

Learning and Change Networks

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This report is written by Brian Annan (PhD), the LCN programme director, on behalf of the UniServices---The Faculty of Education LCN provider team at The University of Auckland. The report represents the provider perspective on developments and facilitation services rendered, from which the Ministry of Education can judge the value. This is a variation from Milestone Reports 1, 2 and 3, which attempted to represent a partnership perspective of developments from the joint thinking of the provider team and the Ministry of Education.

Acknowledgements go firstly to the network leaders that provided the network and school plans and the reflective comments and quotes about developments that made this report possible to write. That information is essential for milestone reporting, but a more important acknowledgement to the network leaders is their endeavour to activate a new way of engaging priority students and their families/whānau as co---constructors of innovative learning environments alongside professionals. Second, is acknowledgements to the UniServices---Faculty provider team members and Ministry of Education LDA team members for contributing information to complete the report.

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SECTION 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Milestone 4 report delves into the LCN strategy as the 53 networks move into implementation and evaluation and strategy leaders think about future-proofing successful elements of LCN to enhance New Zealand's education system. LCN makes a remarkably successful policy-to-practice contribution to address the significant equity challenge that remains steadfast in New Zealand's education system. LCN represents a collective responsibility of students, teaching professionals, families/whānau and communities to address the equity challenge. LCN challenges participants to make mindset and practice shifts in four areas: from school learning to ecological learning; from individuals to connected students, teaching professionals, families/whānau and community; from competition to collaboration; from passive to active; and from needy to appreciative views of priority students and their families. Those shifts represent a transformational move from the schooling improvement paradigm to the new paradigm of future-focused learning environments.

The nine sections in this report move from practical LCN developments and evidence of capability growth, to points of policy interest before listing recommendations, which are a realistic set of tasks to complete the two-year commitment made to the \$7 million LCN appropriation.

Section 2 follows the executive summary and focuses on the work that has been completed for network leaders and participants to conduct three impact checks from their networking endeavour. The first impact check is to evaluate the extent to which change priorities have been addressed in terms of mindset and practice shifts. The second impact check is on the academic achievement trends of participant students. The third and most important impact check is the extent to which the mindset and practice shifts as well as the academic achievement trends have addressed the achievement challenges that priority learners face in their everyday lives. Most of that work is ahead of the networks as current data sets are one-point-in-time. Once end-of-year National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori results are collated, the three impact checks become a priority task.

Section 3 is an analysis of the investment into the UniServices/Faculty facilitation services. The services have followed a bell-shaped curve—a build up in the first six months of the strategy followed by multiple facilitation components operating concurrently during the 14-month middle-section of the strategy and a considerable downsizing of services in the final six months. Three features of the facilitation are outlined; (i) a facilitation team constantly learning and adapting with a strong focus on the future rather than looking back, (ii) the design and delivery capability to activate lateral learning within and between LCN networks, and (iii) new networks benefit from cutting-edge facilitation based on learning from the other networking arrangements

and attachment to international movements (GELP and OECD ILE) around future-focused learning environments. Recently initiated science networks are a case in point, whereby the facilitation services involve a mix of an experienced facilitator coach on the side for network leaders, a science expert infiltrating network activities and a digital design expert to develop appropriate frames and tools. Section 3 rounds off with the value proposition of including Manaiakalani and Ngā Kura ā Iwi in the provider team and taking the risk to innovate via multiple components to the provider team as opposed to take a traditional intervention logic approach – a risk worth taking given the overwhelmingly positive international feedback about the potential of LCN as a global innovation.

Section 4 updates progress in LCN network and school plans. The majority of network leaders indicate that they are now growing networks to involve students, and family/whānau alongside teaching professionals. This more distributed responsibility for change has challenged the traditional role of the school, the teacher and the classroom and is the beginnings of consolidating understandings of new roles. While it has probably been important in the formative stages of the strategy to be cautious in the practical application of the ecological, interactive approach to broaden the thinking of school-based learning beyond teaching, new networks will have the opportunity to include a wide representation of participants early. All networks, whether newly forming or well developed, need to be aware that authentic participation of family, whānau and community is more difficult to achieve if they are kept on the periphery of the network by a firmly established core professional group. Many leaders noted that their network plans are now linked to charters and form parts of schools' annual plans. Network plans are not static documents, some networks viewing them as living documents, as catalysts for connecting participants and modified as new knowledge is acquired, constructed and shared. Determining indicators of change in practice for each participant group posed the greatest challenge for networks that were striving to develop valid success criteria within new and innovative learning environments. The measurement of achievement did not present such a challenge as the network participants were accustomed to such assessment.

Section 5 outlines a shift from a structured evaluative environment at the outset of the strategy to the more flexible current arrangements. Three evaluative tasks are discussed; the three impact checks outlined in Section 2, the Ministry's Leadership and School/Kura capability tools and the UniServices/Faculty evaluative probes. Despite the complexity of creating evaluative metrics for future-focused learning environments, the collective involved in the LCN strategy has forged ahead to work out how to integrate networking and evaluation. One of the most obvious findings is that those two aspects are one in the same thing and you have to be involved in the networking environment to understand the evaluative nature of it. LCN started with collective investigations to identify context-specific change priorities as well as structured frames to evaluate progress against pre-determined criteria of effectiveness. We thought that combination constituted a useful mix of evaluation but it did not work as planned. The mix had to be adapted and, once a few adaptations started, they are now proliferating in creative and

diverse ways through the lateral learning connections within and across the networks.

Section 6 reports on progress against the Ministry's four benefit outcomes; student achievement and capability growth in analysis and use of data, in networking leadership and in lateral learning. Analysis of reflective data from network leaders, facilitators and LDA's indicate a clear commitment to improving educational success for priority learners. There is also good progress being made to grow capability around data, leadership and lateral learning. Signs of the growth tend to be small, conservative steps that start with the instructional core and tentatively move out into other aspects of the learning ecology, a typical safe approach to move towards future---focused learning environments. As Valerie Hannon, a global leader in the field, says: School is not a place for "random or unfocused experimentation" (Hannon, 2010). What is most encouraging in the way LCNs are carefully dipping their toes into the future is that they are bringing up front the role of the parents, family and whānau to sit alongside teaching professionals as invaluable scaffolds to support priority learners, not too little and not too much.

Section 7 includes feedback from and responses to external agents attached to the LCN strategy. Good progress is being made in relation to two of the three points of feedback from the Martin Jenkins evaluation and the OECD officials' tour of LCNs across New Zealand.

The two points that are well on track are (i) the LCN partnership and contractual arrangements between the Ministry of Education and UniServices/Faculty have been clarified and (ii) challenging conversations are more prominent now that implementation and evaluation are interacting with one another. The third point of future---proofing the useful elements of the LCN strategy is not guaranteed by any means. Current arrangements suggest that LCN is a small influence on a policy engine room that appears intent on growing New Zealand's education system from the instructional core out, which is a conservative step out of the schooling improvement paradigm into the new future---focused learning paradigm. Leveraging off LCN as a global innovation to disturb the status quo of professional domination and transform the education system is highly unlikely.

Section 8 addresses matters concerned with the supports and challenges for education change and future---focused learning environments. In particular, the need for more innovative brokering between the visions of system---leaders, that is the Ministry of Education and representative sector leaders and advisors valued by government, and the creativity in schools is discussed.

Section 9 outlines recommendations, the first suggesting to concentrate heavily on impact checks of LCN methodology in the final six months of LCN, with a strong emphasis on impact on academic achievement of priority learners. Subsequent recommendations focus on the production of publications about LCN, completion of diffusion tasks outlined in Variation 3 of the LCN contract, setting up meetings with national reference and advisory groups and ERO to share LCN findings with systems---

level leaders.

