



Ako Aotearoa research manager Kirsty Weir welcomes Nicholas Huntington to his new position with the organisation.

New senior project/research analyst appointed

Ako Aotearoa has much pleasure in announcing the appointment of Nicholas Huntington as our new senior project/research analyst. Nicholas will work alongside Kirsty Weir, our research manager, to assist with the monitoring, reviewing, and support of research and implementation projects commissioned by the National Office.

Nicholas will contribute to our ongoing activities around maximising leverage and impact of our funded projects. He will also assist with the development of syntheses of current knowledge and other resources for the benefit of practitioners in tertiary education.

Nicholas has a background in research and policy analysis, most recently as the senior analyst/researcher for the Industry Training Federation – the representative body for New Zealand's Industry Training Organisations (ITOs). Nicholas managed the federation's research activities, supported ITOs to undertake their own research, and worked to promote research into aspects of vocational education and training.

Nicholas has a particularly strong interest in the linkages between knowledge, research, and practice at both an organisational and individual practitioner level.

Welcome

Welcome to another issue of *Ako Aotearoa Alert*. As I write this, our selection panels are in the middle of making final decisions about our successful National Project Fund grants for 2010, so it is appropriate that the theme of this edition is very much about highlighting some of the diverse work we are already supporting across the tertiary sector. There is some exciting work here, and it is always a great pleasure to work with inspired and dedicated staff who are keen to improve their practice.

As always, our aim is to identify those projects that, in our and our panels' views, have the greatest potential to drive sustainable improvements in tertiary education. Determining priority areas where we might best make a difference and then making the evaluative judgements about which projects to support within those priorities are not easy tasks.

We continue to be surprised, both pleasantly and negatively. Some of our national projects just completed or nearing completion have exceeded our (already high) expectations. In some areas, though, we have been disappointed in the level of interest we have been able to attract to develop quality work in what we believe are important priority areas for the future.

We continue to learn as we go, particularly about how to get the best-possible leverage from some of the strong research that is coming through. In the next few months, we will begin to implement an impact-evaluation framework that is designed to follow up on the impact that projects have had on practice and whether such changes in practice are actually delivering benefits to learners. We are under no illusions: this is not an easy task, but because it is not easy, it is one from which we should not resile.

Dr Peter Coolbear
Director, Ako Aotearoa

Ako Aotearoa supports new Pacific Leadership Development Programme



Pictured above are the members of the inaugural Pacific Leadership Development Programme, which was jointly developed by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Leadership Development Centre. The programme, designed to nurture and develop talented Pacific state-sector managers, includes participants from the health sector, tertiary education institutions, and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

Ako Aotearoa is pleased to be a supporter of this programme, and has sponsored six tertiary-sector managers on the programme. They are (back row): Walter Fraser, The University of Auckland (second from left); Malia Talakai, Unitec (third from left); Louise Falepau, Whitireia Community Polytechnic (second from right); and Toleafoa Sina Aiono- Aiolutepoa, Manukau Institute of Technology (far right). Middle row: Dr Malakai Koloamatangi, University of Canterbury (third from left). Seated: Dr Airini, The University of Auckland (third from right).

Also pictured are: Debbie Ryan (middle row, left), Pacific Perspectives, who has contributed to the development of the programme and supported Ako Aotearoa with the development of our Pacific people's caucus; Alan Woodside (seated, fourth from left), programme coordinator, Leadership Development Centre; and Dr Colin Tukuitonga (middle row, right), chief executive, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs.

Image supplied by Janine Gray / Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs.

The Ako Aotearoa Pacific peoples' caucus work programme

The Pacific people's caucus is developing a strategic work programme to support Pacific staff and learners in tertiary education. This is not only designed to enhance Pacific achievement in tertiary education, but also recognises that, to make sustainable gains for Pacific people, there is an urgent need to support capability building and the establishment of a critical mass of leadership and research expertise amongst Pacific tertiary educators. Thus, there are, at present, three strands to this portfolio:

1. Enhancing Pacific leadership in the sector through our involvement with and support of the Pacific leadership development programme, highlighted above.
2. Identifying and sharing case studies in exemplary practice supporting Pacific-learner success in tertiary education. This project is planned to complement Janinka Greenwood and Lynne-Harata Te Aika's recent project, Hei Taurira, on exemplary practice for Māori. The work will be led by

Dr Cherie Chu (Victoria University of Wellington), in collaboration with the Association of Pacific Staff in Tertiary Education (APSTE).

