Semester 2 2015

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A useful URL to know

Did you know we can use all the images in the University of Auckland Art Collection for University purposes and it’s easy to browse the images at the website below?

Always on the lookout for images for academix, the Editor emailed the very approachable Director of the Centre for Art Studies, Associate Professor Linda Tyler, who administers the collection. She promptly replied saying there is a website of images and – better still – we have copyright permission to use all images for University purposes. For high resolution images needed for print, contact Alice Tyler or Sam Hartnett the photographer (part-time) who can make hi-res images if none are available.

On this occasion we have not used an image from the collection for the cover but it has made page 3 (opposite) possible. All images on that page are of artworks from the collection.

https://artcollection.auckland.ac.nz

Cover photo

Photo by Tony Chung

Dr ‘Ema Wolfram-Foliaki (CLeaR) says, “The Fale Pasifika tells me that there is a Pasifika presence in this institution, in this space. That physical presence is important to me.”

In the words of the University website, “Our Fale Pasifika plays an important role as the touch-point between the University and Pacific communities. For most Pacific communities, such a fale is more than just a physical structure: it is their point of reference for activities that are central to their cultural expression and it gives them a sense of place and community. Equally, the University’s Fale Pasifika, plays a similar role in our outreach and relationship with Pacific communities.”


The Red Warrior

Elsewhere in the website, the artist, Fatu Feu’u, talks about this work. “This sculpture – we call it Toa Pasifika – is a warrior-type icon because in most Samoan houses, especially Samoan Chiefs’ meeting houses, they have a living Koa – a living warrior. His function is to protect the people, protect the property of the High Chief. “And sometimes he’s actually used for ceremonial purposes to perform, to announce very important events. And that’s the idea that I had on trying to create something like this, of a warrior-type head. And of course the warrior in many ways of Pacific iconographies is a very important thing. Even though we don’t see a lot of them, they are still around us.”

“I thought the Fale needed a Pacific type warrior. “The stones in front of the paepae – the foundation of the house – are there to signify the authority or status of a particular chief in the community. “If the high chief doesn’t have a [very large] stone like this it diminishes his authority, or mana, in the community. The other smaller stone bowls I put … on each side of the sculpture, symbolic of the mana and authority of this warrior person.”

Modelling a graduate attribute

Our graduate profiles all contain the attribute: “Respect for the values of other individuals and groups, and an appreciation of human and cultural diversity”. The CLeaR workshop, Engaging Māori and Pasifika Students, provides insights into how you can model this attribute by teaching inclusively and by broadening your understanding of other cultures.

The values that underpin your culture influence your approach to many things, not least education. This workshop gives an insight into fundamental principles that can impact the learning environment. These concepts include the Māori ako, whānau, whanaungatanga, tino rangitiratanga, and manaakitanga and the Pasifika ‘va’. Drs ‘Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki and Jen Martin were mindful of those principals when developing these workshops and draw on cultural values and experiences to facilitate reciprocal learning, establish connections and nurture relationships.

For most people (from any culture) learning is more meaningful when you connect – to your peers, your teachers and the content. For students outside the dominant culture, it isn’t always easy to make these connections. For teachers within the dominant culture, it isn’t always easy to help them make those connections. The text and images below illustrate some of the strategies discussed at the workshop.

**Hearing your language helps you feel you belong.** Even a short *mihi* (greeting) can make you feel welcome. Don’t tokenise Māori or Pasifika terms but make an effort to integrate them when appropriate.

**Nurture the ‘va’ (space) between student and teacher.** Give students the tools they need, eg for office hours – What might you discuss? Can you bring a friend? When they come, give them your undivided attention so they feel they matter to you.

**Silence does not necessarily mean lack of engagement.** It can be a sign of respect. Provide opportunities to build relationships. ‘Think, pair, share’ activities and/or group work can build confidence and encourage students to participate.

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**Sign up for updates from CLeaR alerts**: [www.clear.auckland.ac.nz/app/subscribe](http://www.clear.auckland.ac.nz/app/subscribe)

Enrol for the workshop at: [www.clear.auckland.ac.nz/app/workshops](http://www.clear.auckland.ac.nz/app/workshops)

or to request a workshop for your department, email ‘Ema: ea.wolfgramm@auckland.ac.nz**
2016 CLeaR Fellows

A new group of CLeaR Fellows for 2016 has met twice to discuss plans for learning and teaching leadership initiatives, focusing on the theme ‘Engaging with elearning’. The seven Fellows will work on a 0.2 FTE release basis during 2016 to showcase and share good practice from across the faculties.

Andrew Eberhard (Business School)
Andrew is a Professional Teaching Fellow in the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management in the Business School. One of his areas of interest is using data to try and identify at-risk students (i.e. students who are at risk of not succeeding at university) in order to provide targeted help. Our current systems do not provide us with ready access to the data needed to identify these at-risk students so that we can help them to succeed. Andrew hopes to find a way to combine the data from Canvas, Delna, Student Services Online and other sources to enable lecturers and faculty support staff to detect at-risk students and intervene early to promote their engagement with the University.

Dr Patrick Girard (Faculty of Arts)
Patrick has been a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Auckland since 2008 when he completed a PhD in Philosophy at Stanford University, specialising in Logic. In collaboration with Tim Dare, Adrienne Moyle, Ashwini Datt and Folko Boermans, he is working on a project to take Philosophy’s Critical Thinking general education paper online. The project has two parts. In 2015, they are developing it as an 8-week MOOC for delivery on the FutureLearn platform. They will then expand the MOOC to a 12-week version for University of Auckland students, to be piloted in 2016. This version – a Large Online Course (LOC) – will be offered as a general education paper, with internal assessment, examination, and tutorial activities.

