

Welcome

This is my last newsletter welcome for *Ako Aotearoa Alert*. After having had the great privilege of being the director of this organisation for four years, I have accepted a new role with the Tertiary Education Commission. My time at Ako Aotearoa has been exciting and immensely satisfying; it has also, at times, been frustrating, but I guess that comes with the territory.



The great pleasure is that I believe Ako Aotearoa has been able to raise the profile of tertiary teaching and learning in this country considerably. Not that we have done this alone: much has been down to the sector itself. We have simply been tapping into and fostering the enthusiasm of leading practitioners right across the sector. Herein lies much of the excitement and the reward. The next phase of Ako Aotearoa's development has already begun, which is to build on what has been achieved so far in partnership with the sector and take Ako Aotearoa's reach much wider, especially at the organisational level.

I came into this role with the firm belief that the best of tertiary education in New Zealand – and the best is to be found in all parts of the sector – is world class. I have had that view constantly confirmed while in this role. Nevertheless, I have also become aware that, while our system and organisations enable great practice to happen, they also allow much indifferent practice to exist alongside. Even allowing for student demographics and data problems, the Tertiary Education Commission's Educational Performance Indicators show wide variation between notionally similar providers.

Here lies the frustration: we simply do not share and promote good and excellent practice well enough, and our thresholds for what we regard as acceptable are often lower than they should be. We need to be constantly mindful that tertiary education has a clear moral purpose. Ultimately, it is about people's lives. It is about individual opportunities and outcomes for learners, their whānau, and communities. The wider economic and social benefits of tertiary education flow from this.

The last four years have reaffirmed for me that the sector is still, in general, too conservative in its approach, and it often works in ways it has always done without questioning the base assumptions of practice. As a sector, we are all good at arguing from first principles; weaker when it comes to evidential critique. While there are many outstanding exceptions, tertiary teachers in general have some way to go in developing the capability to become rigorous, evidence-based reflective practitioners. In other words, tertiary teaching is not yet the leading-edge profession that 21st-century Aotearoa, New Zealand needs. We are also acutely aware that better outcomes for learners are not to be gained simply through the efforts of individual practitioners, however professional they may be; their efforts must be actively underpinned by the tertiary organisations that employ them.

Needless to say, these problems are not unique to New Zealand – they are international. I am optimistic that the current alignment of funding incentives and evaluative quality assurance requirements have set a sound platform for us to address these issues in ways that may give us significant international advantages in the future. Of course there is often a large gap between policy intent and reality. In this context, Ako Aotearoa will continue to have a considerable role to play in fostering the best possible standards of teaching and

learning, the development of evidence-based enhancement of practice, and disseminating that good practice as widely as possible.

I am very pleased to be able to report that Professor Tom Prebble and Dr Sue Walbran will be jointly acting as Interim Directors until a new Director is appointed. Both will be acting on a part-time basis: this is not two replacing one! Tom, who was Interim Director during the establishment phase of Ako Aotearoa will focus on strategic aspects, with Sue, until recently a senior manager in NZQA, having oversight of operational matters.

It has been truly rewarding to be part of an embryo organisation and to see it grow to a position of influence. Most of all it has been a tremendous privilege to work with such talented and committed people both within our own organisation and across the sector.

My sincere thanks and best wishes to you all.

Dr Peter Coolbear
Director, Ako Aotearoa

Update: Increasing Educational Attainment for TES Priority Learners

In Issue 15 of *Ako Aotearoa Alert* we featured the start of the Ako Aotearoa project *Increasing Educational Attainment for TES Priority Learners*, which is supported by the Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Education. The aim of the project is to examine how our tertiary system can best serve the needs of learners at lower levels of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. These are the largest group of learners in tertiary education, and their needs are explicitly prioritised in the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES). It is therefore important that we gain an increased understanding of where our system works well for this group, what issues still exist, and how to promote good practice.