Overall, Milestone Report 4 outlines an impressive success story about policy-to-practice activation of future-focused innovation to grow more effective learning environments for priority learners. This report does not fully account for the committed and on-going positive efforts of the Ministry of Education's LCN national manager and LDA team as the report focuses more on facilitation services, as a contractual requirement. It goes without saying that the facilitation team, and clearly the network leaders, appreciate the efforts and trust-building of the Ministry advisors and the success of the strategy would have fallen well short of the mark without them.

Milestone Report 4 also provides a somewhat guarded view about future-proofing and diffusion of the successful elements of the LCN strategy into the New Zealand education system. In addition, the report also reflects some optimism that New Zealand's policy-to-practice direction could become transformational rather than toying with the status quo.

SECTION 2

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

The Ministry's LCN student achievement database is approaching 6500 students by year-end, many of whom are priority learners. Appendix 1 provides an update on the most recent addition of students to the database in relation to National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori LCN database. Trends are similar to those reported in Milestone 3. This collation is a significant achievement in its own right as it represents growing trust between participant schools and the Ministry in relation to dealing with achievement information. Trust was low at the outset of the strategy in October 2012, whereas now both parties are looking at the academic achievement data as vital information to inform a positive change process to adjust learning environments for priority learners. Trust, therefore, is growing around a belief that the data is best used to learn what to change and not to judge students, families or teaching professionals who mostly want all students to succeed in school.

It is not possible to report impact on student academic achievement outcomes in this milestone report because the data sets are still mostly one-point-in-time. It will be possible, however, to report impact in Milestone 5, as there will be two and three point-in-time data sets. We anticipate an analysis of approximately 6500 students in that next report, of which many will be priority learners. This student population will provide a sizeable sample upon which to judge the impact of LCN activity on academic outcomes.

The Milestone 5 report will model the sort of outcomes-focused analysis and reporting that we are asking network leaders to do with participant schools. The report will do two things in relation to reporting outcomes. The first is that it will provide a summative report on gains, or lack thereof, against national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. That report on its own will be important to inform the extent to which LCN is contributing to the Ministry's Better Public Service Goals.¹ Of course LCN will only be one of many influences on the achievement trends, but a significant positive trend will indicate that LCN is a valuable contributor to achievement of the ambitious national goals.

The second thing that the Milestone 5 report will do is analyse the relationship between the summative academic achievement results and the qualitative data around the change priorities that networks have settled on to improve their learning

¹ The Ministry is charged with the achievement of three ambitious targets:

| In 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in quality early childhood education.

| In 2017, 85% of young people will have achieved NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent qualification.

| In 2017, 55% of 25-34 year olds will have a qualification at level 4 or above.

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/BetterPublicServices/BPSProgramme.aspx>

environments. The analysis will interrogate each of the most prominent change priorities one at a time, then it will interrogate those change priorities as a whole. For example, many networks have identified three change priorities for development:

- | Stronger partnerships between students, family/whānau and the school/kura
- | Fostering student agency to shift from passive to active learning environments
- | Developing future---focused digital learning with associated learning pedagogies across schools, families and communities.

The analysis will interrogate each of those change priorities to identify what specific elements are making a difference. In relation to the change priority about stronger family/whānau partnerships, for instance, is it better digital connections between school and home that is making a positive difference or more targeted face---to---face discussions between teachers, parents and students around learning? Or is it a combination of both and some other factors? That sort of analysis will tease out what elements are having the greatest impact on student achievement outcomes.

The table below is part of a diagram Jean Annan (PhD) designed for use in facilitation training sessions to ensure that facilitators and LDAs were on track to support network leaders to do those sorts of analysis at the network level of operation. Reading the table from left to right, the learning and change process started with identifying the achievement challenge then went on to explore current learning arrangements in order to identify change priorities. From there it is a matter of implementing the change priorities and, at the same time, checking for impact on three fronts (in blue in the below diagram). The first impact check is to assess the extent to which the change priorities have altered practices/beliefs for the better. The second impact check is to evaluate the extent to which there are positive shifts in academic achievement among priority learners. The third impact check is to analyse the relationship between the changes in practice/beliefs and the academic achievement trends in terms of nature and magnitude of change. Part of that final check is to look back at the original achievement challenge and ascertain whether it is time to move on to the next challenge or go deeper into specific aspects of the original challenge.

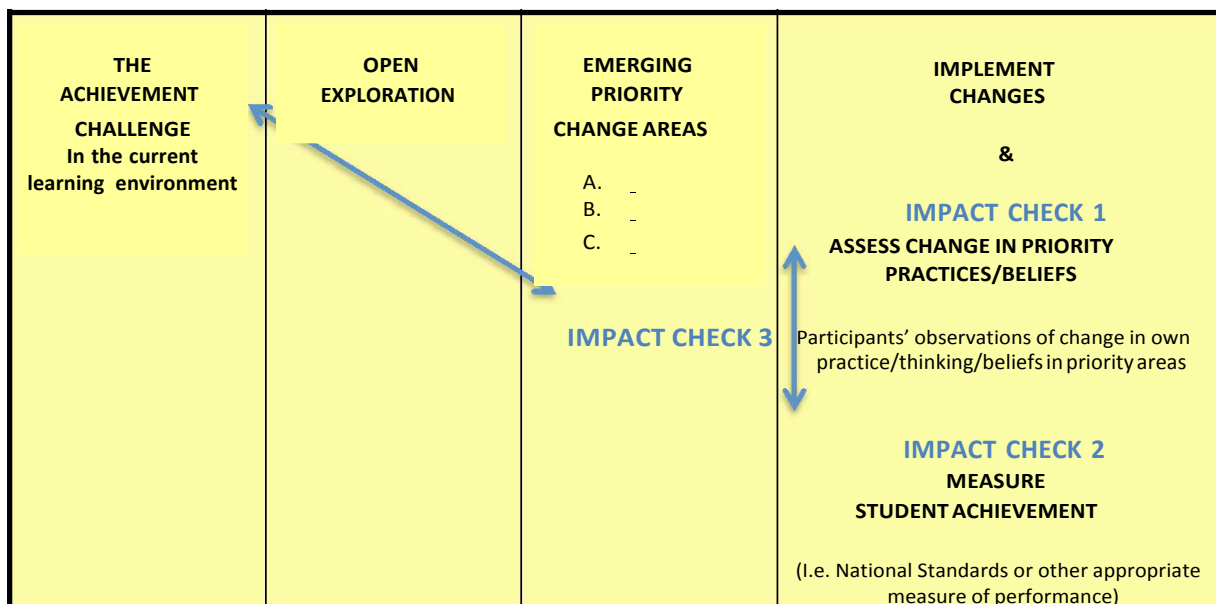


Figure.1 LCN Impact Checks (adapted from), Dr. Jean Annan

A great deal of network activity has occurred during the six month period of this milestone report to make those impact checks possible with networks at the end of this year. The majority of the networks would have completed at least one cycle of exploring their learning environments in relation to achievement challenges and implementing a set of change priorities so the data is there to be able to do the impact checks. The three impact checks are the work of network leaders in their end-of-year self reviews and the facilitation and LDA teams in their preparation of the Milestone 5 report. Our preference is that impact evidence in this final exercise of the LCN strategy is, in part, the responsibility of network leaders, facilitators and LDAs to document the summative and qualitative information from the student achievement data base and network/school plan reviews. That data on its own should be quite exciting in terms of reporting against better public service goals, but the nature and language of that reporting has not overly excited priority learners and their families. Consequently, we are pursuing a complimentary evidence base around imaging impact checks by students, teachers and families. This could be in the form of video-clips, animations and scenario-type stories. The combination of leader and student-teacher-family impact checks is expected to provide a rich array of evidence of LCN development in action.