Associate Professor Jenny Sim (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) (FMHS)
Jenny is the Medical Imaging Programme Director in the School of Medical Sciences. She has been a university academic for the past 25 years and, prior to joining the University of Auckland, has worked in a number of Australian universities as the Medical Imaging Programme Leader and Discipline Head of Medical Radiations. She enjoys pushing boundaries and relishes the challenges of designing innovative curricula that enhance student learning. Jenny’s current focus is on developing an effective elearning strategy to assist online students in the development of their clinical decision-making skills. Jenny also has a strong research interest in online learning, simulation-based learning, communities of learning, reflective practice and continuing professional development. As part of the Fellowship, she also aims to facilitate a community of practice within FMHS to support and disseminate effective teaching practices.

Dr Julie Trafford (Libraries and Learning Services)
Julie has been a Learning Adviser in Student Learning Services for over 15 years. She completed a PhD in Geography in 2012, exploring the capacity- and capability-building potentialities of postgraduate geography research practices. Julie works with librarians, other learning advisers and faculty teaching staff to integrate academic and information literacies into curricula using relevant capability-building frameworks. This often involves the development of online learning resources and assessments. While anecdotal evidence indicates positive outcomes from these elearning opportunities, the technological and learning aspects of student engagement require formal evaluation. Thus, as a 2016 CLeaR Fellow Julie intends to develop a comprehensive and contextually appropriate framework for rigorously evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of these resources to enhance learning outcomes.

Dr Rena Heap (Faculty of Education and Social Work)
Rena holds degrees in Science (Human Physiology) and Education and has been at the Faculty of Education and Social Work since 2004, teaching primarily in Science Education. She has won several teaching awards including University of Auckland Early Career Excellence in Teaching and National Sustained Excellence in Teaching. Her particular research interests are in the scholarship of teaching and learning, elearning, and science education – particularly the history and philosophy of science. It is her commitment to teaching and to practitioner research that Rena brings to the CLeaR Fellowship to further her own, her colleagues’ and students’ engagement with elearning within teacher education programmes, teaching practice and lifelong learning.

Dr Peter Bier (Engineering)
Peter is a Professional Teaching Fellow from the Department of Engineering Science. He regularly teaches mathematics and programming to classes of 700+ students and, to date, has received eight teaching awards. Peter is well known as ‘the unicycle guy’ and he frequently incorporates circus demonstrations into his lectures to help bring physics concepts to life. He is an early adopter of elearning tools and has a significant amount of experience with using technology to more effectively engage large cohorts of students, both in person and online. He is particularly interested in how elearning tools can be used to provide faster feedback to students and has pioneered the use of the Q&A forum software Piazza in New Zealand.
2015 CLeaR Fellows update

2015 CLeaR Fellows, working on teaching and learning enhancement initiatives on the theme ‘Student engagement and achievement’ hosted an interactive session for the Director of Learning and Teaching, the Dean of Education, CLeaR staff, and past and future Fellows.

Constructive feedback from these ‘critical friends’ included many useful ideas on how to refine the teaching strategies and applications members of the current group are working with. The round table discussion format supported deep engagement with ideas, and highlighted areas of common interest across faculties where further collaboration can develop.

The commonality of approaches to student engagement and achievement was surprising, given the range of courses and topics involved. What has combining theory and practice for opera singing got in common with an applied model of institutional action for student success through the first-year transition in Medical Sciences? How does a web-based tool for curriculum navigation, designed to move away from artificial partitioning of courses and to promote a long-term culture of learning, relate to the impact of assessment timing on student grades? These areas have more in common than a cursory glance might suggest, as the Fellows plan to demonstrate at CLeaR’s annual Learning and Teaching Symposium in November. The Fellows’ aim is to engage colleagues with research-informed strategies and applications they can take away to adapt for use in their own teaching context. All staff are invited to share and comment on the Fellows’ experience in an area of strategic importance to the University, to all our students, and to the higher education community worldwide.

For more information on the Fellows and their projects visit www.coursebuilder.cad.auckland.ac.nz/flexicourses/3531/publish/1/

Dr Tanya Evans (Faculty of Science)

Tanya is a Professional Teaching Fellow in the Department of Mathematics where she currently coordinates and teaches the department’s largest Stage II course. Tanya brings a multinational perspective to her position. After finishing her undergraduate degree in Mathematics and Education in St. Petersburg, Russia, Tanya was awarded a postgraduate fellowship at Rice University in Texas, USA, where, in 2003, she completed her PhD in Pure Mathematics, specialising in Low-Dimensional Topology. While at Rice, she also embraced the opportunity to take MBA courses in Financial Mathematics, which remains an area of interest for her.

In 2003 Tanya moved to New Zealand where her main focus shifted towards teaching and learning practices. She is particularly interested in the professional development of teaching staff and was one of the founding members of the Peer Review and Observation group in her department. Tanya is also an active member of the Faculty of Science Teaching and Learning Innovation Group led by Margaret Goldstone.

L-R Anna Yang, (2015 Fellow) and Julie Trafford (2016 Fellow) discuss Anna’s Lablet project which uses mobile technology to gather and process data outside the laboratory.

L-R Graeme Aitken (Dean Education), Tanya Evans (2016 Fellow) Barbara Kensington-Miller (CLeaR) and Keri Moyle (2015 Fellow) pore over Keri’s curriculum mapping tool.

