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CONSISTENCY THROUGH TRANSITION

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## CONSISTENCY THROUGH TRANSITION

Trish Chaplin-Cheyne

We are proud to present this twelfth issue of *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Learning and Teaching)* for 2023, with an open theme. This issue continues the journal's aim of addressing current matters and reporting research in the field of tertiary and vocational education. Our focus is also on building community amongst researchers and practitioners from an array of Aotearoa New Zealand institutions. The transition of polytechnics and institutes of technology into Te Pūkenga offers new opportunities for collaboration, and in this issue we welcome contributions from a range of educational organisations across the motu.

### ĀKONGA AT THE CENTRE

We open this issue with an exciting step towards embedding and normalising Māori perspectives and practices into polytechnics under Te Pūkenga. Three kaiako working in the School of Media Arts at the Kirikiriroa campus of Wintec | Te Pūkenga, aware of how Eurocentric bias has historically and culturally framed teaching and learning styles within the polytechnic setting, bring together their own journeys and weave them together in kōrero to outline a new learning framework called Te Pou Ahurei. Toni Herangi, Mason Holloway and Joe Citizen offer Te Pou Ahurei as a tool for meeting the expectations of tertiary educational institutions around mātauranga Māori in a way that is meaningful for our students (ākonga) and represents our shared partnership values of te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Next, Rosemary Sadd and Jacinda Hills consider another priority area: undergraduate nursing education. In an ever-changing educational landscape affected by attrition, conflicting ākonga commitments, and global pandemics, educators must make sure that learners can practice safely and competently. For second-year nursing ākonga within a Bachelor of Nursing program, being able to respond, assess, and intervene appropriately are considered essential “safety to practice” elements before entering an inpatient clinical placement. One solution is simulation learning. In their article, Sadd and Hills describe how virtual simulation games help prepare learners for clinical simulations later in their training, and ultimately for the challenges of the healthcare workplace.

In “A critical appraisal of anxieties among higher education students: Strategies and solutions,” a team of early childhood education teachers consider a growing problem in tertiary and vocational education and how to mitigate it. Mallory Tomsett, Kelly Warren, Rachael Burke, Fenella Wilson, and Chrissie Keepa form a community of practice. In this article, they reflect on the rise of anxiety in ākonga, report findings from the literature on different kinds of anxiety, and explore some of the approaches they are taking to support ākonga with these types of anxieties.

### LITERACY SKILLS

Literacy skills are a core theme of this issue. First, Clare Thomas looks at the transition from school to tertiary or vocational education. For many ākonga, transitioning to higher education involves leaving their comfort zone and, as Tomsett et al. in this issue have shown, entering a high anxiety environment where accessible support

services can be crucial. Thomas's article discusses findings from a 2022 study of tertiary teaching staff across the Bay of Plenty region. The study found three key features of student support critical to successful transitions for students: digital literacy, literacy and numeracy, and academic writing. These three themes therefore focus how Thomas's support services team direct their efforts to support students to succeed and communicate with stakeholders in the wider institution.

Next, Willfred Grayling examines the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT), which over the past decade has been used extensively by the Tertiary Education Commission to track learners' literacy and numeracy skills in tertiary vocational education programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand. The main aim of Grayling's article is to show that the current LNAAT algorithm for calculating statistically significant learner gain in reading and numeracy is limited in its capacity to describe learner progress. Algorithm transparency, Grayling argues, is required to uncover its unintended descriptive effects, and to propose an alternative. The article concludes with detailed recommendations for managing the LNATT data and allowing users of the tool to more easily track learners' progress.

Alongside language acquisition and numeracy, visual literacy entails the ability to use, interpret, produce, and evaluate visual content. In their important contribution to this issue, Ana Terry and Lucy Richardson argue that the dominant focus on writing and reading overlooks these essential capabilities, thereby disadvantaging our learners. Privileging the written word in knowledge production and treating images as secondary "add-ons" is at odds with the potential visual media has to enhance learning and develop social and cultural competencies. Contemporary technology is overwhelmingly dominated by images. Therefore, the authors call for a pedagogical shift to integrate visual literacy skills into the curriculum and into the professional development of educators.

## ONLINE LEARNING AND SUPERVISION

The landscapes of learning and teaching continue to expand globally, and online learning environments are now an integral part of education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Growing demand for internationalised tertiary education has led to increasing numbers of students studying programmes in a different country to that of the provider. This trend is the subject of Elizabeth Youard's research study, which sought to answer the question: How do tertiary ākonga and lecturers perceive interaction during transnational online learning? In doing so, Youard's research offers recommendations to promote interaction among diverse participants and across national borders and time zones.

We follow Youard's study with a complementary survey of postgraduate distance learning. This literature review by Suzanne Miller and Sally Baddock, with the support of research assistants Finn Miller and Katie Baddock, considers twenty articles that specifically focused on online research supervision practice for masters' and higher-level research students. Miller and colleagues summarise the benefits, challenges and potential threats posed by conducting research supervision online – both for supervisors and their research students – to provide some guidance for supervisors who are incorporating distance supervision into their teaching practice. They present some recommendations for best practice and propose some new avenues for ongoing scholarship in this area focusing specifically on professional alignment between supervisors and students, and the possibilities inherent in distance supervision practice for those historically excluded from higher education due to geographical distance.

## KAIAKO NETWORKS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Finally, this issue turns to teachers (kaiako) as learners, and the ever-present need for educators to develop and hone their own skills. Across Te Pūkenga, various roles exist for learning and instructional designers who complement subject-matter experts to produce high-quality teaching and ākonga outcomes. Balint Koller, Jerrylynn Manuel and Katrina Watt are instructional designers within the Southern Institute of Technology. In

their contribution, they share strategies employed and lessons learnt through reflective practice in the hope that others involved in learning design may benefit from them in their own institutional context. They also highlight the importance of their role and the value instructional designers bring to the organisation in the transition into Te Pūkenga.

Educational institutions commonly use observations of teaching either to evaluate teaching practices or to help develop kaiako capabilities. An article by James Staples, David Woodward and James Harrison builds upon an earlier 2022 study by Staples which explored how peer observation of teaching could be used at Otago Polytechnic | Te Pūkenga to develop facilitation practice and progress. That earlier study showed that a parallel community of practice was the key ingredient to the successful uptake of a peer observation programme. In their contribution, Staples et al. consider the model developed in that study in the light of subsequent research and recommend changes, motivated by the goal of ongoing improvement.

The final article in this issue continues a series of investigations originating from the community of practice of the Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education research group at Otago Polytechnic | Te Pūkenga. David Woodward, Shannon Booth, Elise Allen, Alexa Forbes and Clare Morton set out to unpack the constructivist model of teaching and learning. They explore the use of reflective practice by asking how educators use and encourage this practice in their learners.

Reiterating the benefits of engaging in continuous reflection and learning is an appropriate place to close *Scope (Learning and Teaching)* 12. We hope you enjoy this issue.

**Trish Chaplin-Cheyne** is the director of Te Ama Ako | Learning and Teaching Development at Otago Polytechnic | Te Kura Matatini ki Otago | Te Pūkenga, where she is responsible for the learning and teaching development service team. This team is tasked with ensuring that programmes and courses are designed to best practice standards; that academic staff have the full range of knowledge and skills needed to facilitate learner success; and that ākonga enjoy an outstanding experience. She is involved with facilitating on the Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education and enjoys being in the classroom environment. Trish joined Otago Polytechnic | Te Pūkenga in 2015, as a learning facilitator involved in the Designing for Learner Success initiative. Her areas of particular interest are curriculum and assessment design.

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