3. Evaluating the impact of successive tertiary education strategies on Pacific achievement in tertiary education. We are currently in the process of evaluating the proposals we have received to undertake this work, and we plan to commission this in November.

Strategic elearning development at Unitec

Linda Keesing–Styles, dean of teaching and learning at Unitec New Zealand, describes how Ako Aotearoa's *Taking the Lead* resource assisted Unitec in developing their elearning strategy.



The Unitec elearning team (left to right): Robert Ayres, manager, Te Puna Ako Learning and Teaching Centre; Linda Keesing–Styles, dean of teaching and learning; and Thom Cochrane, elearning team leader.

Unitec made a decision in early 2009 to investigate and implement a plan to progress the effective utilisation of elearning. This is part of a new overarching strategic plan, one component of which is innovation in teaching and learning. As part of our Living Curriculum initiative, we are reframing learning as conversation, delivering programs that are integrated with the world and that are genuinely dynamic. The plan is to nurture resourcefulness and resilience in our students. We define the curriculum not as the information content (or syllabus) of the programme, but rather as the programme learning experience.

The elearning strategy is a central component of the Living Curriculum initiative. Ako Aotearoa's website offered valuable guidance, particularly *Taking the Lead: Strategic Management for e-Learning*. This resource provided a framework for early consideration of how to approach the development of an institutional strategy. Analysis of its strategic areas and case studies provided provocative considerations for us. These were featured in the following order:

- **Strategy** – Ensuring elearning solutions meet the strategic goals of your institution
- **Structure** – How to organise and manage for elearning
- **Resourcing** – Different approaches to funding elearning
- **Decision making** – Who decides which courses and programmes will make use of elearning
- **Collaborating and outsourcing** – Working with others to develop elearning activities
- **Selecting technologies** – Investing wisely in new technology

The case studies from a range of institutions allowed an opportunity for reflection on very different approaches taken by organisations in establishing an elearning strategy. At Unitec, ensuring coherence with institutional strategies and goals had already been established, but deciding which approach to take was aided by analysis of these case studies. The options were: establish a strategic direction at corporate level (Otago Polytechnic), nest a strategy within a teaching and learning plan within an institutional strategy (University of Otago), or

develop a teaching and learning plan alone (University of Canterbury).

A working party, drawn from key institutional and faculty staff, began by considering this issue and opted for closely linking the strategy to institutional strategic direction, but also creating a comprehensive, standalone elearning strategy. The working party then set about analysing and discussing the remainder of the strategic areas, purposefully focusing on the technologies only once the links to teaching and learning had been fully established. The elearning strategy is now embedded as a key component of the Living Curriculum initiative.

The strategy has been fully approved and funded, and is in the process of implementation. Key components of the strategy include:

- focusing the strategy on three key areas: staff capability, student capability and access, and infrastructure
- selecting, training (supported onsite by Etienne Wenger) and releasing staff in every department to act as elearning community coordinators to champion the establishment of elearning communities of practice and support the development of elearning capability
- appointing faculty-based support staff in elearning and academic literacies for a period of 18 months
- shifting towards the use of wireless mobile devices for staff and students to allow maximum flexibility and engagement and to progress the use of Web 2.0 technologies
- moving from Blackboard to Moodle as the institutional Learning Management System (LMS)
- embedding elearning capabilities into the position descriptions and performance and professional development expectations of academic staff.

We recommend *Taking the Lead* as a valuable source of information for institutions considering the development of an elearning strategy.

Taking the Lead: Strategic Management for e-Learning was researched and written by Dr Andrew Higgins (AUT University) and Emeritus Professor Tom Prebble (previously from Massey University). The project was originally sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the summary guide was published by Ako Aotearoa. Go to: www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/takingthelead for further information. Free print copies of the guide are available by emailing: J.Tanner-Lloyd@massey.ac.nz

BY BRIDGET O'REGAN

News from the Southern Hub

Tēnā koutou katoa. Welcome to the news from the Southern Hub. A special acknowledgment to our Canterbury colleagues, who have experienced a difficult time not only with the earthquake, but also with the ongoing aftershocks. Our Ako Aotearoa office was undamaged, and Pat and I have greatly appreciated the many messages of care and concern. In this issue, we feature Adult Learners' Week, completed and newly approved projects, and an update on the distribution of the Adult Teaching posters into teaching rooms the length and breadth of Aotearoa New Zealand.