Gathered around the circle (from bottom left) Patrick Girard (2016 Fellow), Paul Denny, Peter Bier (2016 Fellow), Angela Tsai (2016 Fellow) and Tanya Evans (2016 Fellow) discuss the tools that Angela has devised to intervene with at-risk students.
“Even though we’re called upon to use our critical and logical thinking skills all the time, most of us are not that good at it. This free online course aims to help you develop and improve these skills”, says the trailer video for the University of Auckland’s Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Logical and Critical Thinking. The eight-week MOOC starts on the 28th September 2015.

The MOOC grew out of a search for ways to deal with growing demand for Philosophy’s General Education paper, PHIL105G Critical Thinking. Last year, Associate Professor Tim Dare and Dr Patrick Girard were planning an online version of their large PHIL105G paper with Ashwini Datt (CLeaR) and Folko Boermans (University Media Productions). They were asked to develop a massive open online course (MOOC) on Logical and Critical Thinking, to be offered in FutureLearn, the University’s subscribed MOOC Platform. What began as a small step towards online learning became a massive opportunity (and challenge) for Tim and Patrick. In the personae they’ve donned for the journey, Dr Critical (Tim) and Dr Logical (Patrick) are busy refining scripts and performing to camera, while simultaneously developing resources and honing their writing skills for the online environment.

The experience has been daunting but exciting. “We began with word for word transcripts of our recorded lectures” Tim says, “but discovered that online delivery required almost everything to be reworked from scratch. We’ve really had to learn how to engage, motivate and interact with online learners.”

“It’s not technology” Ashwini says, “but teaching philosophy that matters. From a course design perspective, offering an open, online course to a massive and diverse audience can only be a good test of effective online learning strategies and tactics. We are hoping that the teaching and learning experiences in the MOOC will translate into effective teaching and learning strategies for the large online course (LOC).” The LOC will expand the MOOC to a 12-week online general education course for University of Auckland students. It will be piloted in 2016, with internal assessment, examination, and tutorial activities.

The production process has also been an eye-opener for Tim and Patrick. “You don’t know what media production is like until you have 6 people working long hours to produce 5-minute video clips”, remarks Patrick. “But we’ve had a wonderfully professional team who’ve done an extraordinary amount of work, and the results are astounding. It’s amazing how much can be delivered in a 5-minute clip. Folko and the team have found ways to present the materials which are both engaging and informative.”

Given the complexity of the project, learning designer Adrienne Moyle has been seconded part-time to manage this project as well as other University MOOCs. She says, “It’s great to be working with such a talented team on this MOOC with Ashwini heading up learning design and Folko supervising video production. I’ve been learning a lot about logical and critical thinking, and what to do when I meet an argument in the wild. Tim and Patrick present their topic in an engaging and accessible manner that learners will enjoy, while still being challenging enough to get us really thinking about how we formulate our thoughts, and apply reasoning to arrive at conclusions. It’s fascinating stuff!”

Improve your logical and critical thinking skills in this free online course. Identify common obstacles to effective thinking.

You’ll learn how to:

• Identify and avoid common thinking mistakes that lead to the formation of bad beliefs.
• Recognise, reconstruct and evaluate arguments.
• Use basic logical tools to analyse arguments.
• Apply those tools in areas including science, moral theories and law.

Audience: This course is open to anyone with an interest in improving their logical and critical thinking skills. No previous knowledge or experience is required.

Time: 4 hours per week for 8 weeks
Start date: 28 September 2015
Course Trailer: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/logical-and-critical-thinking
CourseBuilder users will be pleased to know that it is easy to surface their existing pages in Canvas, the powerful new Learning Management System (LMS) that will replace Cecil next year. CourseBuilder enables people without a technical background to build media-rich, interactive websites for courses. Developed over many years to serve the evolving needs of teachers and learners, CourseBuilder is based on industry standard technologies, such as HTML5 and the Python programming language, so resources can be used either within any LMS or as stand-alone websites.

Canvas offers powerful opportunities for course management, communication, discussion, online assessment and assignment submission. CLeaR’s Elearning Group finds it very user friendly and easy to master all basic functions.

How CourseBuilder complements Canvas
CourseBuilder complements Canvas with additional features including:

- Tabs or accordions to organise long or complex material, or as containers for a series of activities based on text or media. This allows students to engage in complex, thought-provoking and scaffolded activities without navigating around different pages.
- Hide-show answers to encourage formative, reflective assessment and provide context-specific feedback.
- A glossary tool to provide definitions automatically in context on a page and/or as a list.
- An image gallery to display a collection of thumbnails which can be clicked to enlarge.
- Student journal/note summaries, available from any device, for contextualised reflections or activities. By default, notes are only visible to the student and teacher, though peer review can also be enabled.
- An image map with clickable hot spots.
- An audio/video element, enabling activities to appear at pivotal points during the playback.

Integrating CourseBuilder and Canvas seamlessly
In the short-term, it is easy to surface existing CourseBuilder pages in Canvas. In the medium term (i.e. by the time most students meet Canvas in 2016) they will see only one (Canvas) menu when viewing CourseBuilder pages.

Our conclusion
Our explorations to date confirm that our University now offers a powerful combination of elearning tools to support teaching and learning as well as considerable opportunities for innovation.
Dr Kevin Morris, Director of Learning and Teaching, is busy attending faculty meetings during July and August with a roadshow that gives an overview of our new Learning Management System, Canvas, and what it means for you. He writes, “I am enjoying the opportunity to discuss Canvas with a lot of groups around the University. In these pages, we thought we would share a few thoughts about the opportunities and challenges we see in the new system. Any software change is an adjustment and a challenge for us all – and I am sure this will be no exception. Over the next few months, we will learn a lot more about the new tool as we start the migration of our courses from Cecil and other learning management tools.”

