

CAPABLE NZ – DIVERSITY IN ACTION, ISSUE 5

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On August 1st, 2019, the Minister of Education, Chris Hipkins, announced a number of government decisions about the reform of vocational education, including the creation of a single national institution, merging the current independent polytechnics. What became clear through the consultation that accompanied this reform is the value of educational programmes that are flexibly delivered, do not require large campus infrastructure, and have learners anywhere. Capable NZ fits that prescription!

The articles in this edition – all with their roots in Capable NZ staff and learner enquiries – illustrate the benefits of diversity, novelty and deep reflection. The work of the future will inevitably meld traditional and emerging needs into new multidisciplinary models of professional practice. New ways of working will mean that learning processes will have to be re-thought, with the emphasis changing from vocational training led by subject area specialists, to learning happening in work, at work and about work, with learners customising how their learning is designed and delivered, supported by process experts.

This is quite a shift, but a necessary one if graduates are to successfully address the wicked complexity of a world where learning is failing to provide viable answers to the increasing chaos of business as usual, and where conventional assumptions about growth and consumption in resource-constrained economies are increasingly being challenged.

Participating in a series of four Radio New Zealand panel discussions marking Tuia 250 ki Tūranga, a commemoration of the first contact between European and Māori², and talking about traditionally Pākehā ways of organising Māori knowledge, cultural expert Karl Johnstone said, "We don't discriminate between history, mythology and metaphor. So we say we came [to Aotearoa] on the back of a whale. But the introduction of the written word particularly the Paepae Tapu, or Bible, changed those things, making our form of history-making more didactic.

"Māori forms of knowledge actually need to be understood without prejudice," Johnstone said, "traditional narratives are often diminished by saying that they are mythological. I often respond by saying, "Was Moses splitting the Red Sea a mythology?" And people say, "Well, no, that's the Bible." So there's a really interesting dynamic there."

One of the abiding myths of traditional ways of learning about work is that it happens outside the workplace – *apart* from work – and are taken back in. It's time to lay that myth to rest, and for work-based learning to be business as usual, customised in real time, in real work environments.

As for history and metaphor – this fifth issue of *Scope (Flexible Learning)* is rich in both. In ten quite different articles it captures a cross-section of the outputs, outcomes, and work in progress, of researchers and learners: working individually, as collaborating learners and mentors, and in small cohorts; applying life experiences and emergent insight to build new knowledge, new competencies, and new capability. Making a better world.

Tertiary Education Commission. (2019). *Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE)*. Retrieved from <https://www.tec.govt.nz/rove/reform-of-vocational-education/>

Johnstone, K., and Wallace, E. (15 September 2019). Awkward Conversations about museums, culture and history. *Radio New Zealand*. Retrieved from <https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/awkward-conversations/story/2018712954/awkward-conversations-about-museums-culture-and-history-with-karl-johnstone-and-eloise-wallace>