start-up Advisories. Attendance at one such day saw around 80 students and whanau in attendance, as a first stage of development. The Northern Kaiarahi[3] has a leadership role in Authentic Learning development and is working actively with staff and with local communities and groups to develop the networks and work.

Northern Region is also trialling a virtual Advisory of on-line students.
2. In Central North teachers have made contact with their students in local venues in the region with the intention of growing these into Advisories. One Learning Advisor is running physical education (PE) sessions in a local gym, offering this to his learning group and the learning groups of other Learning Advisors, and is slowly building up his numbers. His next step is to evolve these into Advisories for students who are interested in working this way. The Central North Kaiarahi also has regional leadership of authentic learning as part of his defined role and has continued actively networking with local Iwi, hapu, whanau, businesses and organizations within the region to establish contacts and possible Internship placements where interests and locations match. There are currently eight emerging Advisories within the Central North region.
3. Southern Region has developments in the hands of their Kaiarahi and Liaison (visiting) teachers. This process began last year in Southern as a piloting region and some learning was taken from this to carry through into 2011. Additionally, Southern Region's Kaiarahi interviews MOE referrals to Te Kura and discusses the strategy with them and their families, ensuring that they aware of Authentic Learning as a point of difference and the opportunity for them to re-engage with learning. This is a process to further encourage across all regions.
4. Central South Region is establishing Advisories in three regional locations and interest in working this way with students has developed significantly as teachers in that region have gained greater understanding of what Authentic Learning is.
5. Many Learning Advisors based both in Wellington and in the regions are working with individual students at this time, encouraging them to work towards placements and internships. They are supported in this by their Team Leaders and the in-region staff.

All Kaiarahi (there is one per region) are well supported by their Regional Manager to advance authentic learning within their regions. This high level support, alongside that of the Senior Leadership Team, is pivotal for the success of this approach to teaching and learning.

Our goal is to have some Advisories in 2011 (some up to fifteen students, some in the range of three to five students) within each region, working with their Learning Advisor predominantly in a support role, supporting the work of other teachers but ideally teaching some of their group's curriculum themselves, and to have a number of individual Learning Advisors working with individual students within their learning group.

The end goal is to develop fully functioning Advisories where student learning is based on specific interests and Internships and Learning Advisors teach across some curriculum areas, and, as in the Big Picture schools, students present their projects and development stories at an Exhibition before their whanau, peers and mentors.

A next steps challenge for us is one which is facing all schools, but which we are well placed to lead and to meet; the development of our ability to plan and undertake NCEA assessment across curriculum areas, through student portfolio presentation. This will require strategic and practical thinking and leadership from our experienced curriculum and assessment teams.

Lessons from 2010

2010 was a time of learning, trailing, and piloting. It was also a year of developing processes and documentation to support teachers and students, as well as engaging our wider communities in consultation nationally as we developed our plans and objectives. An Advisory Group was established at the beginning of the project and from that seventeen workstreams were identified to support the implementation.

Learning Advisors reported through the year that they were working with over 300 students somewhere along the continuum as at September 2010 (up from 244 at the end of July), and some pilots evolved into Advisories through the year, albeit early stage Advisories. Contacts were created and developed with a range of other education providers and agencies nationally as we sought to grow awareness and understanding of the work.

Evaluation reports were generated through our Student Management System bi-monthly and then monthly, retrieving such information as number of contacts between students/teachers, phone calls, mails and achievement information[4]. However, capturing qualitative data was acknowledged from the outset as being more difficult to capture and actually as more important at this stage of the development. The two piloting regions developed ways of capturing such information onto templates developed within the project, but again this information could only be accessed manually. In order to complement the qualitative data a manual exercise was undertaken in order that some of the stories could be scrutinized. A list of Learning Advisors from each region, who had self-identified as actively working with students in this focused way was collated, and a questionnaire sent to every seventh Learning Advisor as a random sample. This information, from forty two Learning Advisors, was processed and stories gathered from the information presented.

Example 1 – Student T's Learning Advisor reports that following a series of authentic learning conversations with T she has seen a 'big change' in his level of communication. "He calls me now, and his other teachers. There was little contact before". She reports that T was really struggling before; although there has not been an increase in his work there has been an increase in the quality of work. Further: "Since the Authentic Learning rich conversations T has completed two STAR courses at the Music and Audio Institute of New Zealand (MAINZ). He has gained an excellence in his performance music.

Previously he had not gained any standards (qualifications) with us. He is now 18 credits away from gaining NCEA Level 1 (requires 80 credits) and we are now talking about what we could do for continuing his education."

Example 2 – An email from student B to his Learning Advisor (B though discussions between him, his Learning Advisor and the Kaiarahi began attending a local Computer Club; from there his interest was followed through and job-shadowing led to an Internship at a computer consultancy, with the owner as his mentor).