About Canvas

First, some context. The system is relatively new on the market, but its reputation has risen rapidly in just six years. It was conceived in Utah by two Computer Science students, who created Canvas as a class project. The system is designed as an intuitive “one-click, drag and drop” design approach. As a product born in the Cloud, it has benefitted from modern technology and compatibility with mobile apps and devices.

Because Canvas complies with the LTI (Learning Technology Interoperability) standard, the platform can integrate any software or application which also “speaks” LTI. For example, we have chosen to integrate Turnitin, Piazza, Google Drive, Talis Aspire (see opposite for details) and QuestionMark as our foundation apps for next year. More than 300 other apps can be found at the Canvas App Center (www.eduappcenter.com) and will be considered on a needs basis.

The Canvas network offers opportunities for us all to develop and evolve the system. The community votes on ideas for development (see https://community.canvaslms.com/welcome). We learned a great deal from Canvas sites we referenced and from other universities during the procurement process.

Our Canvas at the University

A team of people have been working on the technical integration for several months, and the Auckland version of Canvas is coming along nicely. We are working with the company’s new Sydney office and they have made four visits to Auckland recently. As a cloud-based service, however, there is not a great deal we can do to customise the system. While it is an open-source product, we have purchased a ‘hosted’ version, meaning we don’t manage the system, and all the upgrades and features are installed automatically.

Features of the system

Canvas presents new opportunities for learning and teaching at the University. Some of the features we will be adopting early on are:

Planning tools and notifications

Tools for structuring and presenting a course and associated planned activities. Planning tools and notifications features include Announcements, Calendar and Syllabus.

Communication and collaboration tools

A new level of online engagement is possible with Canvas, and this can be made part of course expectations. This makes the online environment a rich space for students to collaborate with their peers and teaching staff. Communication and collaboration tools include: Discussions, Conversation and Chat.

Marking and feedback

Canvas provides tools to support teachers to manage assignments and provide feedback to students. Marking and feedback tools include: Assignments and Quizzes. The online marking tool in Canvas is known as Speedgrader.

The ‘Course Standard’

As part of the implementation of Canvas, the University leadership team have agreed to operate with a set of requirements for each course. A core set of online elements will provide our students with a consistent experience across all courses they are enrolled in. Most teachers develop a course outline, which students receive as a PDF or in hardcopy. Canvas offers you the opportunity to put course milestones and assessment details into a digital format which automatically populates a calendar for students, giving them a holistic view of their academic commitments for the month.
Learning the new system

We have scheduled a number of events to provide early and ongoing opportunities to learn about the new system and be ready for using Canvas across the University in Semester One, 2016.

Discovery Drop-in Sessions

Take this opportunity to ask questions about Canvas, hear from early adopters about their experience and gain an early understanding of what Canvas means for you in Semester One, 2016.

Discovery drop-in sessions are being held in August on Monday 10th August (10am - 12pm), Tuesday 11th August (10am - 12pm), Tuesday 18th August (10.30am-12.30pm), Thursday 20th August (10.30am-12.30pm),Tuesday 25th August (10am - 12pm) and Wednesday 26th August (9am-11am).

Canvas Facilitators

A Senior Learning Designer is working in partnership with appointed Canvas Facilitators and Faculty transition groups to finalise training details, migration and planning during August and September.

Training

In the upcoming months, training will include hands on sessions in your faculty and units. Online material is available to learn where and how you want, self-discovery through the Canvas online global community and multiple ways for users to access help e.g. drop-in hours, one on one and virtual consultation.

For updates, visit https://wiki.auckland.ac.nz/display/CANVAS/

Course Standard – Core Elements

A large part of the Canvas Standard will be easily set up and maintained in what Canvas call the ‘Syllabus’. The Canvas Syllabus is a dynamic container bringing together information from other parts of the system. The Canvas Standard elements are:

1. Course overview - course description and contact details, course outline PDF, learning outcomes.
2. Information on assessment - assessment weighting, methods, criteria, due dates, relationship to learning outcomes.
3. Relevant guidelines and policies (academic honesty, student feedback etc).
4. Learning resources - (Talis reading lists, lecture slides and lecture recordings, where applicable).
5. Course calendar.
6. Course alerts and announcements.
7. Timely access to marks and grades.

What is Talis Aspire and the Course Reading Lists service?

The University is introducing the online Course Reading Lists service to streamline the creation and management of course reading lists and make copyright compliance easier.

Teaching staff bookmark potential readings in Library collections or elsewhere on the web, organise them into reading lists, and make the lists available online to students. Staff can update lists at any time, track student use and engagement, and roll over lists for future re-use.

Students have one easy-to-find reading list, delivered via the LMS. It provides direct access to electronic resources plus up-to-date availability information for books, DVDs etc in Library collections. They can mark their reading intentions and add personal notes.

The service is based on the Reading Lists and Digitised Content products from Talis (www.talis.com). The Library has liaised with CLL (Copyright Licensing New Zealand) and Talis to define the CLL rule set which is automatically checked when staff request digitisation of essential print resources. This will enable electronic reporting on CLL licence usage, with no further need for manual surveys.

Course Reading Lists service pilot

There are 39 courses from across the University participating in a pilot of the Course Reading Lists Service in Semester Two. Lists for these courses are being made available to students via the appropriate learning management system, CECIL, Moodle or Canvas. The Talis Canvas LTI, allowing academics to embed links to Talis readings in context within a Canvas course, was implemented in July and will be tested by some of the courses in the pilot.