The project is guided by the independent Educational Attainment Working Group (EAWG). The group and its work can be accessed via the project space on the Ako Aotearoa website (www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/priority-learners).



International forum presenter Dr Bruce Vandal (standing) with several members of the Educational Attainment Working Group: (left to right) Carrie Murdoch, Business New Zealand; Christine Clark, Corporate Academy Group; Karen Davis, Victoria University of Wellington; and Dr Peter Coolbear, director of Ako Aotearoa.

International expert forums

Ako Aotearoa is hosting a series of public forums and workshops throughout June and July with international experts on issues of relevance to priority learners. Held nationally, these events are designed to promote discussion and debate about how New Zealand can best serve the needs of priority learners. These expert forums draw on international experiences and initiatives to provide insights into how our educational system is working, and how it could be improved.

Biographies of the speakers involved in these expert forums are featured opposite. In June we have held events with Dr Bruce Vandal, focusing on “developmental” education, and Professor Ewart Keep, focusing on links and pathways between education and the labour market. Both speakers have provided extremely valuable perspectives from other constituencies and have been willing to share new and exciting ideas along with cautionary tales.

In July, we host Professor David Conley from the University of Oregon. Professor Conley provided the keynote address at the Centre for Multiple Pathways national symposium

Developing Pathways: Leading students to success, held at Manukau Institute of Technology on 18 and 19 July. Smaller events for Professor Conley will also be held in Wellington, Greymouth, and Christchurch.

Material from these expert forums is available on the Ako Aotearoa project space (see earlier link), including copies of presentations, downloadable material, and links to initiatives of interest.

Discussion papers

Our third stream of activity under this project involves a series of discussion papers on particular topics and areas of concern identified by the Educational Attainment Working Group. The first paper focuses on the issue of targeted training programmes (training opportunities and youth training), the second discusses transitions in to and out of education for priority learners, and the third raises questions about how well our system seems to be serving those who study part time. These papers can be downloaded from the project space on the Ako Aotearoa website (see link below).

How to contribute to the discussions

We encourage people to join the discussion on these papers and to keep in touch with the progress and development of the project by joining the Priority Learners group on our website (www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/priority-learners). If you are already registered on the site, log in and click on the “Join” button provided on the priority learners page. If you are not, go to www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/user/register and follow the instructions to register.

Once you are a member of the Priority Learners group you can contribute to the discussions. Remember, you need to be logged in to do so. We look forward to hearing from you.

For further information about the work, please contact Nicholas Huntington on n.huntington@massey.ac.nz



Professor Ewart Keep (third from right) – presenter at the recent Wellington Expert Forum – with attendees: (left to right) Liz Chinlund, Victoria University of Wellington; Simon Tries, New Zealand Qualifications Authority; Arthur Graves, Ministry of Education; Ruma Karaitiana, Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation; and Cushla Wilson, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

Professor Ewart Keep

Deputy Director, Centre on Skills, Knowledge, and Organisational Performance (SKOPE), University of Cardiff, United Kingdom



Ewart Keep is the deputy director of SKOPE, based at the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences. He has a range of research interests, including lifelong-learning policy, learning organisations, training for low paid workers, the design and management of education and training systems, employers' attitudes towards skills, how governments formulate skills policy, higher education policy, and the nature of the linkages between skills and performance. He is currently working on the role of recruitment and selection as a source of skills, and the feedback signals that employers' patterns of recruitment send to the learner (in reference to future research priorities in the field of engineering and technology), and how English policy makers conceive of skills policy and its linkages to other policy domains.

Ewart is a member of the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland joint Skills Committee, the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Strategic Advisory Committee for Enterprise and Skills, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills' Policy Expert Group, and the Scottish Government's Skill Utilisation Leadership Group. He has provided advice and consultancy for the National Skills Task Force, several UK government departments including the Department for Employment and Learning and the Treasury, the Cabinet Office, House of Commons and Scottish Parliament committees, the Welsh Employment and Skills Board, Skills Australia, and the governments of Queensland, New South Wales, and New Zealand.