"As part of Authentic Learning I will be required to do a project and present it to my mentor and my parents, and a teacher from Te Kura. I will build a computer from scratch; this includes piecing all the hardware together, configuring the hard drive to run software, loading Windows etc. If there are standards in computing at level 2 or 3 that I can tie into my project can you please let me know."

Alongside the positive stories there were, of course, others where stair-casing towards an internship had not progressed. In some cases contact with the student became difficult (many of our students move around the country) or the student simply came off the roll. Some Learning Advisors spent time working with their student(s) only for the effort to go nowhere. However, my belief is that efforts made on the development of such relationships do impact the student's life in some way.

Other findings from the sample information reviewed showed that many of our staff understand the intent behind Authentic Learning and that many are prepared to try this. There is significant teacher goodwill, as they see benefits for their students and are realistic about difficulties we have had previously in engaging students in their learning. 2010 saw the ideas being integrated into staff/student discussions across the organization.

Learning Advisors who became early adopters report both successes and failures, and again we must always bring this back to "one student at a time." Some of our students prefer to keep the 'distance' in distance education.

Teachers report that students responded positively to the increased focus from their Learning Advisor, increased interest in the student as a person and discussions about their dreams and aspirations, and encouragement towards success. This often led to the development of a more active two-way contact between teachers and student/whanau.

One example of significant success in re-engaging students in their learning and increasing their aspirations and achievement was reported (and evaluated by an external evaluator) in one pilot area, Tauranga, where a Te Kura Tutor was engaged to work specifically with sixteen to nineteen year old Young Adults, many of whom came to the programme through Youth Justice and CYFS. He worked closely with agencies in Tauranga and received referrals from them. These were disengaged and troubled students requiring one-on-one support, and he reflected "working 1:1 with youth at risk had phenomenal success as it provided structure and purpose (in order) to move the student forward. " He re-engaged students learning as well as into sports clubs and activities, alongside the development of other authentic learning experiences for them.

Over the last three terms of 2010 none of the Youth Justice referrals reoffended which is a significant success indicator, and of the thirty plus students who worked with him over the year, fifteen were enrolled into tertiary programmes ready for the start of 2011. He reported "What has made this project exciting is that the students became excited – many for the first time….. students setting goals related to career ambitions that *they* are interested in for their own sake… nobody else's."

In 2011 we are building on those successes and successes from other regional pilots, and growing similar models in different areas of the country.

For reporting in 2011 a simpler mechanism has been added to the Student Management System which will enable progress along the continuum to be captured, however, qualitative data capture still holds challenges. To this end, we have developed an intervention logic model of evaluation which will reply on interviews of a random sample of participants (students, supervisors/whanau/mentors).

Conclusion

The philosophies and concepts underpinning authentic learning are broadly understood and accepted by the majority of our staff. They are, after all, based on best practice teaching and learning. The pivotal idea is to place the student right at the centre of their learning; learning grounded in student passion and in their local context, with programmes of learning personalized to support each student, across levels, curriculum areas and across the secondary/tertiary interface.

We have a long way to go before we can point to successful and sustainable Advisories within Te Kura. However, initial steps are underway and such groupings are developing. In-region and Wellington based staff, are increasingly thinking strategically about pathways for each student in their learning group to fit within the strategic direction of Te Kura.

Yes, there are challenges, but there are also real opportunities for our students to succeed as individuals, and for the model to grow.

"The work is like playing jazz…. underpinned by the clear and definite structure but then played out differently with each individual student and with groups of students …" – Elliot Washor (Co-founder Big Picture)

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Notes
[1] Gateway is a secondary/tertiary interface programme funded by the Tertiary Education Commission. Students can gain industry Training Standards on their Gateway work placement which count towards their qualifications.
[2] An Advisory is a Learning Group (Form Group) or partial Learning Group; students who choose to communicate as a group or individually, either face-to-face with their Advisory or on-line as an authentic learning student. All teachers at Te Kura have a Learning Group but not all students or teachers are working towards participation in an Advisory.
[3.] 'Kaiarahi' means 'Guide'. Each region at Te Kura has a Kaiarahi position. Functions include regional relationship development, identification and maintenance of authentic learning partnerships and opportunities, and support for in-region visiting teachers (Liaison Teachers).
[4.] 2010 Evaluation reports separated out our 52 Gateway students, and with some exceptions these were reported upon separately (i.e., not included in the Authentic Learning reports). STAR student achievement was not the subject of formal reporting under Authentic Learning; although over 600 students attended STAR courses.

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DEANZ RESEARCH

DEANZ members are engaged in a number of current and upcoming projects. Some of them include:

DEANZ 2016 project. This project as reported by the DEANZ President involves some stargazing and making links with the Horizon Reports currently being generated by Larry Johnson of the New Media Consortium. Meetings in November will help to clarify what leaders in e learning think might happen in New Zealand over the next 1-5 years. Some of this work will be reported at the ICELF meeting at Unitec, Wellington and a major conference on Higher Education in Auckland in March.