Libraries and Learning Services staff will be using the pilot to test processes related to list review and purchase and digitisation of resources. Feedback from the pilot will inform recommendations to the Project Steering Committee concerning the best way to scale up delivery of the Course Reading Lists service across the University.
Canvas sparks interest in digital learning and teaching

Students on ACADPRAC 703: Engagement in digital learning and teaching are assessed for participation, planning and a presentation on the culmination of their semester’s work. This year, Ashwini Datt, the Course Coordinator, broadened the scope of their presentations, adding a guest speaker and inviting a wider audience to engage in discussions at an Elearning symposium. An audience of about 50 joined in a lively discussion which illustrated how much they cared about their students and their students’ learning.

The message of the course – pedagogy before technology – was clearly demonstrated by the ACADPRAC 703 presenters, Dr Peter Smith (Business) and Dr Duncan McGillivray (Chemical Sciences). Despite coming from opposite ends of the elearning spectrum, Peter, the elearning enthusiast and Duncan, the pragmatic scientist, impressed as caring teachers. The invited speaker, Damon Ellis from The Centre for Creative Application of Technology in Education (CreATE) provided an insight into learning analytics and how it can inform our design, delivery and support models for effective digital teaching and learning.

From the presentations

“Who we are as teachers determines how we will engage with technology. There’s a wave coming towards us called Canvas. My intention is to ride that wave, rather than get drowned in it. I see this as a wonderful opportunity to look at what we do in Cecil and say, Could I be doing it better? Can I use the wave to improve my teaching, improve outcomes for students and make things better for them?” Peter Smith.

“It’s not actually all that easy… there’s nothing that says elearning is bad necessarily but nor is there a lot of evidence saying it’s good either. We have to think carefully before we embark on this journey. There is evidence that you can make it work but it’s not the norm and the differences appear to be a lot about your students before you get there: knowing what their background is because students need to be not only confident in the learning system you give them but also competent in the subject.” Duncan McGillivray.

“Within an online space what fulfils a similar function to reading the energy in the room, to the interactions out in the corridor? And that’s really this whole new area of analytics. For lecturers, learning analytics represents an opportunity to inform course design and delivery, the chance to better understand how students engage with content online. Analytics can reveal, for example, whether students are studying at a sustained pace or bingeing, or whether they are accessing assignment feedback in a timely fashion. This can shape prioritisation and presentation of content, the structure of assessment, and even interventions to encourage better student engagement.” Damon Ellis.

Where are our DACM alumni now?

It is nearly six years since DACM (Doctoral Academic Career Module) was set up with a Vice-Chancellor’s Strategic Development grant. We try to keep in touch with our alumni. Recently we caught up with Dr Molly Mullen (2013 cohort) and Dr Susan Potter (2011 cohort) and asked them for their reflections post DACM.

Molly Mullen (2013 cohort)
Lecturer, Critical Studies in Education, the University of Auckland

“I first considered an academic career in 2001, as I was completing my BA. Instead, I took my lecturers’ advice and focused on gaining professional experience and I went on to work as an Education Manager for theatres in London for the next eight years. The idea of an academic career arose again in 2007. I was completing an MA in Applied Theatre and had been invited to do some visiting lecturing and supervision work. A job that combined both research and teaching a subject and practice I was passionate about seemed ideal. Starting a PhD in 2010, I soon realised that the world of academic work was very different to the one I had imagined, and I felt daunted by it. Through DACM I came to understand the many facets of the lecturers job and also that there were many other possible academic career paths. I started to think about the kind of academic I wanted to be. When I came to make my first job applications, I was equipped with the academic CV, research and teaching profiles I had written for DACM. In my first year as a lecturer, I have drawn on learning and resources from the course to help develop my research, teaching and service roles. As I navigate this early phase of my academic career, the DACM staff and their colleagues in CLeaR continue to provide support and encouragement.”

(Cont’d on P13)
“I’m interested in learning analytics because it would be useful to know how much time students actually spend on the online materials and activities. Is it far more than we expect and far more than they want?” This question drew a lively discussion.

Student workload
Continually grafting on more practices without altering classroom norms and routines does not make for happy students: nor does adding resources and readings without culling or annotating existing ones. Presenters at the Symposium urged us to be mindful of student workload both within and outside the University. NZQA recommends calculating direct contact time, self-directed learning, and time spent on assessment; teachers have responsibility to keep course time appropriate to the weighting of a course.

While relevant for all modes of learning, this is particularly apposite in elearning, where calculating learning hours should be part of the development process. It’s easy to forget that, just because it’s quick to add a link to a great resource and exciting to encourage on-line talk or devise activities to address a perennial issue, it’s not necessarily quick for students to complete and learn effectively from them. Usability testing and calculating ‘notional learning hours’ help address this issue.

Yet estimating learning hours in non-contact time is complex. Europe’s Tuning Project reminds us that prerequisite knowledge impacts student workload and outcomes, as do factors such as “diverse traditions, curriculum design and context, coherence of curriculum, teaching and learning methods, methods of assessment and performance, organisation of teaching, ability and diligence of the student and financial support by public or private funds” (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2008, p.78.). Kilfoil (2015, p1) writes, “One interesting aspect of notional hours is that the concept looks at workload from the students’ perspective. We do not look at how much content we would like to teach but at how much time it takes the average student to achieve deep learning of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are embodied in a particular module.”

Students can perceive self-directed learning outside class as an extra imposition which – since it’s not observed – they can designate ‘optional’ and avoid. It’s important they realise that it’s an integral part of their learning landscape and is just as important as face-to-face learning. When classrooms are flipped, if students treat preparation at home before class as unnecessary, the opportunity for real learning collapses.

Those going ‘blended’ need to let students know they’ve included the time it takes for all activities when calculating learning hours to match course stipulations. In her Carpe Diem workshops, Professor Gilly Salmon recommends you give students estimates of the time each activity should take.

