



## work-based learning 3:

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Editorial

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### WORKING AROUND AND WORK-AROUNDS IN COMPLEX TIMES

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Jan Hendrik Roodt

*Ehara taku toa takitahi engari; he toa takitini*  
My successes are not mine alone; they are ours  
– Whakataukā

2020. A new, and on first accounts, deadly virus starts to spread globally. In the chaos that ensues, the cracks in socio-industrial systems, such as health systems, suddenly become obvious. Old information technology systems, that have been kept barely operational for years, suddenly see massive use and start to fail. Within their own physiological systems, people break down, mentally and physically.

Night falls metaphorically on international and national enterprise; harbours suddenly are brought to a standstill and aviation grinds to a halt. Supply chains break down. The race for a vaccine occupies Earth, and, as the world waits, we are forced into seclusion.

We meet online in small groups. Greetings change from “Kia ora, how are you?” to “Can you hear me?” We joke it is like a seance: “Is anybody there?” The most commonly uttered words are now: “You’re on mute”; “Kei te wahangū koe.” Somehow, many of us keep working and some switch to new work, while others appear to wait through the long, dark days of empty streets, standing in line to grab rationed everyday products off bare shelves.

Over time, new coping strategies emerge. Many of us discover how to be frugal with our resources and our words. We have time to contemplate; a deliberate slowness has been forced on many, while others race on to keep technology systems going and most importantly to save lives.

As we considered the topic for *Scope (Work-based Learning)* 3, we were compelled to capture the work that emerged from the dark night of the pandemic. How did we work around the problems we faced while we huddled around computer screens, with our make-shift home offices bathed in the blue light of fuzzy if bespoke backdrops? How did we manage long research journeys while our opportunities for face-to-face kōrero (discussion) with research participants dwindled and opportunities for ‘snowball’-type sampling faded? How did our resilience express itself while the world hibernated and fretted? Just as sunrise follows night, we also found work-arounds in our work practices. We had to find innovative ways of developing and sharing our work, developing new networks and strengthening existing ones. In a temporary sense, we found our pivots, like a needle orienting to magnetic north. In some cases, innovative work continued and the focus shifted to learning experiences.

Our cover depicts a calm Otago harbour at dawn. The light of a new day is starting to break through. The selected articles in this edition confirm that work has continued in many ways and in many places. New endeavours rose like the morning sun, and others were brought to fruition. This edition of *Scope (Work-based Learning)* shows how we kept going and, as you read the different pieces, you may be surprised at what was accomplished despite social and physical distancing. To paraphrase the title of the article from Martin Andrew, we narrate what COVID-19 made us do, and share stories of resilience, adaptation, and working around.

Those in the roles of mentors and facilitators often played an increasingly prominent role in bringing together the different contributions, as you will see from the table of contents. The mentor and facilitator often had prior experience of volatile and uncertain situations and could navigate by the stars of that experience. Discovering new emergent methods and allowing change itself to constitute learning became pedagogical focus points for many in the worlds of vocational and higher education. We celebrated Matariki as a nation for the first time on 24 June 2022, guided by the Pleiades star cluster. The world was starting to turn, and the more optimistic among us caught promising glimpses of the tunnel's end; or rather, of a landscape inexorably changed forever. Simultaneously came the emergence of Te Pūkenga, either a macro-community to nourish us all, or a taniwha, to use a metaphor used by one author in the article "Horns of Dilemmas," waiting to swallow us all up. Noticeably, we reached out across seas for collaborations, and our researcher life became one characterised by bridges, ultimately linking us all in our work-based endeavours. And so, rather than discuss each research contribution in this volume one by one, as editorials generally do, we ask that you keep turning the pages, discover the different work-based stories and find inspiration for the work that awaits us now.

2023. With the new day comes a new theme, aware of the new and continued learning that is taking place. *Scope (Work-based Learning) 5* focuses the promising light of the new day on the work-based learner and their professional practice journeys. We encourage learners to contribute solo pieces, or to join with their mentors and facilitators for a collaboration. *Ehara taku toa takitahi engari; he toa takitini.*

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