Ewart is concerned with progressions into worthwhile employment and how the demand-side of this equation cannot be ignored. Employers need to be involved in pathways development and have a significant role to play in incentivising improved utilisation and development of skills.

International experts

Dr Bruce Vandal

Director, Postsecondary and Workforce Development Institute, Education Commission of the States, United States of America

Bruce Vandal coordinates research and policy work as director of the Postsecondary and Workforce Development Institute at the Education Commission of the States. He has directed projects on aligning education and workforce development policy, teacher preparation, and college access.



At present, Bruce is the director of *Getting Past Go*, a three-year Lumina Foundation for Education project to effectively leverage investments in remedial and developmental education to increase college attainment. He is also the co-director of the *Tennessee Developmental Studies Redesign Initiative*, which is a partnership with the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) to reform developmental education courses at TBR institutions. This initiative is funded by the US Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

Bruce's insights into facilitating successful progressions into higher levels of study provide a valuable reference for how we might address similar issues in New Zealand.

Professor David Conley

Director, Centre for Educational Policy Research, University of Oregon, United States of America

David Conley is Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership at the College of Education, University of Oregon. He is the founder and director of the Center for Educational Policy Research at the University of Oregon, and founder and chief executive officer of the Center for Educational Policy Improvement, a not-for-profit educational research organisation. He also serves on numerous technical and advisory panels, consults with educational agencies nationally and internationally, and is a frequent speaker at national and regional meetings of education professionals and policy makers.



In 2003, David completed *Standards for Success*, a ground-breaking three-year research project to identify the knowledge and skills necessary for college readiness. This project, funded by the Association of American Universities and The Pew Charitable Trusts, analysed course content at various American research universities to develop the Knowledge and Skills for University Success standards. In 2005, Dr Conley published his research from this project in *College Knowledge: What It Takes for Students to Succeed and What We Can Do to Get Them Ready*. Dr Conley's most recent book, *College and Career Ready: Helping All Students Succeed Beyond High School*, features case studies of America's most college-ready high schools, informs policy makers, administrators, teachers, parents, and students how they can develop a culture rooted in postsecondary success.

BY IAN ROWE

News from the Central Hub

Kia ora again from the Central Hub of Ako Aotearoa. By the time you read this we will be in the middle of our winter months. May this find you all well, warm, and in good spirits – having had a great year so far.

In this issue of *Ako Aotearoa Alert* we feature a current project exploring inclusive art education, describe a completed hub-funded project on integrated assessment, outline our impact evaluation process for hub projects, and interview Peter McNeur, an inaugural member of the Central Hub Advisory Group.



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Central Hub funded projects



Marcel Baaijens (left at back) with students Darryl Kennedy, Shannon Norton, Elizabeth Gardiner, Yelene Barbalich, Laura Heider, Barbara Burrows, Ella Johnston and Helen Benge.

Current project – Tertiary art education for adults with intellectual impairments

Marcel Baaijens's project report will soon be available on the Central Hub homepage on the website (www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa-central-hub). The project involved Marcel surveying staff working with intellectually impaired learners at community and institution-based art educational settings in New Zealand and overseas.

The survey was undertaken through online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Marcel's report also includes case studies of good practice, alongside interviews with art teachers about their art educational philosophies. The report features a comprehensive 31-item list of critical success factors for an inclusive art education methodology. These factors include the need for educators to:

- realise that inclusion is first and foremost the quality of human relationships rather than the quality of resources
- expect and embrace the unexpected
- shift the current relationship based on deficiency labels, as determined by the medical profession, to one based on creative potential, as determined by those in the art sector.

Marcel describes how he put his theories to the test in a short course, where 50 percent of places were reserved for intellectually impaired students to ensure they would not form a minority in the class. He includes and discusses examples of the resulting creative products.