SECTION 3

INVESTMENT INTO FACILITATION SERVICES

Previous milestone reports have reported a growing partnership between UniServices/Faculty and the Ministry of Education, both at the strategic level and in delivery. However, Ministry officials and provider team leaders discussed those efforts and agreed it was possible to partner at the delivery end but at the strategic end it was a contractual arrangement. This section, therefore, does not attempt to capture the work of the Ministry beyond the work of the Ministry's advisors that work alongside the facilitators. Hopefully, this way of reporting assists the Ministry to capture the value of the investment into the provider team's services. This is particularly timely to inform the Investing in Educational Success (IES) strategy.

Investment in facilitation services from UniServices/Faculty is following a bell-shaped curve pattern from the beginning to the end of the contract. The contracted UniServices/Faculty team grew through a six-month start-up phase from October 2012 through to March 2013. It then operated at full capacity during the middle 14-month phase of the contract from May 2013 through to June 2014. In the final six months of the contract, the facilitation team is to be scaled down considerably from the middle phase in line with the available residual budget. The nature of the facilitation services was designed to be interactive as a contracted group and also to be interactive with the recipient groups, not to deliver to groups as a supply arrangement. Interactive services as distinct to service delivery is a simple concept, but not so simple to enact. Hence the explanation of the interactive facilitation services in the next few paragraphs.

3.1. Overall facilitation services

The table below outlines the services in those early, middle and late stages of the contract. Each of the services was conceptualised and designed by the facilitation team. It took considerable knowledge, skill and experience to conceptualise and design each element in the table – they were not just a bunch of good ideas thrown together. They are a set of components that were carefully considered and purposefully selected for this strategy to support the formation of self-determined networks and then to activate an interconnected system for readjusting agency of key players surrounding student learning, including the students themselves. Some components were highly structured for networks that were unsure about what they were signing up for. Other components activated more creativity and freedom from the outset. Based on this conceptual design capability, the UniServices/Faculty team were able to lead the adaptation process at the strategy level as networks interacted with the concepts and processes and put their own spin on things. The UniServices/Faculty sophisticated conceptual design capability and adaptive delivery assured a disciplined approach to networking and a dynamic interactive environment.

Start---up six months October 2012---March 2013	Middle 14 months April 2013 – June 2014	Final six months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex coordination Programme design Evaluation design Website design Facilitation and LDA Direct facilitation (7) Manaiakalani Regional Networking OECD ILE Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex coordination Programme design Evaluation design and implementation Website development Facilitation and LDA training Direct facilitation (16) Kura---ā---lwi Manaiakalani WFRC documentaries of developments in five networks CORE Ed dissemination of Manaiakalani WFRC findings Regional networking Video imaging by David Copeland OECD ILE Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diffusion support to MoE Website and VLN development Direct facilitation inclusive of Evaluation (14) Regional networking LCN reference group OECD ILE Project

Facilitation services for this milestone period, that is January to June 2014, have been at maximum capacity with 53 networks now in operation. The combination of services was designed to support and energise networks to flourish as individual networks, to connect those networks with one another and to connect the collective networking body to national and international models of future---focused learning environments. All the facilitation services were fully operational at the start of this milestone time period (1 January) to achieve those local, national and international arrangements but they were not necessarily explicitly aligned. By the end of the time period (30 June) the services are better understood as a more coherent whole by the facilitation team, but not as a tidy and orderly matrix of change levers, rather as components related to one another, that could interact and create connections. It involves extremely sophisticated design to create various components of a facilitation team in that way. The art is to have each component of the provider team do its bit and for the various components to connect with one another to support the growth of the ambitious lateral networking environment that was envisioned from the outset. This approach to facilitation has contributed to each network being unique in its make---up, knowledge and practice/belief change interests.

Those networks that started at the beginning of the strategy in late 2012 effectively acted as pioneers in interacting with the LCN facilitation services. In comparison to recent services, it was a slow, structured and methodical interactive environment. Among the benefits of those rock-breaking days were that participants experienced foundation networking at a deep level and are now appreciative of the flexible and dynamic environment that currently exists. Networks that started just prior to or during this milestone period have been spared the pioneering experiences of early interactive invention. Participants have been exposed to much sharper framing, more nimble tasks and they have access to multiple images and narratives of lateral networking on various websites and various opportunities to learn and practice lateral learning, such as Manaiaakalani visits, regional networking, LCN newsletters, website information and twitter.

3.2. atures of the facilitation services

The shift from a structured to a flexible learning and change environment is a reflection of at least three features of the contracted facilitation services.

One is that the facilitation team, alongside the Ministry's LCN advisor team, has learned a great deal along the way. Additional to the continuous learning, is the willingness to adapt, to let go, to acknowledge insecurity in going into the unknown and to move on. There is no time or reason for rigidity or to linger on implementation theories that may have seemed to be the right way to go but ended up falling by the wayside.

The second feature of the facilitation services is its design and delivery contribution to create reciprocal and lateral learning and change at scale. Part of this feature is the way the design and delivery creates high energy and enthusiasm among participants to continue exploring ways of growing better learning environments. In other words, the design did not create a bubble of enthusiasm as OECD officials suggested it could be last year, it did so much more than that -- it created surges of energy and a 'pick-up' factor when things got gloomy causing a new surge of energy. Those continuous energy surges and the ability to bounce along to get the tasks completed, also with some fun in the mix, has broken the mold of the previous 'work harder and longer' schooling improvement ethos. Sitting underneath that breakaway from the past is a sophisticated theory for future-focused facilitation, which is currently being prepared for publication (J. Annan, B. Annan, Wootton & Burton, in draft, 2014).

The third feature of the facilitation is that the services for new network arrangements have taken account of LCN experiences to date and of learning from international connections in the OECD ILE project and in the Global Education Leaders Programme.

3.3. Facilitation of science networks

New science networks are a case in point and a little detail about those arrangements will exemplify the cutting-edge approach in place. There are three active LCN Science Networks operating and each has had one to two network leaders meetings. The names of the three networks and make-up are listed below.

- Botany Science--- 9 schools, 2 secondary, 1 intermediate and 6 primary.
- Half Moon Bay--- 7 schools, 1 secondary, 2 intermediate and 4 primary.
- Central Hawkes Bay--- 11 schools--- 1 secondary, 9 primary and 1 kindergarten

A fourth network with 6 kura attached to the Tūwharetoa iwi is yet to be approved as of 16---6---2014 MoE status update report.

The mix of facilitation is different from previous arrangements – there are three facilitation roles. First is lead facilitator Mary Wootton who is positioning as a coach on the side for the core network leaders who are expected to lead the developments from the outset. Second is Jessica Costa, a science expert and lecturer at The University of Auckland, who will immerse herself into the activity systems in the networks, find interesting and useful hotspots of interest and support participants to create projects around those points of interest. Third is Rene Burton who is assisting to create frames to activate network activity and tools to support the learning and change processes. An overall frame has been developed (see below), which is an adaptation to the conventional LCN implementation frame, in order to support networks to learn what to change in science over the course of the rest of this year. Initial focus is on finding out what students, teachers and families think science is all about and what their interests are in science. Early indications suggest that science in primary schools has become lost in units of work that give the appearance of a holistic approach to learning but, in fact, represent generic project---style learning that typically explores the living world, planet earth and beyond but does not explore early years thinking about other areas of science such as physics and chemistry. Preparation, therefore, for the harder science curriculum in secondary schooling is underdone. These early findings do not suggest that preparation for secondary science is the purpose for LCN science networks. To the contrary, it opens up a range of possibilities about the purpose of the networking. Agreeing on purpose requires the perspectives of students, teachers and families. In that light, the LCN methodology to activate collective knowledge building and decision making is likely to drive those groups to a purpose for networking which will be far more ambitious than prep for secondary schooling.