JISC's scenario building strategies from United Kingdom are the basis for the scenarios. Julia Hallas at AUT is undertaking doctoral work on a similar topic.For more information see: http://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/projects/ 2016-scenario-guide-effective- tertiary-education-new-zealand.

Does E learning Help or Hinder Student progress and retention?

This project has been monitoring student progress and retention in several institutions for the past semester using strategies developed in the first part of the year. It is Ako Aotearoa funded. Pre and post-test data is now being analysed. Interviews with participating staff are also being reviewed. A report on the project is due for release in February. One major outcome will be the development of a toolkit for staff engaging in e learning. The project is significant because institutions are now funded on completions, rather than enrollment, so having an understanding of student behaviour is increasingly important.

E learning Guidelines.

This project commenced in about 2004. Some of the guidelines and scenarios developed at that time are less relevant now. It is proposed to update the national guidelines over the next 12 months to enhance both relevance and utility. The project will link to the DEANZ 2016 one, the Taking the Lead: Strategic Management

DEANZ Active in Research!
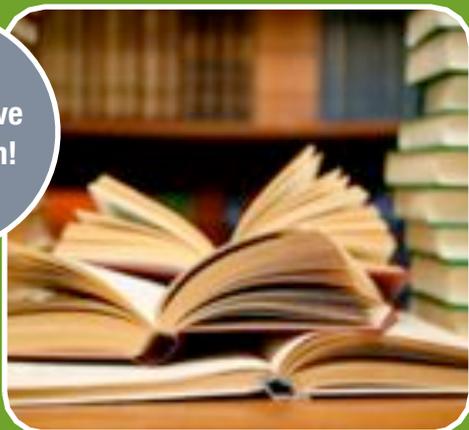
CELEBRATING SUCCESS!

Article added to the Routledge Education Class of 2011

An article by Mark Nichols, a member of DEANZ Executive and co-editor of the *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning*, has been recognised by Routledge as the most downloaded article in the journal *Distance Education* last year. The article, "Student perceptions of support services and the influence of targeted interventions on their retention in distance education", was funded by Ako Aotearoa and published in Distance Education 31(1), 93-113.

The article is now free for anyone to read and access for the next 12 months, from:

http://www.educationarena.com/ pdf/classof2011/ EducationalMediaTechnology.pdf .

DEANZ President's Column: Together let's grow the influence and support of DEANZ this Summer!

Niki Davis, University of Canterbury Professor of e-Learning

DEANZ has been springing forward over the last few months since my last report in this magazine. Among other things we have overcome 'quake related challenges, grown through our voice and research projects to inform the nation and the world, and held our Annual General Meeting.

Minor changes to our DEANZ leadership

The September 2011 Annual General Meeting confirmed a few changes in DEANZ leadership, which I am told is common in the year between our bi-annual conferences. We welcomed Jen McCutcheon as the new Executive member from Te Kura / The Correspondence School and I am delighted to see her article about their innovative work in this issue of the Magazine.

I thanked the outgoing Executive for their work and commitment to DEANZ and continue to encourage the new Executive to continue to make DEANZ a relevant and vibrant organisation. To a large extent the work of DEANZ is reliant on the commitment and time of the Executive Committee. Nick McGuigan has been co-opted back on the Executive as editor of the DEANZ magazine. Special thanks have to go to Derek Wenmoth continuing as Vice President. In my AGM report I noted that Anna Weatherstone was longstanding Executive members who decided to stand down from the Executive. Although Anna's wisdom and enthusiasm is missed, I have been delighted with the support provided by Andrew Higgins a Past President who has ably stepped into the role of Secretary.

Research

DEANZ was fortunate to win two research contracts that have informed our work and service nationally and internationally. DEANZ' Ako Aotearoa project for the tertiary sector is the topic of a separate article.

Eddie Reisch of the Ministry of Education Virtual Learning Network commissioned DEANZ under the leadership of Derek Wenmoth to research and produce illustrations for the matrix at the centre of the Learning Communities Online Handbook. Derek and I worked with Visiting Professor Michael Barbour who travelled nationwide to interview and observe e-learning clusters of schools involved in distance learning. This research provides illustrations for the matrix at the centre of Virtual Learning Network's Learning Communities Online handbook and we

Niki Davis updates us on recent DEANZ events

hope that it will stimulate the addition of many more insights that will also be linked to the matrix. This research is being launched at the Research Stream of the ULearn'11 conference in Rotorua, as I write.

Finances

It has been an eventful year with a change in Treasurer from Nick McGuigan to Michael Campbell in December 2010 and then the loss of material in Michael's office that was demolished due to the February 'quake in Christchurch. The Charities Commission provided information on ways to handle that challenge and a set of audited accounts has now been prepared and will be submitted within the extended deadline provided by the Charities Commission. The Executive have accepted Michael's recommendation to increase the frequency of auditing to each year to get us firmly back on track, so this will be put to the forthcoming AGM in April 2012 at our conference in Wellington.