In a recent follow up with Marcel, he informed me that the inclusion class at The Learning Connexion has been running successfully for two terms. Non-impaired students are raving about the class to others, creating such a demand that a second class will be

offered in term 3. The demand came from non-impaired students who are keen to experience studying and creating work alongside intellectually impaired students and who seem to benefit the most from the inclusion class.

Completed project – Integrated assessment for Māori youth learners

Hannah Hohapata, the chief executive of the Matapuna Training Centre in Gisborne, has recently completed a Central Hub funded project that trialled an integrated approach to student assessment – one that at least improved students' chances of successful learning. Her students are typically Māori youth for whom educational attainment has been largely unsuccessful.

Hannah's team reviewed many of the learning activities her students experienced to document what naturally occurring evidence of unit standard achievement would be possible during those activities. That approach allowed a partial move away from many of the "workbooks" that had previously been used by students as evidence of achievement.

Results showed that, compared with the achievement of previous groups, youth credit achievement during the trial improved by 20 to 30 credits per student. Moreover, those credits were obtained in a shorter time during the course.

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Key factors in the success of the trial included: mentors working alongside students, designing new teaching and assessment resources, reorienting the teaching practices of staff, and reassuring students that integrated assessment was a good replacement for workbooks.

The full report is available via the Central Hub homepage on the website (www.akooteaoroa.ac.nz/ako-aoteaoroa-central-hub).



Hannah Hohapata (left), chief executive officer of Matapuna Training Centre, with Gina Hauiti-Houkamau, intensive literacy programme manager.

Evaluating the impact of projects

As described on page 7 of this issue, Ako Aotearoa has started an impact evaluation of the projects funded under its Regional Hub Project Funding Scheme and National Project Fund. This will help us understand the *sustainable* impact these projects have on improving the teaching and learning process and learner outcomes.

The evaluation includes interviews that are conducted with the teams of all completed projects at 6-, 12- and 24-month intervals. The data from these interviews will be used to evaluate Ako Aotearoa's funding initiatives. This will also inform how we support the project teams in disseminating their work more widely. The following examples from my recent interviews with completed Central Hub project teams give an indication of how projects are impacting positively on learners and teachers.

The success and impact of early career academics in New Zealand tertiary institutions

This project, by Dr Kathryn Sutherland, Victoria University of Wellington, and Lesley Petersen, Eastern Institute of Technology, set out to uncover the experiences of early career academics at two New Zealand tertiary institutions. It aimed to identify key recruitment, appointment, induction, training, and development processes that result in well-prepared academics capable of enhancing their students' educational outcomes and their own careers.

The findings have been incorporated into a printed resource used in the orientation programme for all new teaching staff. Dr Sutherland has also started running "Developing Scholarly Habits" retreats for early career academics at VUW. By the end of this year, 80 teaching staff will have used the resource and 30 will have participated in the retreats. Feedback from the new teachers indicates they are more organised, managing their time more efficiently, preparing more productively, and enjoying their work more.

The utility of learning packages and their suitability for building apprentices

The Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) wanted to review all aspects of the training of building apprentices and accept recommendations for the improvement of their learning experiences. With Ako Aotearoa funding, the BCITO commissioned Dr Amanda Gilbert to produce a comprehensive report that has enabled the BCITO to make changes to their training initiatives. These changes included: the case management of apprentices' learning, a focus on the assessment of integrated tasks rather than on unit standards, providing professional development in assessment and moderation techniques for a cohort of training advisors, and removing identified barriers to apprentice learning.

To date, over 6,000 trainees have benefited from the improved methods, with 2,573 apprentices successfully completing their qualifications under the new system during 2010.

The BCITO chief executive Ruma Karaitiana explained the different ways that learners have benefited from the project, citing: increased support and more regular formative assessment, clearer expectations supported by goal setting, better identification and addressing of barriers to learning, and steadier progress with improved completion.

Interview with Peter McNeur

Recently, I had the pleasure of talking with Peter McNeur, who is an inaugural member of our advisory group and director of the Wairarapa Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP). This Masterton-based organisation aims to provide lifelong-learning opportunities, particularly for those in rural districts. The REAP's activities include education programmes from early childhood through to tertiary education that are funded through a variety of organisations including local trusts.