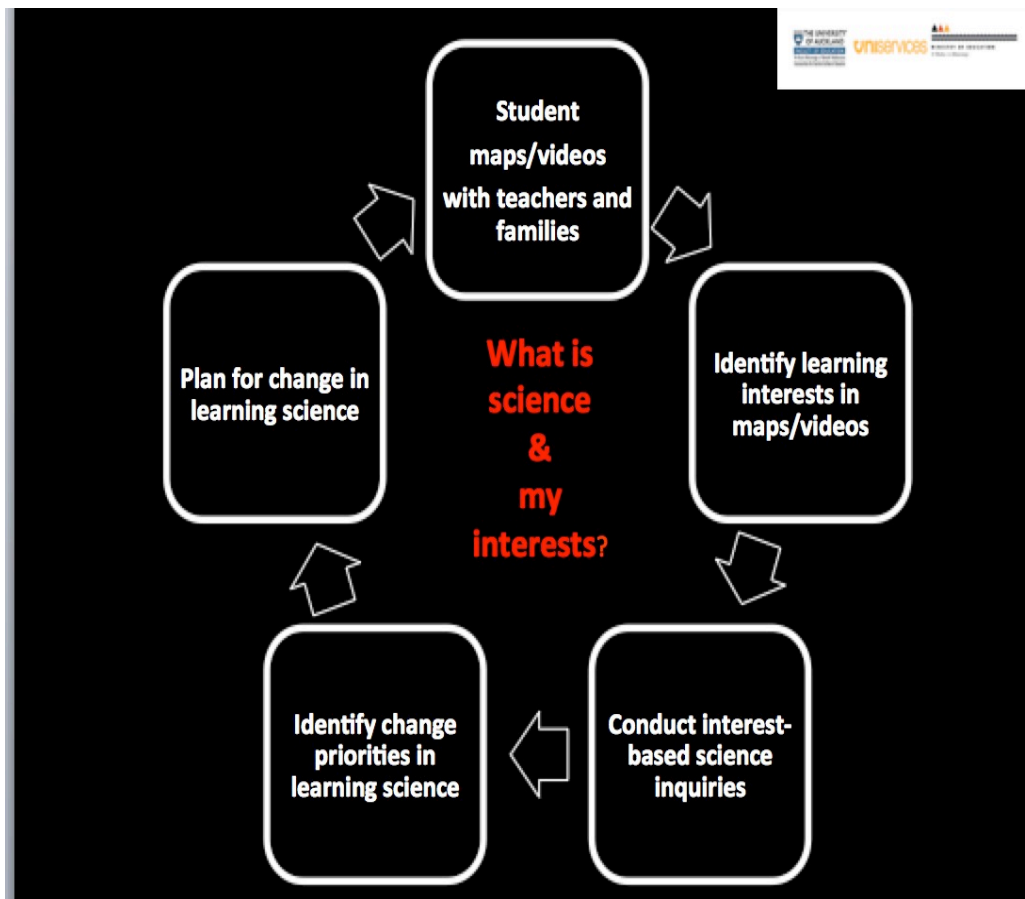


Figure 2. Science LCN Implementation Framework

There is tentativeness among the leaders and participants of the science networks about moving from a PLD environment focused on the instructional core to a networked learning environment to explore science as part of the ecology of learning. The following quote from a LCN science network leader exemplifies the influence of the new facilitation arrangements to move in that direction:

“Thanks for your attendance yesterday and it was good to see there is a commitment to the Network. It is different to any traditional PLD in that somebody is not going to come in and sort it for us. I am sure there will be a few hiccups along the way but hopefully the long term benefits will be there for the kids and we can have a few laughs” (Email after 2nd meeting from one of three volunteer network leaders)

Network leaders are not proceeding alone by any means. They are requesting some level of support with the mapping task to analyse the current situation to inform their vision. Each network’s request for support is slightly different.

- In the Botany science network, facilitator---Jess has supported 30 students per school (8 schools so far) to complete their learning maps in science with at one teacher in

attendance. Jess and coach Mary then met with some teachers and students from across participating schools to analyse the data from this exercise. One data set is the four elements in the learning maps; (i) the people and (ii) tools involved in science learning, (iii) the interactions between those people and tools and (iv) the sites where learning in science occurs. Another data set includes video clips of what students think science is, what they they would like to investigate and what they like to add/change about the way they learn science.

- .. In the Half Moon Bay science network, the leaders asked for *modelling of the task* so they could then replicate the process in their schools. Facilitator Jessica Costa first worked with 18 students and their teachers from across three schools. These teachers, videoed the students and scanned learning maps for use back in their schools. The facilitator then worked with another group of three schools that asked her to model the activity with a group of students, parents and teachers after school.

Those two examples of science networks getting underway exemplify a desire among most new---comer network leaders to get things right and to be secure in their thinking before they involve the families, whānau and community. Facilitation in this instance is about building trust to go into the unknown and to engage students, families, whānau and community in conversations that would previously been held in the staffroom among teaching professionals.

3.4. Manaiakalani

The inclusion of the Manaiakalani cluster in the LCN provider team was an intentional move to promote the importance of a strong school---community digital platform to realise the potential of lateral learning. Manaiakalani leaders have been outstanding in their services not only to LCN networks, but also to all comers across New Zealand that show an interest in digital connections within and across schools and out into communities. Specific services within the LCN strategy have included;

- .. Regular opportunities for LCN network leaders to participate in 2---day study visits to the Manaiakalani cluster in Tamaki
- .. Working alongside LCN facilitators to provide direct PLD around digital pedagogies into six LCN networks
- .. Advice to network leaders to set up trusts and negotiate low---cost purchasing arrangements with digital technology and communication companies
- .. Regular presentations at regional networking sessions
- .. Fit---for---purpose presentations at facilitator and Ministry LDA training
- .. Ongoing reciprocal learning with the LCN programme director

Appreciation among LCN network leaders for the Manaiakalani contribution to the LCN strategy is considerable. This is evidenced through network leader on---line survey feedback after regional networking sessions and from emails expressing appreciation

after specific input into individual networks. It is also prevalent in the ongoing networking dialogue that is now occurring across the country.

An additional gift from Manaia Kalani to the LCN strategy is the Woolf Fisher Research Centre (WFRC) research findings about coherence, engagement and spread. These findings are currently being packaged via Rebecca Sweeney's services in a UniServices/Faculty sub-contract with CORE Ed to develop a set of images and scripts that share the findings from the every-day-life perspective of students, teachers and families and from the sophisticated thinking of the researchers, Professor Stuart McNaughton and Dr Rebecca Jesson. Appendix 2 outlines the package that should be on-line early August.

3.5. Ngā Kura ā-iwi (NKAI)

Ngā Kura ā-iwi (NKAI) was included in the UniServices/Faculty provider team to ensure the profile of the indigenous approach to networking is appropriately recognized. NKAI is an exciting example of Māori tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) to work with the Crown and education sector to diffuse Māori networking design, implementation and evaluation thinking into the system. Several interesting implementation developments have come out of the NKAI journey to date.