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Adult Learners' Week: Adult English-language students of the Buller Regional Education Activities Programme (REAP) celebrate their successful completion of the course.

Adult Learners' Week: "Learn for today and tomorrow"

The Southern Hub was delighted to sponsor Adult Learners' Week across Te Waipounamu. The region celebrated the many adult learners with a variety of events and activities. Although we were unable to take up the invitations to be part of these events because of the earthquakes, the reports we received show that it was a great week for turning the spotlight on to community learning opportunities.

Marlborough offered the local community a wealth of activities to take part in over the week, including a Men's Shed open day with a men's health tool-box, a Pasifika weaving class, and a women's programme – this comprised a talk by a writer, sushi making, and Hebel carving. Their awards ceremony was held as part of a highly successful Pasifika concert and fiafia.

In the Otago district, one of the highlights for Adult Learners' Week was the awards ceremony for outstanding adult learners and exceptional adult educators, with a total of 30 awards given on the night. The brief learning biographies of each of the nominees in the awards booklet are an inspirational read. They illustrate a passion for learning and a determination to overcome barriers for learners from many

different cultures and in many different curriculum areas.

In the Buller area, 18 providers of adult learning contributed to a full-page newspaper spread about Adult Learners' Week. Despite a virus laying out the young players in a youth versus "older and bolder" scrabble competition, the week's events gave many opportunities for learners and families to celebrate adult learning in Westport, including open days at local providers, shared meals, and workshops.

What is Adult Learners' Week?

Adult Learners' Week – He Tangata Mātauranga, established in 1998, is a UNESCO initiative supported by the Tertiary Education Commission, adult and community education providers at a local level, and the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO. The week also incorporates International Literacy Day on 8 September each year. The aims of Adult Learners' Week are to celebrate, encourage, and educate communities about adult learning. (For more information please go to the Adult and Community Education Aotearoa Inc. website: www.akoaoaterrora.org.nz)

Southern Hub completed projects

Paying attention to emotion

In this project, *Investigation into the role of emotions in tertiary teaching: A pilot study into the emotions experienced by tertiary educators in their teaching contexts*, Dr Veronica O'Toole and her team, Alison Ogier-Price and Andrew Hucks, all from the University of Canterbury, paid attention to the importance of emotions in teaching.

There is increasing international research evidence that suggests emotions play a role in student success and commitment to ongoing study. Recent Ako Aotearoa-funded research Hei Tairā by Greenwood and Te Aika (2009) reported that tertiary teachers' strong support of Māori students' "emotional and spiritual space" has been integral to these students' successes in tertiary-level study.

The primary aim of the project was to identify what emotions are currently experienced by tertiary teachers in their teaching contexts and what emotional strategies, if any, they employ. The authors also sought to identify ways that tertiary teachers might be supported in their well-being to promote a positive learning environment.

Fifteen participants from four tertiary institutions (a university, a polytechnic, and two private training providers) took part in the project, with twelve participants completing all stages, which included keeping diaries, individual structured interviews, and online questionnaires. Three commonly used and validated questionnaires were used to measure happiness, satisfaction, and positive and negative effects.

The results from an analysis of the diaries found that the most frequently reported positive emotions were happiness, satisfaction, and enthusiasm, and negative emotions were anger, disappointment, and frustration. The most commonly reported triggers for both positive and negative emotions came from teachers' interaction with their students. In the structured interviews, tertiary teachers talked about the importance of managing their emotions during their teaching. The emotion most likely to be regulated was anger.

Whilst the authors comment that their study opens a brief window into the emotional experience of a small number of tertiary teachers, it does provide several implications for practice and ongoing research.

- The relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), subjective well-being, and job satisfaction. Higher emotional-regulation skills, which form part of EI, are related to job satisfaction in other teacher groups.
- The relationship between regulation of emotions and burnout. Previous research has shown that teachers who have higher emotional-regulation skills report fewer instances of burnout.
- Modelling how to handle emotions in classroom situations was seen to be beneficial for positive student learning.
- The significant effect of happiness and other positive emotions on students and their learning is an area that has been generally under-researched in education.

View the report at: <http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-southern-hub/resources/pages/investigation-role-emotions-tertiary-teaching>



Managing emotions in the classroom: Dr Veronica O'Toole (left) and Alison Ogier-Price's research highlights the range of emotions currently displayed in the classroom, strategies teachers employ to control them, and the significant effect of positive emotions on student learning.