A popular programme is "Computers in Homes" where each household is provided with a computer and the whole family is involved in an introduction to basic computer skills. Peter says the REAP prefers to broker courses by assessing the learning needs of the target group then matching an appropriate provider to support the required learning. A strong focus is to work with people whose earlier learning experiences were largely unsuccessful.

Peter has taught in primary schools overseas and in New Zealand and has twice been a principal. In May 1992 he was appointed as the REAP's community education organiser and then director in 2004. The organisation has 14 permanent staff and around 60 casual staff.

Peter enjoys contributing to the advisory group and values the opportunity to help influence and support the operation manager's work. He shares Ako Aotearoa's vision for enhancing outcomes for all learners in tertiary education and takes every chance to promote Ako Aotearoa's work among his adult education colleagues.

Away from his busy workload, Peter is a competitive social squash player and enjoys the solitude and challenge of trout fishing in any number of the Wairarapa's fine rivers.



Peter McNeur, director of the Wairarapa Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP), pictured here with REAP staff members Makuini Kerehi, Kaitakawaenga (centre) and Wendel Richardson, education team leader.

Keeping workplace literacy and numeracy issues alive in New Zealand

Jeremy Baker, the Industry Training Federation's (ITF's) executive director, reflects on the recent New Zealand Literacy Forum, run by the ITF in partnership with Ako Aotearoa.



Rachel Barwell, national prisoner training co-ordinator at the Department of Corrections, describes at the New Zealand Literacy Forum the department's recent initiative to embed literacy and numeracy into vocational courses for prisoners.

More than 140 people gathered at the forum to discuss the major challenge facing the sector – how to keep workplace literacy and numeracy issues alive. This is a vibrant and passionate sector, and we were thrilled with the turnout and level of engagement at the forum.

While the ITF's Vocation and Educational Training Research Forum held in April (also in partnership with Ako Aotearoa) highlighted ongoing or completed research, the Literacy Forum focused on how literacy and numeracy have been implemented in the workplace. Over the past few years, people have worked hard in this sector to embed literacy and numeracy into training. Now we need to look at ways in which that momentum can be maintained.

We were delighted with the range of presenters at the forum, and there were many highlights throughout the day. One of the presenters, Bronwen Foxx, chief executive of Disabilities Resource Centre Trust – Te Whakaipurangi Haua – gave an entertaining and thought-provoking address about embedding literacy and numeracy from an employer's perspective.

In 2007 the Trust, based in Whakatane, started working with Careerforce, the industry training organisation (ITO) for the health and disability sector, as part of the Tertiary Education Commission's Embedded Literacy Pilots with five ITOs. The pilot programmes are being used to inform embedded literacy practice for ITOs. The pilot project ITOs were encouraged to explore different options for embedding literacy and numeracy learning into their training programmes. The Disabilities Resource Centre Trust was part of Careerforce's

pilot, and this involved running the training sessions with trust staff.

The Trust delivers more than 120,000 hours of care every year. Ninety percent of its 200 staff work in people's homes, and one of the challenges Foxx outlined was the logistical difficulties in getting staff to turn up to the centre to take part in training sessions. She was quick to acknowledge, however, the benefits from the programme – citing improved communication and confidence among staff.

Rachel Barwell, national prisoner training coordinator at the Department of Corrections, gave a presentation on how embedded literacy and numeracy have been introduced to the department's vocational courses for prisoners. The department delivers training to nearly 3,000 prisoners each year as part of its strategy to reduce the chances of reoffending once prisoners are released.

Since embedded literacy and numeracy were introduced in 2010, nearly 500 prisoners have commenced vocational courses with embedded literacy and numeracy elements. The department aimed not only to improve prisoner's core literacy and numeracy skills, but to support them to achieve the national qualifications.