- .. The first is the considered start that NKAI made to begin its LCN activity (discussed in LCN Milestones 1 & 2). In brief NKAI took nine months to sign a sub-contract with UniServices/Faculty as they had to carefully consider the obligations that they were committing their kura to, inclusive of each kura's whānau (families), hapū (groups of families) and iwi (broader affiliated peoples or tribes).
- .. The second is the distinctive collaborative leadership style of NKAI and their organizational structure (refer attachment in LCN Milestone Report 2, 2013).
- .. The third is the way NKAI adapted LCN principles for the Māori context. NKAI took the LCN concept and: "renamed LCN to ToA, an acronym for Te Tihi o Angitū and in reference to the qualities associated with the term ToA, that is adeptness, competence, accomplishment and excellence" (NKAI Milestone Report 2, January 2014).
- .. The fourth is the way NKAI has set out to create coherence from the outset across four work strands aimed at strengthening;
 - (i) responsiveness to iwi (peoples or tribe), mana whenua (attachment and rights to the land) and whānau,
 - (ii) kura leadership,
 - (iii) pouako (mathematics) capability, and
 - (iv) engagement and achievement.
- .. A fifth NKAI development is the unique reporting procedure of verbal engagement of NKAI developments followed by a written report directly to the Ministry of Education rather than through UniServices/Faculty milestone reports. NKAI leaders report that the Ministry of Education has shown to be responsive to their Treaty of Waitangi partner and encompassed their cultural

engagement practices. They feel the Ministry is supporting the way in which Māori people wish to report their findings. NKAI reporting arrangements, therefore, assure greater understanding among partners of the NKAI developments and respects NKAI as a Treaty of Waitangi partner with the Crown.

- A sixth development was Arihia Stirling and Te Kepa Stirling representing NKAI at the June 2014 OECD ILE meetings in Paris. Their representation was a powerful message to OECD about the indigenous agenda becoming a live conversation among indigenous and non-indigenous leaders.

NKAI has been exemplary in its dealings with UniServices/Faculty both in terms of contractual arrangements and advancing the thinking of networking in different settings. NKAI has chosen to break away from a subcontracting arrangement with UniServices/Faculty and has negotiated a contract directly with the Ministry for networking mahi. That repositioning does not mean the relationship between NKAI and UniServices/Faculty is over by any means.

There are several areas where collaboration is likely to continue between the NKAI and UniServices/Faculty. One is to sort out the 'talking past one another' that tends to happen when NKAI and UniServices/Faculty leaders try to think through arrangements to create reciprocal collegial learning between Māori and English medium leaders. It seems a simple discussion point. Yet there are considerable complexities that need in-depth analytic conversations by both parties, and if those conversations are held there is tremendous potential for better understandings about networking Māori and English settings. Probably the most important beneficiaries of those conversations will be the Māori students in English-medium schools which have leaders enthusiastic to learn how to tap into Māori networks in new ways.

A second area for possible collaboration between NKAI and UniServices/Faculty is to publish the two different versions of facilitating networking in English-medium and Māori-medium settings. UniServices/Faculty and the Ministry of Education are currently discussing two publications about the LCN strategy, a practical short article and a more in-depth induction manual of LCN methodology. UniServices/Faculty provider leaders are also in the process of preparing some facilitation-specific publications. NKAI will no doubt publish their ideas about lateral networking in their setting further down the track. They may want to collaborate with UniServices/Faculty and/or the Ministry in some of those publications.

3.6. Conclusion

To conclude, a question is posed in relation to the influence of the LCN strategy on newly forming national IES policy, which is discussed in more detail in Section 8, Points of Policy Interest. Could the network leaders, participating schools and Ministry advisors have created the disciplined qualitative inquiries and lateral networking environment without the facilitation team's sophisticated design frames and support for implementation and evaluation?

The simple answer is no. It sounds overly complicated having to have sophisticated frames, the activation theory underpinning the facilitation services, the bringing together of LCN networks in the regions, promoting the digital influence of Manaiakalani and the indigenous agenda of Ngā Kura ā Iwi and bringing to the table global trends from GELP and ILE. Without all those facilitation components, networks would still have emerged. Had they attempted to do so, the majority of networking would have been mediocre with a few outlier gems and possibly some counterproductive activity. What these facilitation services have done, alongside the Ministry's LDA advisors support is to assure success in every network with radically efficient fiscal arrangements. In terms of cost benefit, it is a staggering success in policy--to--practice roll out.

SECTION 4

NETWORK AND SCHOOL PLANS

In the LCN Milestone 4 data collection survey, network participants, facilitators and lead development advisors were asked to respond to the following questions and statements:

1. Who has been involved in creating your network plan?
2. Describe how you will monitor progress, success criteria and measures.
3. How is your network plan used?
4. Other comments

A total of 90 responses were received from 31 networks. The total number of responses represented 43 comments from the entire networks or network leaders, 29 comments from facilitators and 18 comments from lead development advisors. Most participants commented on the areas in one integrated response rather than four separate responses. Analysis of responses involved identifying the portions of responses relating to each question and statement.

Within each statement area, data were analysed by identifying emerging patterns in the information that networks had chosen to provide. As the questions asked had been open, there was no assumption that any omission of information represented an absence of expected activity or participant group. Initially the information from each of the participant groups was considered separately but it was pooled when it became clear that there was high agreement among the three participant groups. In addition, several networks had combined their responses during meetings with those of facilitators and lead development advisors. However, in the presentation of these results, we have included separate examples from networks, some of which include combined comments from all three responding groups, facilitators and lead development advisors.

This report on the planning and plan use with the LCN networks has been compiled in a collaboration between the UniServices, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland provider group and the LCN team of the Ministry of Education.

4.1. Analysis of responses

The majority of networks have indicated that their participant group has gradually broadened over time. Almost all networks reported that the construction of understandings and plans has involved, to varying extents, the input of students, school staff and family/whānau. Some networks indicated wide consultation or collaboration but didn't necessarily fully explain the make-up of the participant groups. Only five networks recorded that only network leaders had been involved in the process so far.

A pattern emerged from the networks' comments on participation. Although some networks reported that students, family and whānau had been involved since the outset, the majority indicated that plans had been initiated by network leaders, in the light of information contributed by students, teachers, family and whānau. Plans, once framed, were further developed in collaboration with students, in most cases, and then family/whānau. Two networks reported the participation of local businesses. It was clear that networks had taken time to develop plans in an iterative way to involve key participants. One network commented that their plan had "taken us a year to write but we have been doing things in the meantime". Below are some examples of network leader, facilitator and lead development advisor comments about participation in planning.

Network/Network Leaders

- .. *We all are involved in the planning. While we each have informal portfolio responsibilities using our passions and strengths, dialogue has been lateral and every leader, teacher and child has involved has been able to share in the planning at workshop and meeting levels.*
- .. *All participants have informed the network change priorities.*
- .. *Principals and enthusiast created the bones of the plan based on scoping information that came from the parents, teachers and children.*
- .. *The teachers have developed actions of the plan for success criteria and the measures that will be used. Going to work with parents and students on their part of the plan.*
- .. *Students and their parents have been involved in the creation of the graduate profile.*
- .. *Our plan is owned and understood and evolved by all.*

Facilitators:

- .. *In the process of developing school plans with students, teachers and parents identifying their own goals, actions and success measures.*
- .. *Evidence from participant groups parents teachers and priority learners has informed the plan.*
- .. *2014 plan still being written to enable all participant groups to contribute to their own actions and measures.*
- .. *Currently teachers and leaders have contributed to the plan, with plans for students and parents to do the same.*

Lead Development Advisors:

- .. *Some networks of schools had just drafted plans and indicated their intention to work with a broader participant group to determine success criteria.*
- .. *All participant groups have been involved in developing the Network plan but mainly driven by leaders. Still finalising SC, Probes 3 & 4 have helped a great deal here.*
- .. *[Participation] has been mixed across the schools. In some schools all stakeholders have been involved in the planning and in some it has only been the teachers and leaders.*

Within networks, there was also some variation in the extent of collaboration and spread of learning and change processes. One lead development advisor commented that, “this has been mixed across the schools [within one network]”. In most schools all stakeholders have been involved in the planning and in a few it has only been the network leaders. A few networks described their interaction outside of the network leader group as consultation although the pattern of increasing network breadth indicated increasing levels of collaboration for many.