It is good to report that DEANZ finances continue in a relatively healthy state given the surplus that was handed across. To large measure this good health is a result of the surpluses we have made from our biennial conference, so the financial success of each conference is very important to the organisation. The Executive Committee is very aware of the need to use the Conference surpluses wisely and for the benefit of all members.

Conferences

Under Mark Brown's leadership, the 2010 Conference was an enormous success in its quality and it also made a profit. As you will be aware we had hoped to hold the 2012 conference in Christchurch and struggled to maintain that decision until the June 'quake increased the probability of further disruptions. It was then decided to move back to Wellington, which has often been a successful location for DEANZ. Mark Nichol volunteered to lead the conference committee and you will read the unfolding news on our web site and in another item in this magazine. Particular thanks to the Organising Committees for all their hard work, both the temporary Christchurch committee led by Michael Campbell and the current committee led by Mark Nichols.

Community

This DEANZ Magazine continues to strengthen under the co-editorship of Nick McGuigan and Thomas Kern. Our professional non refereed publication provides a key route to let members know about your activities as a distance educator and it is a voice for DEANZ. The production is a lot of work that Nick leads with great enthusiasm that we acknowledge, not least following their move to Macquarie University in Australia. We can all help Nick and Thomas by providing them with copy that reports on the diverse activities in which DEANZ members are engaged, which they will be delighted to receive. Nick has mentioned that he will be particularly keen to receive copy from Auckland and further north because it is currently under represented. *A member in who volunteers to act as a Contributing Editor would be very welcome!*

The **DEANZ website** has continued its development thanks to Kathryn MacCallum, including defending us from hackers. Recently the Executive voted to provide Kathryn with some funds to support this work, which is particularly useful given her currently planned maternity leave. The online payment system that aligns with a member database is working now. The website is the face DEANZ presents to the world beyond our organisation and it is really important that it reflects who we are and what we do. If DEANZ members have any comments or ideas about our website, please let the DEANZ Exec know – we want this to be a dynamic and up-to-date site. *Again a volunteer as a Contributing Editor would be welcome.*

DEANZ webinars have been provided to members this year and the most recent one in September launched our DEANZ Ako scenarios for tertiary education in 2016. You may view recordings through the secure area of our DEANZ web site. The webinars that have been a feature of DEANZ work over the past four or five years and are now sponsored by Webqem and the University of Canterbury e-Learning Lab. We look forward to more volunteers to present professional development and research.

DEANZ also continues to be recognised as a body that informs strategy with a wider audience on blended learning and eCampus developments, as well as distance education. For example, as I mentioned in my report to our Annual General Meeting in September, DEANZ' briefing paper for the then new Minister of Tertiary Education, Rt. Hon Steven Joyce in 2010 about Distance Education and e-Learning was followed up with two responses.

As part of our national voice DEANZ is an active member of the national Tertiary eLearning Reference Group (TeLRG) convened by Ako Aotearoa and the Ministry of Education (tertiary branch) represented by me, Niki Davis, as President. Active TeLRG membership has enabled DEANZ to influence policy and research and to better inform our work. We have provided information and informed the Ministry of Education's literature review of e-learning that will be published later this year.

In addition, Ako Aotearoa has requested that we ask members to use their Register of Research, including adding entries. I have added entries on DEANZ projects and those of the e-Learning Lab and encouraged all my thesis students to do so too – it can improve the impact as well as their links to professional networks. I encourage DEANZ members and their colleagues to get their research into the Register too!

We are also fortunate that Executive Member Gordon Suddaby also as a member of TeLRG in his role to represent ACCODE. DEANZ has a memorandum of understanding with the Australasian society, ACCODE that fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange such that members of both ACCODE and DEANZ gain mutual benefit. A similar memorandum of understanding is being negotiated with Rod Simms president of ODLAA led by Bill Anderson, DEANZ Past President.

Membership

Finally I would like to note that DEANZ membership has remains healthy, as shown by figures at our recent AGM. The Executive's discussion of institutional membership is ongoing covering both tertiary institutional membership (led by Mark Brown) and the school sector SIG (led by VP Derek Wenmoth); members' views are welcome. Our DEANZ Communications and Administration Officer, Katherine Harris recently refined her post to that of Membership Secretary and volunteered to work unpaid. She recommended that her funding be released for web site work and this has been agreed. Katherine will lead a membership survey with support from Michael Campbell, who is qualified in marketing. Please look out for this survey over the next few months.

While it may appear that membership is of less value now that our journal is freely viewable, it is important to not that there would be no voice, journal or magazine informing the profession and policy makers if there were no members of DEANZ! Please encourage more people to join DEANZ and increase the strength of our voice – it is only $60 per year and a great way to indicate individual and institutional commitment to 21st century education and training!