A recently approved project

Working with Pasifika student teachers and graduates; exploring the teaching of effective approaches for assessing young Samoan children's learning. Pauline Luafutu-Simpson, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa NZ Childcare Association.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that assessment for young children's learning is poorly understood in Pasifika early education, and this reveals a gap in teacher education. The project team uses action research and qualitative methods to examine the teaching of assessment of Samoan children's learning. Their focus is how this teaching can be strengthened in both tertiary classes and practicum centres. Participants will be Samoan lecturers, associates, and students involved in field-based training in Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa NZ Childcare Association's qualifications and Samoan graduates.

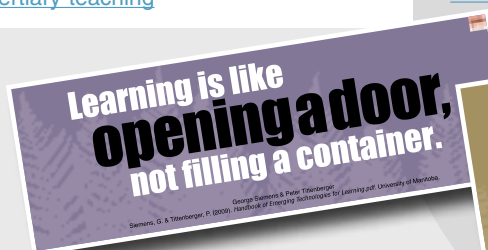
The Teaching Adults posters

The Southern Hub's seminar room is filled with boxes of posters and cartons of posting tubes as we ready ourselves for the mail-out of these very sought-after resources. To date, we have received orders for 5,406 posters from 106 tertiary education providers across the sector – universities, polytechnics, and private training establishments from Whangarei to Invercargill.

The set of 11 posters was developed as a collaborative project, undertaken by members of the Southern Educational Developers (SEDs) in institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), that arose from an identified lack of quality posters to support their adult-teacher learning objectives. The posters identify core principles of learning to support adult learners, along with providing an attractive resource for classrooms. However, the posters remind educators of good practice and create a standard against which adult students can measure their education experience.

We are happy to accept more orders for sets of the laminated posters. Please contact me via email: bridget.oregan@canterbury.ac.nz. They can also be viewed and downloaded individually from our website: www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/posters

Two of the range of Teaching Adults posters created by the Southern Educational Developers group as a Southern Hub-funded project.





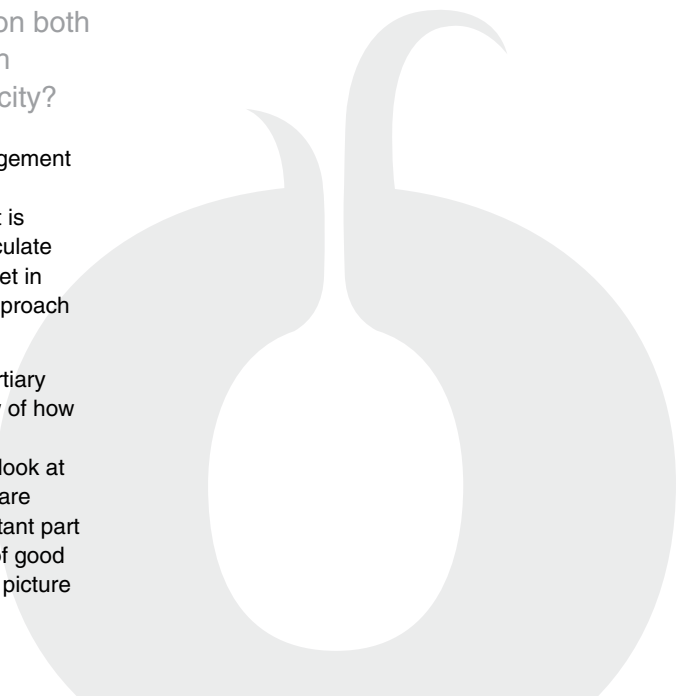
First milestone meeting between Network Research and the project steering group. Left to right: Dr Peter Coolbear, Ako Aotearoa; David Do, New Zealand Union of Students' Associations; Lesley MacGibbon, Network Research; Liz Gordon, Network Research (Project Team Leader); Sam McKenzie, Wintec Students' Association; Rita Curry, Sonya Mudgway and Tee Milroy, Network Research (project team); Bridget O'Regan, Ako Aotearoa Southern Hub; and Jacqualene Poutu, New Zealand Union of Students' Associations.

Stocktake of codes of practice, service guarantees, and provider-learner contracts for domestic students

When learners enrol with tertiary providers, there is a significant contractual undertaking. Usually, there is significant goodwill on both sides, but there are also commitments and obligations for both parties. How explicit are these and what is the level of reciprocity?

