

## INNOVATION, REFLECTION AND SUPERCOMPLEXITY

David McMaster and Trish Chaplin-Cheyne

Previous editions of *Scope Learning and Teaching* have focussed on a theme: this edition of 2020 has not but that does not detract from it. Like its predecessors, Issue 9 provides a forum for ideas and analyses of teaching practice in the applied context of the polytechnics and institutes of technology (ITP) of New Zealand. It has been an extraordinary year in which the world grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic; the fact there have been such a good number of consistently high quality submissions demonstrates the commitment of our teachers to reflection, enquiry and enhanced practice.

Zhukov and Cherrington cast the coronavirus pandemic as an example of the global challenges with which we must contend. They argue that if the Auckland International Campus is to produce New Zealand's most employable graduates, we need to integrate sustainable practices and related skills into learning. They believe that in the current world environment, sustainability is a valid career pathway and a critical skill for future employment.

Embedding of soft skills to ensure graduates are work-ready is broadly accepted in vocational education. Carlyon and Opperman's report on what their research revealed and how teachers in ITPs approached this. Common soft skills taught across disciplines included relational, professional, reflective, and effective communication. The five teachers interviewed said they made both explicit and implicit links to the soft skills being developed, and deployed a variety of strategies including storytelling, humour, role-modelling, targeted activities, and making use of teachable moments.

A study undertaken by Hannigan and Saini illuminates the experiences of international students in the time of the COVID-19 crisis. Varying levels of stress and anxiety were experienced by the participants as they coped with psychological, social, and financial hardship, which impacted negatively on their ability to learn. As well as facilitating academic achievement, teaching involves understanding the pressures experienced by learners. At a time when New Zealand's borders are still closed but the ambition to bring international learners into the country remains, we are asked to consider how well prepared we will be to support the international learners in our care.

Ellwood reflects on the development of personal motivation among learners: extrinsic motivators can shed light on a favoured pathway to intrinsic ones. By fostering curiosity and a desire to find answers to questions, teachers can assist learners to shape individualised, internalised motivation drivers. A shift in focus from external, outcome focussed goals to a desire for success and personal discovery may result in higher inherent satisfaction and the development of intrinsic motivation.

The transformation from lecturer to learning facilitator is discussed by Ganeshan and Mehdipour in the context of a Level 7 programme at the Auckland International Campus.

With content available everywhere, lectures are passe. By cultivating a fluid and dynamic learning environment incorporating real life and personalised learning, they are adopting a facilitated experiential approach to teaching. Learning facilitators are fostering independent critical thinkers who, they believe, will be well equipped to contribute to solving the problems of the world.

Experiential learning involving industry-related pragmatic strategies and reflective practice featured in a learning project facilitated by Chawla and Cherrington. They engaged learners in the *Moveember* initiative, which raises funds for men's health, to explore leadership in action. Through engagement with agile methodologies and real-life authentic learning, participants came to a better understanding of collaborative leadership in action. Enamoured with the results, the writers resolve to emulate the experience.

Nistor describes developing an experiential model, involving facilitation by the teacher and learner autonomy, in an English for academic purposes context. Although the learning process was modelled in English acquisition, it became clear to the learners they could deploy it in other contexts and develop autonomy in their future study. Increased learner autonomy allowed them to develop their own preferred learning model.

Pace and Cherrington write about providing master's learners with the skills needed to critically evaluate data for decision-making within applied management. They believe that subsequent recommendations will have higher credibility by providing an analytic engineering perspective.

Thinking back, in a drought-stricken Auckland, on her participation as learning facilitator in the Untouched World Waterwise field programme, Cherrington believes we all have a role to play in influencing positive change. The programme investigates the use, quality, and economics of water as a resource in the Otago region, and builds participants' leadership skills. She concludes we can all make an impact as individuals – collectively we have a wealth of knowledge and experience, and the solutions are there for deployment: action is now called for.

New possibilities are discovered by Burns through re-evaluating teaching exercises in different education contexts. He recommends a reflective practice that scrutinizes the effectiveness and relevance of exercises so that they might be adapted and extended into other realms. Such ongoing revision also contributes to quality education practice.

Citizen uses his own experience to reflect on the difficulty of suspending one's cultural world view to recognize and accommodate another. He reminds us that the Pākehā world view is not universal and cannot be taken for granted. With reference to a collaborative project informed by Te Ngāwhā Whakatupu (the Wintec Māori capability framework), he writes about learning to change his assumptions about power and the 'who' and 'what' of decision-making. He observes that the "multiplicity of differences between Māori and Pākehā ways of doing and being that are often ignored or brushed over within institutional discourses." Citizen advocates educators becoming co-learners in a true sense of *ako*, acknowledging the existing expertise of their learners and better allowing them to become self-motivating.

A discussion about teacher training in vocational education and reflection of Otago Polytechnic's Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education leads Walne to advocate cultivation of an environment of high trust in which socio-cultural assumptions and beliefs about teaching can be safely discussed. She recommends novice teachers cultivate learning relationships with more experienced teachers or learning leaders in their subject context. Additionally, formal learning could be more closely situated within the workplace context.

Curriculum review in the Otago Polytechnic Bachelor of Nursing is described by Hogarth and Burkett. This is to ensure that graduates can address both current and future health needs of their communities. Research and maintaining currency in the health environment are essential components of the process, and it is enabled through transparency, teamwork, and a commitment to learn from the process.

Wood offers a review of a digital tool enabling users to highlight and annotate any text-based content on the internet: *Hypothes.is*. She advocates its use as academic practice to enhance understanding of a text and to improve literacy. She believes it has a number of potential uses in the vocational context, and requests feedback from teachers how it might be deployed.

The development of an online training scheme, the Certificate in Digital Health, is the subject of Benians' and Collins' submission. It is hoped the employment of graduates will result in easier access to healthcare and improved health outcomes for rural New Zealanders. The scheme is delivered online and involves learner-centric design, recognising and addressing learner diversity.

Otago Polytechnic's Doctor of Professional Practice was designed from the ground up rather than being an adaption of established qualifications. Mann and Bull explain how this has resulted in a great deal of flexibility in how the form and nature of the final assessment is negotiated with the candidate. The candidate must develop not just the content of their argument but also the form that argument takes: a challenge is extended to the learner to create an artefact to articulate the justification for being awarded a doctorate.

Issue 9 of *Scope* has afforded teaching practitioners a medium in which to engage with contemporaries and to reflect on their practice. This will hopefully inspire others, awaken interest, discussion and debate, and forge allegiances as we strive, through education, to make a positive difference at a time when it is need more than ever.

Thanks to the contributors, the editorial board, editorial team, and the production crew.