Not just an optional extra! Changing student perceptions of online preparation
Tales of students failing to prepare for face-to-face activities abound. A story from a member of the audience struck a chord. She was employed to create an online course using existing content from an earlier distance learning offering. Many of the activities were in Flash, so were not readily edited. She produced a beautifully presented course with lots of interaction. So why did the on-campus students constantly ask for face-to-face tutorials? On closer analysis, the interaction on the website only took place between student and content. There wasn’t enough communication and feedback. The students saw the content as too theoretical and irrelevant to what they wanted to learn. In response, she introduced tutorials where students engaged in group activities. The students loved them but they stopped doing the online preparation on which the activities were based. They saw the tutorials as replacing the time previously spent on online.

She has now scheduled time for students to do the preparatory online learning on the morning of the tutorial. This has made time allocated to online preparation visible to students and they no longer see it as an optional extra.

A similar story of success, using timetabling to encourage self-directed team work offline, bore this out. Apart from a lecture at the beginning and end of the course, class time is scheduled as team time since the course is all about working in teams. The story teller said, “It solves so many problems having team time designated in the university system. The trick is getting it into that system!”

References
A CLeaR lens on the art of mathematics

Spurred by a single classroom observation, Drs Julia Novak and Tanya Evans (Mathematics) are transforming their teaching into research. It’s been CLeaR’s pleasure to contribute to their project through the various programmes we offer. It’s particularly satisfying that Tanya and Julia are keen to disseminate their experience.

Julia says, "My lecture on determinants was a little rushed, dry and probably a bit boring". She had asked CLeaR’s Dr Sean Sturm to attend the lecture and give her feedback. Sean urged her to think about providing guided opportunity for students to develop their understanding, rather than transferring her own expertise directly to them. Julia recalls, "I thought of asking the students to construct the formula for matrix determinants for themselves and use the required techniques to calculate it. But on the surface, the idea of non-maths majors doing this within a fifty-minute lecture seemed absurd!"

Something about the idea, however, kept Julia thinking and she eventually raised it with colleagues. Student discussion seemed implausible. Unlike papers in literature or law, introductory algebra just didn’t seem to present interpretative openings or points of principle for the class to discuss.

Almost a year later, when Julie needed to do an assignment for Clear’s Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCert), she saw an opportunity to explore the idea further and took up the problem again. She had an idea now – to team-teach with a colleague, each of them explaining and endorsing a different way to calculate determinants. With two of them, they could work to polarise the class. And then the students would debate which way was better. Over several weeks, the idea was refined through many conversations with Tanya Evans in the office next-door. Together, they "imagined passionate discussions, the championing of ‘favourite’ techniques, clever heckling and students pointing out faults in their opponents’ positions." In Julia’s mind, it was a nice fantasy for the assignment but Tanya was thinking quite differently. One day, she surprised Julia with a fiat. "I’m due to lecture on determinants in only three days. Let’s do it."

The lecture takes places in the middle of Tanya’s Stage II maths course. Students were given a handout to read in advance. It outlined two techniques for calculating matrix determinants – row reduction, and co-factor expansion. In the lecture, Tanya expounded on co-factor expansion, Julia on row reduction. The students each picked a side, divided into small teams of four to six and spent quarter of an hour talking animatedly about what’s good about their preferred method, and what’s wrong with the other. A representative from each group took the stage to present their position in the face of questions, heckling and interjections. “We were surprised that, in the second vote, many students changed their minds,” says Julia. “We could influence this by giving students different examples for their practice and discussion.” The class gave students an opportunity to experience how mathematics is really done, what Tanya and Julia call ‘the culture of mathematics’ and ‘mathematics as an art’. In contrast the more typical master performances explain current results without disclosing all the hard work – sometimes centuries of it – behind the finished product.

The experience was so successful that Tanya and Julia wanted to disseminate it. They say, "We needed someone to help us with the Scholarship of Teaching (SoTL) aspects of dissemination, to show us how to do non-mathematician things like write about teaching and transform mathematician-style abstractions into outputs like conference proposals and journal submissions. Writing ethics applications was particularly foreign to us. From our disciplinary standpoint it is hard to identify what’s important in the questions in the way that ethicists see it." They called on CLeaR’s Dr Barbara Kensington-Miller to help. Together, the three of them wrote a paper explaining their insights, implementation, and observations.

What Tanya and Julia want to know now is: Do the students really develop a deeper understanding of mathematics this way? What prompts would allow students to show that they had achieved the desired conceptual learning? Presenting their work at the TERNZ conference last year, Julia and Tanya started talking with 2015 CLeaR Fellow Dr Jason Stephens. Jason’s methods in educational psychology seemed to provide an ideal solution to the problem, and he soon joined the team.

The question of what students learn will keep Julia, Tanya and Jason busy over the coming year. Julia will convene focus groups to gather students’ perspectives to feed into a first research paper for the PGCert in Academic Practice and then into another SoTL publication. Tanya will take on a CLeaR Fellowship, branching the project into elearning by implementing and evaluating pre-lecture videos clips and quizzes in Canvas. Both Tanya’s and Julia’s courses are taught in multiple streams, allowing a comparative experiment that Jason is now designing.
Summer Research Scholarship, anyone?

Applications for a 2015-2016 Summer Research Scholarship may be open in your faculty. You will need a small research project that should take a novice student researcher about 400 hours. The scholarship creates a symbiotic win-win relationship. The academic will take their research idea forward considerably at no cost to themselves. For this benefit, they actively supervise an undergraduate student (usually someone finishing Stage II), and initiate them into an aspect of research work – and that is often satisfying in itself with a student who intends to go into research. The academic also reports at the end on how the project went.