Although responses indicated diffusion of the LCN process across network leaders, student participants, families/whānau and, in some cases, the business community, the extent of spread through schools was not always clear.

Connotations of ‘school’ were not necessarily universal. It seemed that the term had been used to refer to;

- .. those people who were directly involved with the student participants
- .. the entire staff of a school or
- .. all of those attending schools.

Some networks indicated that the Learning and Change Strategy had impacted on their school systems and that some schools had arranged teacher only days to share information about LCN and consider its implications for whole schools. For example, one network explained that, “all leaders and practitioner evaluators have been involved in planning, change priorities were shared with all teachers at an after school ToD ...”. Another network noted that a wider perspective was now taken on other school activities and initiatives. (See notes below regarding the links between LCN network plans/LCN school plans and overall school plans).

4.2. Monitoring progress, success criteria and measures

In network plans submitted for Milestone 3, the means of observing changes in achievement and practice were noted. Determining measures of achievement has been reasonably straightforward for networks as this has involved a mix of National Standards information and/or existing or ‘network constructed’ evaluative tools. In addition to using evaluative tools, some networks made comment in the current milestone report about moderation processes being an important feature of their networking activities.

The greater challenge for networks has emerged in the development of success criteria with one network indicating that they were yet to reach agreement on these. A facilitator identified this challenge for a network considering that, “it will be a challenge to support [the network] with ensuring the rigour of monitoring and measurement of tasks without it becoming an uncontrolled list of activities”.

The current milestone information indicated extended evaluation, some networks commenting that the networking process was monitored using the evaluative probes. Several networks said that monitoring was an integral part of the plan. Planning documents were viewed by several networks to be ‘living documents’. They were updated either at meetings or through Google Docs as a result of ongoing knowledge construction resulting from the input of new knowledge into the networks.

Some network comments are listed below to illustrate the dynamic nature of network/school plans.

- .. *Our network plan is updated every time we meet so it is a living document that reflects the feedback and new discoveries of the cluster.*
- .. *Each participant group has decided how they will monitor their actions and measure success.*
- .. *Plan will be monitored in regular network meetings -- using Google drive as a network for planning, sharing and collaborating*
- .. *[The plan has] promoted discussion among the network on best practice*
- .. *Our monitoring is built into the plan.*

4.3. Use of the Network and School Plans

Network plans were used for a range of purposes. In the main, they guided the development of schools' plans that specifically addressed the priority changes from the network plans.

School plans were developed in the specific contexts of the particular schools and participants. Some sample comments from networks are listed below.

- .. *Most of the schools have the network change priorities in their school plans and this is driving much of their school planning*
- .. *Network plan helped shape all school plans'. School plans are our focus*
- .. *Next step is for individual schools to flesh out their school plan from the network framework.*

The school plans developed from the network plans were used to guide and justify learning and change activity and direction, to monitor practice and progress and to provide a focal point for participant interaction. Several networks noted that the school plans were linked to their wider school systems, reflecting school charters and comprising parts of annual plans. Some networks noted the flexibility of these plans and their capacity for ongoing re---construction. Below are comments from networks.

- .. *[The school plan] has been embedded in the annual plan with clear milestones indicated. It has also changed the way we look at issues our students are facing. We are now looking at understanding the issue from all perspectives instead of leaping to a solution that we think will support student achievement.*
- .. *School plan/charter is focussed on raising achievement in writing for our professional learning.*
- .. *The network plan is used to justify what we're doing and where we're heading.*
- .. *The change priorities are integral to each school's operational systems; for example, they are linked into the strategic and annual planning and reporting and appraisal processes.*

Facilitator comments (examples listed below) indicated the network plans had served as catalysts for forming learning connections. Some networks gathered their

information using electronic documents and, in doing so, were monitoring progress and gaining new insights into future planning. Dynamic plans allowed networks to respond to new information as it emerged.

- *The network plans have been a catalyst for forming learning connections.*
- *Network gathering their thinking evidence using google doc and the strategic planning as a "network – hunchtracker" – implications for their future planning.*
- *The network uses their plan as a working document, and intend using it to monitor progress.*
- *The plan is used at each meeting as a monitoring tool, and as a working document, is updated/ changed regularly to reflect and respond to what the network is finding.*

4.4. Summary and conclusion

A pattern of increasingly devolved networks emerged from the responses of network leaders, facilitators and lead development advisors. The responses indicated that the majority of network leaders extended their networks to involve students, and family/whānau once their thinking had been challenged about the traditional role of the school, the teacher and the classroom. This meant that network plans were largely developed by network leaders based on information from multiple sources and school plans were constructed with students and family. Some networks included all participants in the entire planning process. Inclusion of students and family early in the process may be increasingly straightforward as information about the Learning and Change process diffuses across NZ schools.

While it has probably been important in the early formative stages of the strategy to be cautious in the practical application of the ecological, interactive approach to broaden the thinking of school---based learning beyond teaching, new networks will have the opportunity to include a wide representation of participants early. All networks, whether newly forming or well developed, need to be aware that authentic participation of family, whānau and community is so much harder to achievement if they are kept on the periphery of the network by a firmly established core professional group. Relationships, practice and the functioning of the network can be enhanced when people interact regularly and feel confident to talk about things that are important to all participants. Belonging comes from sharing in the activity and struggles associated with the establishment and cultivation of networks (see Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002).

School plans were developed upon network plans and were used to monitor changes in achievement and practice. Many networks noted that they were linked to charters and formed part of schools' annual plans. They were not always static documents, some networks viewing them as living documents, as catalysts for connecting participants and modified as new knowledge was acquired, constructed and shared. Determining indicators of change in practice for each participant group posed the greatest challenge for networks that were striving to develop valid success criteria within new and innovative learning environments. The measurement of achievement did not present such a challenge as the network participants were accustomed to such assessment.

SECTION 5

EVALUATION

LCN evaluation processes are becoming more diverse over time. The original intent was to create conventional evaluation processes that would gather data at particular times in order to determine improvement. At the outset, there were three evaluative tasks set up for that purpose.

- The first evaluative task was for networks to complete the three impact checks in relation to their investigations into the students' current learning environments, that is
 - (i) measuring student academic outcomes via National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori, (ii) measuring changes in practices/beliefs and (iii) analysing the relationship between the change priorities and the student academic outcomes.
- The second evaluative task was to use the Ministry's Leadership Capability Tool to ascertain growth in leadership capability among networks leaders and a second Ministry tool, called the School/Kura Capability Tool, to ascertain leadership capability growth within schools and kura
- The third evaluative task was to complete a set of evaluative probes designed to check that network decisions and activities were in sync with the strategy vision.

Networks have not simply followed suit and completed all the evaluative processes on offer. When selecting evaluation methods, networks have considered competing interests, time constraints and the value of those tasks to the participants.

Only the first of those three evaluative tasks remain unchanged from the original intent.

5.1. Impact checks

Section 2. Student Achievement Outcomes and Section 4. Network & School Plans, in this report address developments in that first task around impact checks. There are two good reasons for the continuance of the evaluation of change priorities in relation to national expectations. The first reason is because the framing is flexible allowing network and school-specific change priorities to come and go, to be re-ordered and to be merged. The second reason is that schools have found these measures useful for informing their strategic and annual planning and reporting cycles, which they have to do as a matter of course.