Together let's grow the influence and support of DEANZ this summer!

Na mihi nui

Niki Davis

University of Canterbury e-Learning Lab, November 2011

Leah de Wijze, Senior Instructional Designer Open Polytechnic, provides us an update on an innovative working group of instructional designers getting together to create a space for collaboration.

a platform needed to be able to network and collaborate with each other

The Open Polytechnic hosted a group of Instructional Designers from the central North Island recently with the aim of determining whether or not to create a professional development group

"It's a fairly new profession, especially here in New Zealand. It's only really been recognised here in the last 20 years," says Leah de Wijze, Senior Instructional Designer.

Making sure learning material is understandable and assists learning, Instructional Designers often have many different titles, making it harder to recognise their distinct field.

"Although there are quite a few Instructional Designers in New Zealand, we're often called different things. There's also not a lot of professional development or formal study in the area.

"A lot of our work is related to eLearning and we felt a need to have something more structured as well as a platform to be able to network and collaborate with each other," says Leah.

Gaining funding from Ako Aotearoa to help with costs for the initial meeting, Leah says there was a great response in the central North Island area.

"There was a huge response, even though it was the day of the snow. Everyone was there except for one person whose plane was grounded.

"The next step will be undergoing a process to build a more formal community of practice. It's about learning and it's a great way to build a talent pool. At this stage it looks like the Open Polytechnic will lead the initiative."

An online group area has been set up here on the Ako website: http://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/communities/central-region-instructional-designers.

The group met again in December. If all goes well, they would like to become a national, rather than a regional group. This will be looked at again in February next year.

Leah de Wijze
Senior Instructional Designer
Learning & Teaching Solutions

Open Polytechnic
KURATINI TUWHERA

DEANZ AWARD

The winner of the DEANZ Award 2012 will be announced at the 2012 DEANZ Conference 'Shift Happens: Resiliance, Relevance and Reform', during the conference dinner. Applications are due **17 February 2012**. The application form for this prestigious award can be downloaded from http://www.educationarena.com/pdf/classof2011/EducationalMediaTechnology.pdf.

In this issue we ask Bill Anderson, Director of Distance Learning - University of Otago, what got him started in flexible learning and the motivation required to continuously improve in the area.

I've spent the last four years of my distance education life at the University of Otago, having arrived in Dunedin on a warm sunny day in March 2008. The role I took on came with an opportunity to learn an entirely new language – medicalese – since the majority of Otago's distance programmes are in the Health Sciences area. I can now spell ophthalmology as well as say it. The thing that didn't change when I moved south was the nature of the issues that face distance educators and students. While Otago distance students are predominantly postgraduate students, in my discussions with the staff who are distance teachers I still find that I am talking about retention, the problems of returning to study, technology use, materials production, marginalisation, invisibility, education as the third shift (work, family, then learning), and, even in this connected age, isolation, to mention but a few. Sounds bad, but then there is the joy of an enthusiastic student, the thrill of pulling off a superb Connect conference, the connections developed within the class, the recognition of the contribution of DE to the personal and professional lives of many people – balances things up really.

Your job is to know where the gaps in knowledge are and address them...

How did I get here? After an inauspicious beginning as an economist in a government department, a few years as a primary teacher and then a stint at home looking after young children, I was fairly convinced that education was pretty important. During that time, especially the latter part of it, it became evident from personal experience and that of the people I mixed with, that not everyone could attend educational institutions face-to-face. A few distance courses later I was a DE convert. Luckily for me, that was when I was able to stay up 'til 3am writing assignments and still get up to feed the kids at 7am without too many ill effects ... I'm a bit over that now! From then on it was all down hill. Not in the sense that it got worse, rather that there has been a steady impetus to keep going and keep involved in DE. That involvement meant a number of years in the academic world, teaching and writing in the area of DE amongst other things.

I still have a (subdued) academic role, but a highlight of my academic life was the opportunity to spend two years at Penn State University working on a doctorate with Michael Moore as my advisor. There can be no denying Michael's huge contribution to distance education, and there is no doubt that comes on the back of a wealth of practical, research, and theoretical knowledge. It was a valuable experience to be working with him. What was as good as that individual work with Michael, was working in a doctoral programme focused entirely on distance education. Can you imagine being in a cohort where there were 35 students from 14 countries and 5 continents all intently studying programme design in distance education? That was one of the most fascinating experiences of those two years – so much variety, such diverse perspectives, some scarily intelligent people! The beer was pretty good too!

Professionally, the most important aspect of my work is to remain focused on the importance of access to education for all. All sorts of bits and pieces hang off that key idea, conceptually and practically. When nothing else is going right, I think of people around NZ (and overseas) using distance education to improve themselves in circumstances I probably dare not contemplate. I soon realise that the annoyances I face are usually pretty minor.