Success in tertiary education, in its simplest terms, is a product of student engagement and effort on the one hand, and quality of provision on the other. How good is New Zealand's tertiary sector at ensuring prospective students understand what is expected of them before they enrol in qualifications? How well do providers articulate their service standards to students? How do they ensure these standards are met in practice? How democratic are these processes? Are there any differences in approach between different parts of the sector?

This project has been established by Ako Aotearoa, in collaboration with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Learner Advisory Committee, to gain an overview of how providers deal with these issues. We have commissioned Network Research to undertake this study and the work is well under way. The project is designed to look at international trends in developing codes of practice, how these have been (and are being) developed in a New Zealand context, and what the drivers are. An important part of the project is to develop and share a series of case studies about examples of good practice. We are looking forward to developing as comprehensive as possible a picture about how providers address these issues.



A guide for developing assessment policy

Developing assessment policy: A guide for tertiary institutions was first printed and distributed by Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) in late 2009 to all leaders and academic developers of universities, wānanga, institutes of technology, and polytechnics. Ako Aotearoa has now joined forces with VUW to sponsor a reprint of the guide, with the intention of disseminating the publication more widely. We see it as being of value to many organisations in other areas of the sector, as well as to a broader audience within the larger institutions.

The guide, written by Susan Davidson and Lynanne McKenzie from VUW, is the second summary publication about tertiary assessment that Ako Aotearoa has supported in the last year. It has been drawn from two sources: the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) project *Valid and practical tertiary assessment of student learning outcomes* (led by Luanna Meyer at VUW's Jessie Hetherington Centre for Educational Research, in collaboration with Patricia Johnston at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, Helen Anderson at Manukau Institute of Technology, and Richard Fletcher and Malcolm Rees at Massey University), and the Tertiary Assessment and Higher Education Student Outcomes symposium held in November 2008, with its joint VUW and Ako Aotearoa publication of the conference proceedings (referred to separately below).

The guide presents a concise and practical set of considerations for assessment policy and practice guidelines in higher education, reflecting the relationship between four key stakeholders in the assessment process: the student, the teaching staff, the institutional management, and the professions, regulatory bodies, and statutory law. It emphasises the alignment of assessment with learning outcomes and the graduate profile, a focus on assessment to improve student learning, and the use of a variety of assessment methods.

The guide broadly defines steps to policy development, and a tertiary assessment grid (TAG) provides a mechanism for institutional self-review of assessment policy and practice to better accommodate the different purposes of assessment. The TAG addresses manageable, valid, and equitable approaches that meet requirements related to the integrity required by stakeholders in higher-education institutions.

If you would like to receive a copy, please contact us directly at: info@akoaooteaoroa.ac.nz

Other Ako Aotearoa publications about assessment

We are building a cohesive range of Ako Aotearoa-funded publications to support tertiary educators and researchers. The new guide joins existing publications we have supported through partnership, sponsorship, and our funding initiatives at a national level.

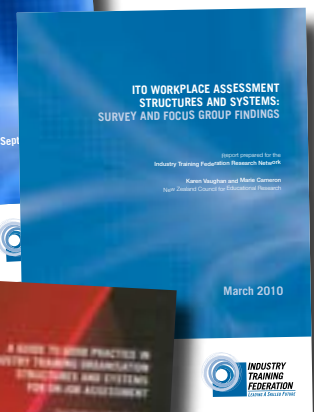
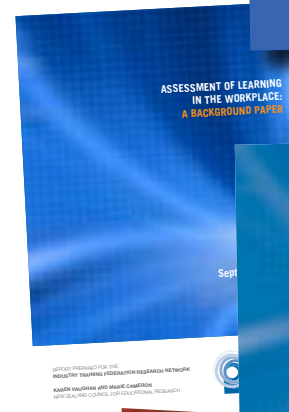
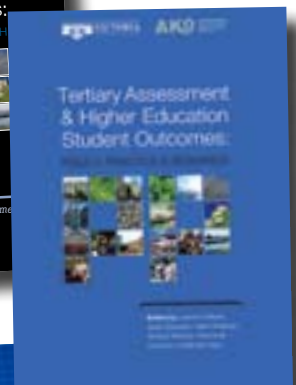
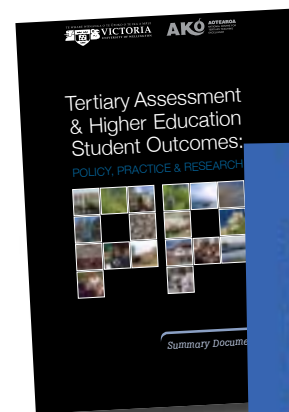
Tertiary Assessment & Higher Education Student Outcomes: Policy, Practice & Research, edited by Luanna H Meyer, Susan Davidson, Helen Anderson, Richard Fletcher, Patricia M Johnston, and Malcolm Rees. This publication features the conference proceedings from the 2008 assessment symposium. There are 22 chapters featured under a range of topics, from assessment policy and quality assurance to cultural and linguistic issues.