The other two evaluative tasks, the Ministry's capability tools and the UniServices/Faculty Evaluative Probes have had to change because they are generic in

nature and have a finite and static set of change areas. That is not to say they have not added value. Many networks have found the structured content and routines useful scaffolds to get started.

It is worth a brief explanation of the way they are likely to play out in this regard. The two process tools are discussed below.

5.2. Ministry Capability Tools

The Ministry's leadership and school/kura capability tools are still in circulation for networks that find them useful, and the Ministry is now in the process of reviewing how to evaluate leadership capability growth. The Ministry asked UniServices LCN programme director Brian Annan (PhD) to facilitate a session to review the tools.. The director's advice was to focus on the principles underpinning leadership in future--- focused networking and learning environments rather than tweak the existing tools. Three sets of principles were tabled as possibilities to consider; OECD's seven principles for innovative learning environments, GELP's principles for systems change and LCN's principles around mindset shifts. Advice was provided that the existing leadership tools be put aside and, instead, effort would be best directed to support network participants to understand and learn to use a set of principles for leadership in networking and modern learning environments. One alternative to filling in static rubrics to measure leadership against static criteria is to engage in lateral collegial dialogue about the nature of leadership for networking in future---focused learning environments at network and regional network leadership meetings then have participants in subsequent meetings share images of that type of leadership in action.

5.3. Evaluative probes

The evaluative probes are used in the strategy with integrity around the original intent by approximately half the networks. Other networks are either adapting them or selecting other measures.

A range of reasons have been given for choosing not to conduct the probes; some considered they were designed 'for' rather than 'with' networks, too much content, too structured, generic questions in surveys/interviews, little involvement of the students, just do not have time to get to them and the timeliness of some of the probes. Some networks, for instance, were asked to complete probes 1 and 2 retrospectively, which was annoying rather than helpful. Those networks that have chosen to overlook the probes have been encouraged to concentrate more intensively on the first evaluative task around completing impact checks.

Those networks that adapted the probes have done so mainly for manageability and context reasons, for example, for students in special education settings. The original intent was to complete all four probes and complete probes 3 and 4 twice during implementation. Practical matters led many networks to skip some probes and use

those most relevant to their phase of development, probe 3 having been the most popular. Some networks have also decided to adapt the questions in probe 3 so they are more relevant to the network's specific change priorities as these priorities emerged from the networks' open analyses and were not predetermined. That has created extra work for the networks in their engine---rooms to collate data for analysis but they have welcomed the opportunity to assure greater relevance to particular situations surrounding priority student learning.

It became clear early in the strategy that the design and implementation of the evaluative probes required modification. Initial attempts to launch the probes caused considerable push back from network leaders about manageability and a sense of having things 'done to' them rather than the evaluative measures being co---designed, which had become the usual mode for networks designing investigative tasks around current learning environments.

A review was conducted and there was contention within the provider team as to whether to stick with the evaluative probe content and process or introduce choices and adaption. A decision was made to stick with the probes as designed but to respond positively to networks that wanted to adapt or discard the probes. It was a matter of the provider team following the LCN principles – if they wanted networks to shift from passive to active agency in evaluation and appreciate their talents rather than treat them as needy or difficult in that area, it was better to open up new avenues than protect the status quo. The facilitation team went on to create a more diverse evaluative environment. Some networks wanted a high degree of support and structure and others wanted support to design and implement evaluative tasks that they saw as relevant to their context. Over time, each of those scenarios was played out while the strategy generally moved toward a more diverse, contextualised and interactive way of thinking about evaluation.

Diversifying evaluative

Strategy leaders are now explicitly talking about a continuum of structure---to---freedom as a frame to think about evaluation within networking. This has resulted from networks reviewing traditional notions of evaluation and envisioning new more contextually applicable means.

Two versions of evaluation that have emerged exemplify the flexibility within the LCN strategy. One is at the freedom end of the continuum and the other is at the structured end.

An evaluative development at the freedom end of the continuum involves participants imaging the way that they have shifted their thinking in line with the mindset shifts that the LCN strategy is encouraging; schools to ecologies, competition to collaboration, passive to active and needy to appreciative. Video clips are emerging in many places. Strategy leaders commissioned David Copeland to capture the reflective thinking of students, teachers, families and leaders and there is now an array of interesting images showing how participants have moved in their thinking, beliefs and practices (a range of

videos will be placed online by end July on <http://www.lcn.education.auckland.ac.nz>). Network leaders are also starting to image the shifts in thinking for themselves. Jenny Jackson, a principal in the Whitestone network in Oamaru, recently completed a sabbatical and wrote a 12 page evaluative report, which she found hard, and toward the end, uninspiring work. She then produced a U-Tube animation of her evaluative thoughts, which re-energised Jenny and is also energising colleagues around the country <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSOriel49Lk>. Deputy principal Chris Theobald in the Seaview network, in Lower Hutt, did likewise and the digital connects to his animated video have helped speed up the process of participants in that network understanding the mindset shifts that LCN is pursuing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ895_WMQ3Y&safe=active. Michael Fletcher, Principal of Chaucer School in the Bay Lynn network Auckland, and Leanne Smith, a deputy principal in the Auckland Intermediate Schools network have gone one step further to engage students in imaging their mindset shifts via U-Tube videos (Access to these videos requires informed consent).

These imaging developments are the beginnings of a new form of evaluation that may appear to be a promotional exercise, but are in fact, colleagues sharing with colleagues evaluative thoughts about shifting from one learning space to another. An important new-age evaluative feature of these developments is that the original script-writer posts the video and gets some hits on it, which is incredibly useful.

However, this is just the beginning of an interactive surge. That surge involves conversations and exploration of the thinking about the ideas in the video among colleagues on email, twitter, in interactive Google sites and in face-to-face gatherings. Those conversations are typically a mix of how cool the post was in terms of 'turn-on' factor and also critical analysis of the content, in an appreciative way as opposed to finding fault or gaps. Just as quickly as the ideas are bounced around and spread widely, the novelty wears off and the next image comes along. This creates a new surge of interest, energy and reflective conversations. This pattern is similar to that of the past when people waited in anticipation for the next new book to be published, but those timeframes were months in waiting and weeks in reading before the knowledge-growing conversations eventuated. This new evaluative environment operates in minutes, hours and weeks.

The example of evaluation at the structured end of the continuum is the way in which the evaluative probes have supported practitioner-evaluators to probe into what is happening in a group of schools. Evaluation facilitators Karen Mose and Robyn Chester, with the facilitation team, worked directly with network leaders to implement the use of the probes. April 2014 marked the handover from Karen and Robyn to the facilitation team to fully activate the probes. The UniServices/Faculty LCN administrator is now the point of contact for activating probes and ensuring all material are up to date. All documents are now stored on the Virtual Learning Network (VLN) so there is no confusion about which documents are the latest versions.

Below is the breakdown of probe usage in the 53 networks operating across the country.

Probe	No. of networks	Explanation
Probe 1	27	Probe 1 was not timely for many networks as they had already advanced and had to complete it retrospectively
Probe 2	26	Probe 2 was not timely for many networks (same as above)
Probe 3	12	These networks were ready and chose to complete this probe
Probe 4	4	These networks were ready and chose to complete

A few points about the positive impact of the probes from participant networks are listed below.

- .. Reinforced the need for evaluation
- .. Spread evaluation to another level of participant , for example, enthusiastic teachers
- .. Promoted conversations that include challenge, critique, questioning and engaging network leaders
- .. Encouraged lateral learning across networks with the practitioner evaluators
- .. Challenged networks to discuss who were the participants in their network and who was involved in identifying what to learn and change
- .. Definite actions followed from probe analysis

Some quotes from network leaders follow.