The undergraduate student will earn the $5,000 provided by the University over Summer, being trained in some aspect of research and conducting it like a research student. Any eligible student interested in a research career has the chance to see if it really suits them, and to get some experience likely to be advantageous when they get to the researcher stage. And of course there is the small remuneration in a time when jobs are often hard to come by.

Last edition we reported on CLeaR’s Dr Susan Carter and the research she accompanied with Summer Research Scholar Priyanka Nair. For both of them, the experience was terrific. Susan found herself re-enthused for the project as Priyanka absorbed herself in the data and its analysis: they plan to write an article over next Summer that Priyanka will lead author to consolidate the sense that this was a fully-fledged supervised research project. Was this an unusually productive summer scholarship?

Dr Julie Harrison from Accounting and Finance and summer research scholar Anh Vu (Andre) Pham have a similar story. From Julie’s point of view she was able to kick-start a research project that otherwise would have had to wait for other projects to be completed. By engaging Anh Vu Pham to collect data and provide an initial analysis, Julie was able to explore the research potential of the project. She plans to take this project, refine the methodology and extend it to include additional data, with a view to submitting an article to an international conference in 2016. Without the benefit of Anh’s assistance, the project would still be relegated to the “wish I had more time” work-in-progress list.

Anh Vu developed expertise in NVivo10, which is commonly used for qualitative data analysis – he knows that what he learned will be of use to him in the future. The data he analysed came from stakeholder views on the proposed International Integrated Reporting Framework, so he got an insider view on a complex politicised issue. He also learned really valuable skills by producing an analysis of stakeholder views on the International Integrated Reporting Framework – an almost 4,000 word report. These skills will be useful if he goes on to do a masters or PhD later, or whenever he needs to write reports during his career.

Where are our DACM Alumni now?

Susan Potter (2015 cohort)

Lecturer, Art History, the University of Sydney

“I’ve recently taken up a new position – the second in just under two years – as a Lecturer in Film Studies in the Art History department at the University of Sydney. After finishing my PhD in 2012, I undertook a six-month postdoc at the University of Auckland before working as a Lecturer in Media and Communications at a regional university in Australia, the University of New England (UNE), Armidale NSW. During my time at UNE I had the opportunity to contribute to the redesign of the curriculum including the development of new first-year units of study in Media and Communications, and a new unit in Hollywood Cinema.

Though it’s currently in storage with my move, the DACM ringbinder sat on my shelf within easy reach during my time at UNE. I referred to it every now and again, most often in relation to teaching and curriculum design, but also to remind myself – when I was tired or uninspired – about what makes great university teaching. One of the most memorable articles for me was the imaginary letter to a new academic teaching for the first time on the importance of engagement, enthusiasm and organisation.

“Writing this reflection piece has been on my long ‘to do’ list, alongside working on current research projects (planning an upcoming archive research trip, co-editing a special journal issue, and revising a book manuscript), and finalising teaching materials for the semester that starts next week. For anyone who’s taken the DACM, that will be no surprise! I remember one of the early modules on workload and time management. It’s the latter skill that I’ve found to be essential to survival in academia. There are so many varied and often (but not always) interesting demands that it can be hard to prioritise. To remind myself of the importance of bracketing off regular time for research and writing, I’ve saved to my desktop a recent online article by a US professor entitled ‘Face It: Your Decks Will Never Be Cleared.’

“Working as an academic comprises a compelling mix of intellectual demands and practical activities. I’ve been lucky in that my current position is a continuing one – the kind that has been diminishing in the Australian academic context with the rise of casual and fixed term contracts. I’m coming into the job at an exciting time in the development of the film studies major, after a significant curriculum review, and with the opportunity to contribute further to the development of the program at undergraduate, honours and PhD levels. And, for the first time, I have the opportunity to teach squarely within one of my areas of research, a possibility that has reminded me of the discussions in the DACM of the nexus between research and teaching. Right now I’m figuring out how to introduce second-year undergraduate students to the study of early cinema and modern life, and what films to include in my first lecture: should I play Alice in Wonderland?”

Contd from P10
Masters supervision: tips, traps and tracks

Why do academics do it? Masters success has less kudos than doctoral success, so there is less institutional incentive for supervisors. Associate Professor Jennifer Frost (Arts/Humanities), Dr Mark Andrews (Engineering) and Dr Mike Lee (Business) pooled their experiences at a CLeaR seminar on masters supervision. Together they shook out some of the vagaries of Master supervision and gave excellent pointers for novice supervisors. Mike sees the masters degree as ‘the neglected middle child’, caught between the honours research project that initiates students into research and the capstone doctorate. With a masters thesis of around 40,000 words, students must do half the work of a doctorate in a quarter of the time. Supervisors are also under pressure. Is masters supervision practical in terms of careers?

A recurrent theme was the need to scope modestly. Often students read seminal work and want to do the same, but they needn’t and can’t within the masters timeline. Attempts to cut back projects can cause tension, but one thing masters students learn is to be realistic as researchers, and work within pre-established frameworks. There can be replication of methods; results need not be original if the design is; and it doesn’t really matter if there is little in the way of results. The object is to demonstrate research-readiness.

How do academics decide who to supervise? A high grade point average won’t always tell you whether a student will make a good research student, since A+ students cannot always handle the uncertainty and chaos of open-ended research. It’s more accurate to interview potential masters students. Ask them about their motivation, aspirations and goals for after graduation. Talk to them about the ‘character development’ that they are likely to undergo, the challenges and frustrations, and the sheer dogged slog. Judge their state of mind and where they are outside of the University. What are their other responsibilities? And if they have done an honours research project, talk to the academic who supervised it. Then if you hear that the student has trouble meeting deadlines, you know to set them all a month earlier than they need to be.