Barwell said the project was too new and the numbers too small at present to draw any significant conclusions, but early indications looked promising. She told the forum that instructors have reported an improvement in prisoners' participation in courses and comprehension of the key concepts being taught. This also resulted in improved training outputs.

The final session of the day focused on the future of workplace literacy and numeracy. The enthusiasm, passion, and commitment evident in this session gives us confidence that there will be even greater innovation and development in this space in the years ahead.

National Tertiary Learning and Teaching Conference 2011 – Te Huinga Ako ā-Motu 2011

After several years of the National Tertiary Learning and Teaching Conference – Te Huinga Ako ā-Motu – taking place in the North Island, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology is hosting the event at its Nelson campus on 12–14 October. Ako Aotearoa is pleased to support the event again as main sponsor. Bridget O'Regan, Ako Aotearoa Southern Hub regional manager, will also contribute to the planning as a member of the conference organising committee.

The conference theme for 2011, *Building Futures*, has been developed in the context of significant change happening throughout the tertiary education sector. Amidst all this change, it is important for educators to keep focused on the basics of learning and teaching, so learners can develop solid foundations on which to build their own futures.

The conference logo with its building blocks reflects the message to "mind our ABCs"



as we build careers and aspirations for a sustainable future. To register your attendance, or for information about submitting a paper for presentation, please go to: www.nltitconference.ac.nz.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Good Practice Publication Grants 2011 – call for applications



We are pleased to announce the details of the Ako Aotearoa Good Practice Publication Grant (GPPG) scheme for 2011. There are now two streams to the scheme, which reflects our view that sustainable improvement of outcomes for learners is about both the improvement of individual practice, and strategic and systematic organisational support to enhance educational performance.

Evaluating the impact of our projects

To date, we have committed nearly \$6 million to supporting research and implementation projects in tertiary teaching and learning (across our regional and national funding schemes). We have commissioned initial evaluation work to measure the impact of our funded projects and this has indicated the schemes are working well. For example, Networkers conducted an evaluation of the Regional Hub Project Funding Scheme and found positive changes in the status and work of individuals and project teams, as well as permanent improvements in the process, delivery, and/or content of tertiary courses.

What is important for us now is to gain a better understanding of the sustained impact of our funded projects. We recently completed a pilot of an Impact Evaluation Framework, involving selected completed projects from the Regional Hub Project Funding Scheme and the National Project Fund. The framework examines the following four key areas relating to project outcomes and the impact these have had both within the participating organisation(s) and beyond:

- outputs resulting from the project and how these have been shared
- practices and how they have changed as a result of this project
- benefits to learners and how they have been achieved as a result of this project
- the impact on the project team.

This framework is now being implemented across all of our funding streams and will involve us visiting all funded project teams at six, 12, and 24 months after their projects have been completed. During these visits, we will discuss the outcomes that have been achieved from each project in light of the original project objectives. Our conversation will also enable us to discuss any additional support we might provide to teams to maximise the impact of their work, as well as any future project ideas resulting from the work.

The data collected from these evaluations will be invaluable to both Ako Aotearoa and its stakeholders as the funding initiatives are evaluated. Just as importantly, it will guide our support for the project teams, so they can disseminate their work more widely. However, the ultimate driver for this evaluation process is the need to better understand the sustainable impact these projects have on the teaching and learning process, their ability to bring about positive organisational change, and how that change impacts on learner outcomes.

Individual and Group Good Practice Publication Grants

The Ako Aotearoa individual and group GPPG streams showcase proven good practice in tertiary teaching and learning by individuals and groups. The funded publications must include evidence of learner benefit through the systematic collection of evidence.

Up to 20 grants are available during 2011. The maximum grant allocation for a written account of good practice with suitable supporting digital images is \$3,000. Submissions may also be supplied in the form of a digital video or multi-media presentation to a “professional standard” (\$5,000 maximum).

Applications close 5pm on Friday 28 October.