When I ask myself 'What next?' my thoughts often turn to research. I've been fortunate to have undertaken or been involved with others in a few good research projects, and there's not much that beats the thrill of knowing that you are pushing at the boundaries of knowledge in a way that people might find useful. My advisor used to say "Your job is to know where the gaps in knowledge are, and address them... and don't confuse gaps in your personal knowledge with gaps in knowledge generally". Undoubtedly there are still plenty of gaps of both kinds to go around and I always enjoy a challenge.

Derek's Blog

Derek Wenmoth, DEANZ Vice President updates us on the use of technology in the classroom and how best we may be able to persuade our more reluctant colleagues ... through his blog "The Elephant in the Room" http://blog.core-ed.org/derek

We live in an age where the use and impact of digital technologies is undeniably evident in all aspects of our lives, and schools are engaging in some serious planning and professional learning to ensure that the programmes they provide for students remain relevant and engaging for todays learners – and of course, the use of ICTs features significantly in all of this. Much of my work takes me into schools where I see some inspiring work being done by teachers – fueled by a potent mix of passion and professionalism. I'm often asked to come and provide further inspiration with a keynote and/or workshops, or to facilitate a planning process to ensure that what they're doing continues to be innovative and worthwhile. Such events are generally very 'energy raising' and forward-focused.

Increasingly, however, I find myself approached at some point in the day by a principal or staff member with a question – one for which there is no easy answer. It's the elephant in the room that no-one wants to bring up in open forums, but reserve for that quiet moment usually just as I'm about to leave. The question is asked in all manner of ways, but for the sake of abbreviation, I'll paraphrase it here as "*how do we address the issue of colleagues who simply refuse to come on board and integrate ICTs into their teaching and learning in the way(s) we've agreed to as a school/staff?*"

Why is this question so significant? Let's use the metaphor of a waka – all of the paddlers need to be paddling in the same direction, toward the same destination, and committed to keeping the rhythm of the team that will ensure the work is evenly shared and doesn't become a burden for a few while others rest. The paddlers will come in all shapes and sizes, with different strengths and abilities, but in the waka they are a team. The waka is no place for individuals – it must be a team. One person not doing their part

impacts on the whole team performance, making it so much harder for the others to keep up.

Schools are pretty much like that – we celebrate the fact that we have staff who are specialists in their different fields, with a range of interests and expertise. They will be remembered by students for their idiosyncrasies and things that made their style unique, but in pursuing the common and agreed vision and goals of the school, they are a team.

Each of us reacts differently to coping with change and adopting different ways of doing things. There's a general agreement with the principles of Roger's work on the adoption of innovation for instance. This is why planning a professional learning programme in schools that caters for the spectrum of needs among staff is critical, and why the 'one-size-fits-all' approaches are well and truly a thing of the past. And if Rogers work is accepted, then there'll always be the late majority and even laggards in our midst – which is where the ideas submitted to a recent eSchoolNews article titled 10 ways to change the minds of tech-reluctant staff may be helpful.
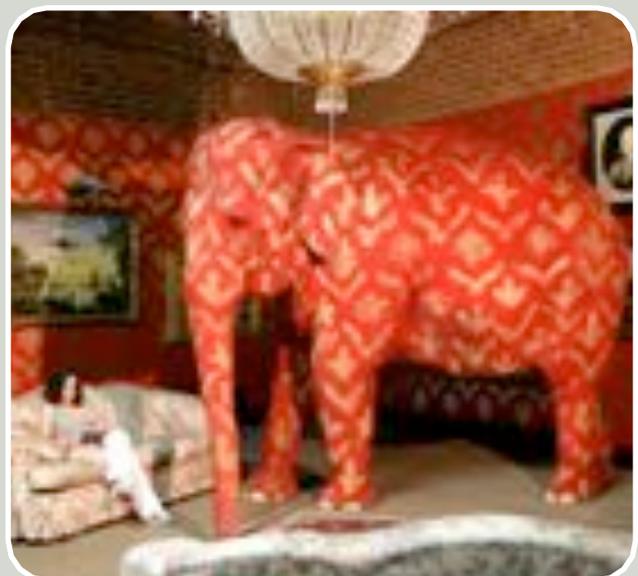
But the questions posed to me aren't really about the *reluctant* staff, but those who are simply *refusers*. Their behaviour can be spotted a mile away, and includes:

1. The avoiders – "*I'll make time for the ICT PD once I've done everything I need to for NCEA implementation…*"

2. The excuse makers – "*My laptop has never functioned properly, so I can't really do that..*"

3. The apologists – "*I just don't seem to be able to make it work, it must be my glasses or something…*"

4. The debaters – "*We really need to be sure we're using the technology for the right reasons, not simply because it's there…*"

5. The pessimists – "*Technology is leading us down a road to destruction, there are so many problems lurking online…*"

I'm sure there are others, but that pretty much covers what immediately springs to mind. While there are very few of these people occupying teaching positions in our schools, their impact on schools being able to achieve the agreed vision and purpose is often considerable. That's because the staff of a school are a team, and not a team playing for the glory of the team itself, or even for its fans. No, these teams are playing for the futures of the students they've been entrusted with.