Tertiary Assessment & Higher Education Student Outcomes: Policy, Practice & Research – Summary Document, by Susan Davidson and Lynanne McKenzie from VUW. This summary focuses on the purpose of assessment in tertiary organisations – the implications for culture, equity, students and staff, with case-study examples from presenters at the symposium.

The publications were jointly launched in August 2009 by VUW and Ako Aotearoa at an event hosted by Professor Luanna Meyer, the director at VUW's Jessie Hetherington's Centre for Educational Research.

Assessment of workplace training

In the last issue of the *Alert* newsletter, we featured this suite of publications, researched and written by the Industry Training Federation Research Network under our National Project Fund. All three are available in PDF format through our website at <http://akoaooteaoroa.ac.nz/projects/ito-workplace-assessment-structures>, or contact us at: info@akoaooteaoroa.ac.nz for print copies and further information.



Tertiary Research in Progress Colloquium 2010

Kirsty Weir, Ako Aotearoa research manager, provides an update on the National Project Fund project teams.



NPF and TLRI project teams, pictured here with Ako Aotearoa staff, meet for the second *Tertiary Research in Progress Colloquium*.

In July, we ran the second *Tertiary Research in Progress Colloquium* for the project teams that are supported through our National Project Fund. We have invested more than \$2m through this initiative on projects to improve tertiary teaching and learning for the benefit of learners. Our goals for the colloquium were to identify early synergies across projects and to enable funded researchers to network informally with like-minded colleagues. We were again delighted with the level and quality of discussions about each project, as well as the dialogue about broader issues relating to tertiary teaching and learning in New Zealand.

In addition to the National Project Fund teams, we invited recently funded teams from the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) to present their work. Dr Linda Leach and Dr Nick Zepke represented the TLRI at the colloquium and provided an overview of the existing and completed TLRI tertiary projects. It was great to see a broader picture of the funded work for improving teaching and learning in the tertiary sector.

In all, 20 teams presented at the colloquium (including 2 doctoral students supported by Ako Aotearoa). The presentations showcased the range of exciting projects under way, some of which were research based and others that had significant implementation elements to the work. It reinforced for us the diversity of our portfolio of projects. There are various methodological approaches employed using strong sampling procedures. Project teams are also focusing on the nature of evidence needed to enhance teaching and learning practices.

There were many stimulating discussions over the two days. Of note was an emerging interest in tertiary teaching as a profession. Many tertiary teachers have dual roles, as both disciplinary experts and teaching and learning professionals. How to balance these roles and support good practice in teaching and learning is an ongoing interest for Ako Aotearoa.

There were also some very constructive conversations about how we can support project teams to get research in front of the decision makers of organisations. We see us having a key role in supporting the dissemination and application of the findings accumulating from the projects.

With many of the first round of funded projects nearing completion, we are very aware that conducting high-quality research on its own is not enough to affect change in practice. Careful attention must also be paid to how the implications of key findings are communicated to, for example, the research community, practitioners, and policy makers.

Practitioners and policy makers are faced with decisions about what interventions or approaches to employ, often within significant time and resource constraints. To have the

largest impact, research findings should be clearly and concisely communicated, have appropriate regard to context, and focus on the implications for policy and recommendations for practice. We see ourselves as brokers of this information and we are looking forward to sharing these findings with the sector.

The Ako Aotearoa *Tertiary Research in Progress* handbook features a one-page summary of each presentation. To access or download a copy of the handbook, link to the project presentations, or visit the project team spaces on our website, go to: <http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/ako-aotearoa/resources/pages/ako-aotearoa-tertiary-research-progress-colloquium-2010>



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