Organisational Good Practice Publication Grants

The organisational GPPG stream will showcase suites of organisational strategies designed to improve teaching and learning that have been widely and sustainably implemented across an organisation, and proven to be effective.

Up to three grants are available during 2011. The maximum grant allocation is \$10,000. Publications must be in the form of either a 2,000 word summary accompanied by a digital video or multi-media presentation to a “professional standard” of up to 10 minutes in length, or a 5,000 word report with a brief executive summary.

Applications close 5pm on Friday 18 November.

Further information, including application forms, guidelines, and selection criteria are available at www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/good-practice-publication-grants or contact your Ako Aotearoa Regional Hub.

Two new National Project Fund reports now available



Engaging learners effectively in science, technology and engineering: The pathway from secondary to university education

By Professor Tim Parkinson et al, Massey University

Launched at Massey University in June and featured in further detail in Issue 15 of *Ako Aotearoa Alert*, this comprehensive study, which included over 1,000 teachers and learners, examined how university students become or remain engaged in science during their transition from school to university. The research shows that learners at both school and university are highly engaged by “being scientific”. This research also found that university learners report higher levels of commitment to their studies than do school science students. The authors

question, however, whether the university teaching and learning environment levers off this commitment as well as it could. They argue that the pedagogical environment of science education needs to be redeveloped to promote students’ attainment of intellectual independence and higher order cognitive and non-cognitive skills, at all levels of their studies.

Across both sectors, teaching qualities were found to be the key determinant of learner engagement. In particular, the enthusiasm, commitment, and teaching techniques of science teachers and lecturers were the critical factor in enhancing learner engagement. The challenge, of course, is to develop curricula and a teaching environment in which content is so strongly anchored in the context of both the “real world” and of students’ own career aspirations that engagement is not allowed to deteriorate. To address these issues, the researchers have developed a framework for enhancing student engagement across the transition from secondary to tertiary science.

To download the summary document or full report, go to www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/engaging-in-science

Enhancing nursing education through Dedicated Education Units

By Dr Willem Fourie and his collaborative team across Manukau Institute of Technology and Counties Manukau District Health Board

A critical issue for nursing education is how to optimise practical learning opportunities in clinical contexts. The Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) model departs from the one-on-one dynamics of the preceptor model by creating a collaborative teaching and learning environment that fosters interaction and sharing of knowledge amongst learners and staff. As a result of this project, three new DEUs were established by the project team in 2010 and two more are planned for 2011.

The research report by Willem Fourie and Beverley McClelland is now available. It considers the benefits of a DEU model, including the following findings.

- The quality of the planning, welcome, and orientation are key factors influencing student learning experiences.
- The roles of the clinical liaison nurse, academic liaison nurse, and charge nurse managers significantly impact on the success of a DEU.
- Peer support and teamwork are key contributors to the success of a DEU, including student and staff interactions.

The authors also provide recommendations for developing DEUs. These will be covered in more detail in a guide planned for release in August.

To download the research report, go to www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/nursing-deu

National Project Fund report coming soon

Exploring community and whānau-based learning strategies for Taranaki reo and tikanga

By Te Kupenga Mātauranga o Taranaki

This research project examined how regional education programmes meet community aspirations, such as revitalising te reo Māori and cultural practices. The findings of the project highlight the importance of informal adult teaching and learning on marae or in Māori community settings. The locus of the programmes is as important as the content, and the value of the setting is not just for the learner, as an individual, but also for their whānau and communities as well.

Overall, the five ways identified through which marae-based learning environments contribute to Taranaki Māori aspirations were the:

- revitalisation and strengthening of a Māori identity
- broad development of Māori that improves their position in society
- acquisition, application, and transmission of Taranaki Māori knowledge for community purposes
- strengthening of connections between individuals and collectives to enhance regional cohesion
- sustainability of Taranaki Māori practices and communities.

The summary report, *Tahia te Marae, Tahia te Wananga – Marae and Māori community-based adult learning*, will soon be available, along with the full report, at: www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/kupenga



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