This is what makes the issue so significant. Education isn't about the teachers, it's about the learners – their future – and ours. Sure, we are a profession that values and respects the abilities of individuals. We'll generally go the extra mile to support those who are struggling, or to accommodate those who find change difficult. But when it comes to considering how we are working together to affect the futures of our learners, the focus must clearly be on the strategic goals we have agreed on, and on all striving to make that happen. Some may be *reluctant*, and they can be accommodated, but there isn't any room for *refusers*.

Consider the health system for a moment. Think of a hospital that adopts a new online patient information system, having demonstrated the considerable advantages to patient treatment through having all patient information coordinated in one place and made available electronically to the specialists who may be treating him/her. The system requires that all of those working in it are familiar with and conscious in using it. What would we make, then, of a nurse or doctor who simply refused to play their part, claiming that they preferred the old paper approach, or defended their position by arguing that the electronic data could be 'hacked into' and thus it wasn't in the patient's interest. Such behaviour wouldn't be tolerated, and most likely, the person concerned would face some sort of disciplinary action.

Consider now the case in a school, where, after consultation with the staff and parents, the decision is made to establish an online environment where resources and learning support can be made available for students to access in their own time. The school and its community agree that this is a positive thing to do in supporting students to become self-managing learners, and provides parents with the ability to take a more active interest in the work their offspring are engaged in. The action is included in the school's strategic plan and signed off by the BOT, with the expectation that every staff member will make a contribution to the online resource pool in order to make the online offerings complete. How do we then regard the teacher who, at the end of the year, hasn't made any move to contributing, and defends his/her position with excuses/apology/debate etc.? No student has died. No student has been put at risk (apparently). But the fact remains that an expectation, agreed by the BOT and school management hasn't been met.

This is the elephant in the room. We don't want to offend sensitivities. We make excuses for the teacher(s) involved – they are overworked, they are too old (or too young), they have had a rough year, etc. Other staff attempt to 'fill the gap'. Resentments loom large and rifts begin to occur among staff. Expectations are revised, and in the subsequent year's strategic plan putting materials online for students becomes an 'option' for staff. The refusers win, and the learners lose.

Having heard of and witnessed such concerns for some time now, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. It's time for leaders to lead. They must be prepared to take responsibility for following through on the strategic goals set by the school. These are not to be treated as a 'wish list', but as a plan containing specific actions and expectations backed up by evidence-based decision making.

2. Every teacher should be be provided with opportunities for professional development that is relevant to their needs, and assists them in fulfilling the requirements of the job they do.

Without it, such requirements become un-enforceable.

3. Schools need to have a robust process for involving all staff and their communities in developing a vision and strategic plan, particularly where new initiatives are contemplated. Such decisions need to be reached on the basis of informed, future-focused thinking that is focused primarily on preparing students for their future.

4. Teachers in schools need to be held to account for the contribution they are expected to make to the agreed strategic direction of the school. there ought to be clear links between the intentions of the school's strategic plan, and the objectives included in a teacher's performance review at the beginning of each cycle.

Such instances in schools may be rare – but where they do occur, it is the impact on students that I am concerned about – and of schools who remain continually unable to achieve the goals they set for themselves in terms of meeting their students needs. How much longer can this be tolerated?

Derek Wenmoth

DEANZ Vice President

Game-Based Learning Handbook

I spent today at the International eLearning Futures Conference (follow #ielfc11 on twitter) at Unitec in Auckland. I had a slot after lunch speaking about future trends in eLearning, which provided a good follow-on from Steve Wheeler's opening address.

In my talk I spoke of several things that are shaping the expectations learners have of our educational institutions and the courses we provide – from mobile devices, to visualisation tools, to open content – and gamefication.

So it was with interest I came across the e-book above when I arrived home this evening. Titled The GameIT Handbook, the book has been funded by the European Commision, and provides a framework for games-based pedagogy.

For those unfamiliar with games-based learning, this provides a pretty useful introduction, particularly the early chapters. For those who are more familiar with the concept, the book provides some useful case studies that unpack the ideas more and illustrate a range of contexts in which games-based learning approaches might be used.

Derek Wenmoth

JOURNAL OF OPEN, FLEXIBLE AND DISTANCE LEARNING

The Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning, the official DEANZ Journal, has successfully made the transition from print-based media to online resource openly available under Creative Commons Attribution licensing.

Prior issues of the journal, including those published under its previous title (The Journal of Distance Learning) are available @ http://journals.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/index.php/JOFDL/index.