In Arts/Humanities subjects, it can work really well when masters students combine study with 20 hours teaching, as this gives them time for ideas to germinate. In STEM disciplines, potential projects may be the by-product of doctoral research. It’s great when that happens, as the masters student is swept into the momentum with others around them who have their heads into the area. It’s harder to begin from zero. The time-pressure of a masters means everything has to go smoothly for a year, yet it’s a stage of life when students often have babies. And a masters may be a gateway to a doctorate – Jennifer wanted her American History masters students to go on to doctorates within the United States – in which case grades matter.

Structure should be established early. The panel agreed that it’s helpful if chapters can be stand-alone articles, able to be submitted for publication. Deadlines are important but one academic found it was not helpful to pressure some students – and thus become another stressor amongst a list of many.

Departmental systems that had twice yearly project reports and oversight by a committee and the HoD also supported supervisors: progress was not their responsibility alone. Supervisors need emotional intelligence; we need to accept that some students just cannot get high grades, recognise the boundaries of supervisory responsibility – we all agreed that this was perhaps one of the hardest things, as supervisors are more usually fully engaged in and committed to any research project that they supervise.

It was recommended that supervisors be honest about writing from the start of the masters, and clear about what they would accept. These supervisors saw the masters thesis two or three times over the year, but each time they saw writing would give detailed comments only on four or five pages. Students were then expected to go through looking for similar typos or errors they needed to pick up. That was their responsibility.

It helps to have departmental student meetings where everyone talks honestly in a relaxed atmosphere. By relating their most humiliating experience as a researcher, supervisors can set the tone.

One challenge is the need for external examiners, and criteria of exclusion of who these can be. They can’t be anyone the supervisor has collaborated with, which can mean the pool is small. Choosing examiners is ‘an act of diplomacy.’ Academics may not want to use up their collegial good will with masters examination requests. Then once suitable examiners are found, it can be good to set up an exchange system.

Do you research your own teaching and produce Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)?

Are you as innovative in presenting your work as you are connected to teaching?

The Faculty of Education and Social Work is a foundational partner with Springer and seven other universities in launching a new video journal. The Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy is to be published as an open access journal. It represents an intriguing development in the field of academic publication and an international peer-reviewed, open-access avenue for publication as we prepare for the next PBRF round. Because Faculty of Education and Social Work has invested in this significant innovation, academics from that faculty will be prioritised, yet there may be spaces for your work.

If you can envision yourself producing a video research article on teaching and learning, check out:

http://www.videoeducationjournal.com/

and contact Martin East to signal interest.
First in the family: a global perspective

Inspired by years of working with students, Dr 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki (CLeaR) began research into Pasifika students who were ‘First in their Family to attend a University’ (FiFU). With funding from the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), the project has grown into an international collaboration. This global project examines FiFU from a strength-based – rather than the more common deficit – perspective. ‘Ema and Associate Professor Lorri Santamaria (Education) are the academic leads on the project.

The multiple difficulties that students must negotiate to achieve success shouldn’t be conflated, yet they are often grouped for poor reasons, like simplistic ethnic categories. ‘Ema says, “We often generalise about students’ backgrounds, but we should remember there are differences and distinctions within those groups.”

Existing research often focuses on FiFU students’ need for support, labelling them ‘unprepared’, ‘at risk of failing’ and ‘likely to withdraw’. This project shifts focus to the students’ strengths, not asking, “Why do they fail?”, but, instead, “What strengths do they have that we can build on?” By studying their experiences, we can ask, “What do they bring to the university?”

Research methodologies

As part of this global collaboration, the research team wanted to bring more indigenous research methodologies into the research arena. Focus groups appealed as a way for students from diverse groups to share experiences. The University of Cape Town team were conscious that, as English is not the home language of the majority of their students, EAL speakers might be silenced in a diverse focus group.

They decided to use participatory learning activities (PLA), asking students to draw their experiences of the journey to, into and through the university. Students can tell their stories in a drawing which they can then refer to in focus groups. The drawings also give a window to interpret the experiences of these students. This methodology has also been adopted by the University of Auckland team.

The image below is a drawing of one South African FiFU student’s journey. The student explained what the various parts of the picture represent.

At the University of Auckland, our Pasifika students’ journeys typically include the family. Parents and grandparents have often sacrificed much to achieve a better education and better life for their family. One Pasifika student burst into tears as she told this story. One day, when her grandfather dropped her off, she suggested he take a look around campus. She was so happy that she could give him the opportunity to step into a place and social circumstance that he had never anticipated accessing. Pasifika students’ achievements do not only belong to them, they belong to the whole family.

Participating Universities

The University of Auckland, the University of Cape Town, the University of Sydney, and the University of Western Australia.

WUN+ Partners

University of California, Berkeley, USA and Thompson Rivers University, Canada.

Key Outcomes

- Symposium and writing retreat, January 2015.
- Chapter titled Together to the table: How to apply critical leadership in cross-cultural international research to be published by Routledge, 2015.
- Presented research co-authored by FiFU team (Melbourne and Brisbane) 2014.
- Symposium (the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (ISSOTL) Conference) October 2015.

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"Now I am just chasing my dream of being a doctor. If I'm not a doctor then it's not my destiny. I'm still on the road to success, where I will have a better life." A University of Cape Town student explains her drawing (above). (Reprinted with permission from Dr Moragh Paxton and Dr Roisin Kelly from the University of Cape Town)
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