November marks the publication of a special issue of the Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning entitled 'Beyond Open Educational Resources: Open educational practices in formal education'. This issue focuses on the role of open content, Open Educational Resources (OERs)draws attention to open educational practices as a means to increase access to educational opportunities, widen participation in education, promote social justice and potentially transform formal education via the concept of 'openness'. The recent OPAL Report (http://oer-quality.org/) by the Open Educational Quality Initiative argues for the use of open content in the form of OERs in combination with open educational structures in order to transform learning. This suggested transformation implies shifts toward both open education and open learning, including:

a) innovation in the adoption of open educational practices within relatively 'closed' educational institutions and structures.

b) changes in the form of policy or regulatory interventions across a broad range of educational contexts in order to not only support but also promote openness on the part of educators in sharing what they have, e.g. knowledge, resources, networks, etc.; and

c) increased attention to learner choice in the content, pacing and mode of study in formal education as part of the 'opening' of learning in formal and informal learning situations.

If your are interested in submitting a research paper to the journal or you would like to find out more information, please do not hesitate to contact the journal editors Mark Nichols or Ben Kehrwald @ journaleditor@deanz.org.nz.

Mark Nichols - Co-Editor of Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning

DEANZ 2012 CONFERENCE

"Shift happens: Resilience, relevance and reform" is the theme for next year's DEANZ conference, which will be held at the Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington, April 11-13. Proudly sponsored by Open Polytechnic (Platinum) and Ako Aotearoa (Gold), the 2012 event will continue the tradition of Aotearoa New Zealand's premier conference in open, flexible and distance learning. The conference will be relevant to tertiary, secondary and company trainers seeking opportunities to network, be inspired, and learn from keynote (and invited) speakers and the DEANZ community.

All information is available @ http://tinyurl.com/deanz2012. The conference has a particular focus on the themes of *resilience* (dealing with uncertainty and coping with changes you can and cannot influence); *relevance* (providing educational services that are relevant to the context and culture of the learner); and *reform* (moving to better futures for all, addressing the political, social, economic and personal drivers). These themes will resonate for all active in education and training under the broad heading of distance education.

Registrations are open and **abstracts are now invited**. The 2012 event gives the opportunity to open, flexible and distance education practitioners the chance to share their work in the form of non-refereed papers, posters and workshops. Submissions for refereed papers are also invited, and accepted papers will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning* – the online, open access DEANZ journal. Author instructions can be found at http://www.deanz.org.nz/home/conferenceDocs/DEANZ_2012_Author_Instructions.pdf.

You can keep up to date with news and tweets on the conference as it happens by following us at https://twitter.com/#!/DEANZ2012. Register your interest in the event itself to ensure you receive conference updates at https://secure.cmsl.co.nz/ei/getdemo.ei?id=398&s=_9B01AIK63.

We're anticipating a great event, and we look forward to you being a part of it in central Wellington next year!

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.

Keeping you informed

Upcoming Events

Open content licensing for educators workshop
23rd - 27th January 2012
Online, Free, Ako Aotearoa, Creative Commons and the OER Foundation.
http://wikieducator.org/Open_content_licensing_for_educators/About

Eighth International Conference on Networked Learning
2 - 4 April 2012

The Open University of The Netherlands, Maastricht, The Netherlands.
http://www.networkedlearningconference.org.uk/index.htm

DEANZ 2012 Conference - Shift Happens: Resilience, Relevance and Reform
11 - 13 April 2012
Michael Fowler, Wellington, New Zealand.
http://tinyurl.com/deanz2012

4th Biennial Threshold Concepts Conference
27 - 29 June 2012
University of Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.
http://www.nairtl.ie/index.php?pageID=27&eventID=310

DEANZ 2016 research to Guide NZ is ready for your input now, please!

At the start of this year Ako Aotearoa recognized the expertise and leadership of DEANZ members and awarded DEANZ networking funding to collaboratively work using JISC 'futureing' methodologies to create a set of scenarios that will inform more effective development of tertiary education in New Zealand, and the NZ Tertiary eLearning Reference Group (TeLRG) advises the project. Four leading DEANZ researchers, have interviewed leaders in New Zealand and globally in order to create the first ever set of a nationwide educational system. Now we need the support of all DEANZ members to gather more data and feedback on this set to validate and improve it. The centre pages of this magazine summarise our scenario set. Please review it on your own, with colleagues and/or students! Please also recruit others to engage with it on: ***http://bit.ly/deanz2016***

We look forward to your feedback via comments on our DEANZ 2016 Blog and/or DEANZ2016 page on FaceBook or by email to Niki Davis (Niki.Davis@Canerbury.ac.nz) and/or Pinelopi Zaka (pinelopi.zaka@gmail.com).

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, referred, 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.

So what are you waiting for, grab your nearest and dearest colleagues, friends, workmates, clients, and spread the word.... it is only $60 for individual members!

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