*“Practitioner Evaluators proactive – influential role beyond evaluative responsibilities encouraging transparency, accountability, and clarification”,
 “Practitioner Evaluator played significant role in keeping us connected to data and the collected voices”.*

Probe 3 has been a popular tool with many networks. It has given those networks leaders an opportunity to involve students, parents and teachers, as well as 'digging deeper' when they find a point of interest, in particular a mis---match between what teachers, students and parents are saying. For example in one network, *“Over 75% of the parents and teachers say the students have goals and understand them only 20% of our students say that”*. Priority students were asked to share their goals. Some read them from a sheet in their book and some could “parrot” their goals. When asked what these goals meant, in 80% of the cases the students said they did not know. These students were also unaware of what success would look like. Common teacher responses were:

“I want them [the students] to take more ownership of their goals” “The goals need to be written in the students words.”

So the priority students wrote their own goals and then said what they could do to achieve them. Reflective comments from networks leaders after using probe 3 have

said they could be more useful if

- .. “ ... questions for each participant group were about their own practice, rather than looking at other people's practice, especially in parent/whānau section”.
- .. “ ... networks were able to make changes to the initial probes to suit their need”.

A few networks that have completed probe 4 have found it time---consuming but useful as the big picture of the network across the schools is recognised. In some cases the participants who have been interviewed have agreed to share the transcripts and these are being used with the network to develop success criteria, add to the plan and share effective practice. One network found there was a different level of understanding between the teachers and the leaders in the network about the change priorities. An action point here was to hold some cross school teacher meetings with the purpose: to come together as a Network and build connections for future lateral learning, to clarify our understandings of Home School LEARNING Connections (*this was one of the network change priorities*), to share positive practice happening around schools in relation to developing stronger Home School Connections. Quote from a practitioner evaluator from this network: *In my role as Practitioner Evaluator for our network I was privileged to go into various schools and conduct Probe IV interviews. It was amazing to see the wonderful things that are going on in our schools.* This motivated a Google doc entitled “*Sharing our awesomeness*”---to share strengths and encourage lateral learning. Through the process there has been a shift in the practice of the practitioner evaluators, rather than analysing the data *for the networks* the raw data is circulated to the network and the *analysis happens together*.

5.4. Conclusion

Evaluation that focuses on networking between students, teachers and families to grow future---focused learning environments is not an easy matter to consider. Despite the complexity, everyone involved in the LCN strategy has forged ahead and is working out how to integrate networking and evaluation. One of the most obvious findings is that those two aspects are one in the same thing and you have to be involved in the networking environment to understand the evaluative nature of it. Consequently, those standing on the side are unlikely to fully appreciate the intricacies of successful evaluation in networking, or the distinctions between past---focused and future---focused thinking about evaluation.

SECTION 6

PROGRESS AGAINST MINISTRY BENEFIT OUTCOMES

This section summarises LCN participant views about the Ministry's benefit outcomes, namely progress in academic achievement for priority learners and capability growth in leadership, analysis and use of data and lateral learning. Network leaders, UniServices/Faculty facilitators and Ministry LDAs provided individual feedback and there was little distinction between comments. Some respondents answered a series of questions on line while others discussed the questions at a network meeting and formed a group response. An outline of the collated data from this exercise is attached in Appendix 3.

6.1. Tracking student academic achievement

See Section 2. Student Achievement Outcomes.

6.2. Growth in leadership capability

In the milestone 3 report, the leadership focus was on distributed leadership and the emergence of new leaders from within participant groups. The following quote from a network leader sums up that growth:

“LCN has opened our eyes to doing things differently. Processes are less hierarchical – we are working with participants in teams and looking for unity in change. Membership has been consistent and we anticipate expanding leadership to increase buy in. We have moved beyond a group of principals and we have a shared understanding around what LCN networking is about” (Network leader, 2014)

This milestone report goes on to summarise progress in terms of the change priorities of most interest to leaders, how leaders are engaging the wider network and planning for sustainability.

Change priorities of most interest

Leaders of most networks seem to be settling on a few change priorities that have risen to the top in terms of interest for development. One interest focuses on increasing **family, whānau and community connections focused on children's learning**. Schools that previously reported finding it difficult to engage parents and whānau are finding that parents and whānau of their priority learners are welcoming the opportunity to support their children's learning outcomes, sharing their views and beliefs about their children, and about teaching and learning. Examples of changes in practice include, schools using information from learners and their parents to inform planned actions at network and school levels, teachers connecting more with parents, connecting whānau across schools, and mapping conversations with students, parents and whānau. Leaders are well aware that future shifts need to be made by the students, parents and whānau as well as themselves if the various support roles are going to lead to greater learning success for priority learners. The good thing is the leaders have made some shifts and they

are challenging themselves to step up again rather than settle on early successes.

A second change priority of significant interest to almost all networks is to focus on **student agency**. There is a noticeable increase in interest to grow knowledge and understanding about student agency. As they dip into that knowledge growing exercise and gain confidence to trial the way priority learners can exercise more agency in their own learning, there is a growing realisation that it is not all about student agency.

It is more about agency adjustments of all players surrounding student learning. As students take more responsibility as agents of their own learning, teachers have to adjust down their responsibilities. For families and whānau it is a matter of shifting their agency from support to peripheral schooling matters, such as fundraising and festival-style support, to a meaningful support role to their children's learning. Through LCN networking, each group is being encouraged to become more involved in deciding what actions they could take so that they take the appropriate level of responsibility to lift student learning to national expectations. Network leaders are reporting an increased self-belief that priority learners are capable of stepping up to the new active role in their learning. They also acknowledge that they are only at the very beginnings of the agency re-adjustment process.

A third change priority of significant interest is **pedagogies associated with modern learning environments**. Typically this interest remains focused on the pedagogies of teaching. One part of the teacher-focused thinking around pedagogies is the big part that digital technologies can play to support learning and to share effective teaching practices. However, focusing on teaching pedagogies is limiting when trying to grow innovative learning environments. The focus needs to shift to pedagogies relevant to all the players surrounding student learning, including the students. As the focus shifts from teaching as the priority for pedagogical understanding to all players involved in the ecology of learning there will be some giant-sized questioning of current thinking. What does it mean for current systems and processes focused on 'professional learning', on 'teaching as inquiry', on what constitutes 'evidence of effectiveness'? That sort of thinking will tip things up-side down but network leadership, overall, are nowhere near that level of thinking just yet. If LCN had a second cycle of development and that cycle concentrated on future-focused learning environments, it would almost certainly be the next step.

The emergence of those three overarching change priorities has not come from a politician or senior official or external expert telling the network leaders what to do. It has come from the network participants deciding what is most important for the students and those supporting the students. Network leaders reported that contributing factors include the level of 'quality conversations' about learning, the growth in relational trust, the high level of commitment and unity of purpose, the encouragement of distributed leadership and 'agency' of all participant groups, and lateral learning within and across networks.

This is overwhelmingly positive feedback from network leaders. Evidence in Appendix 3 supports these statements. Good leadership is happening across all the LCN networks in the country.

Engaging wider network leadership

The level of leadership engagement of wider network participants is on a continuum, ranging from planning engagement or using learning and change frames with small cohorts of priority learners and their whānau, to holding cross-school activities that include and involve all key participant groups – priority learners, their whānau, teachers and community members, school boards of trustees having cross-school board meetings, and establishing community and business trusts. More established networks that are purposefully growing the membership of their leadership groups in response to their investigations into what they need to learn and change, and they are engaging teachers, students, parents and whānau more in network activities focused on accomplishing their change priorities and attaining their achievement challenges. Networks report a spread of leadership within their schools and there is higher cross-school engagement of teachers through planned lateral learning focused on sharing expertise to improve pedagogy and programme planning for priority learners.

Some networks reported that this type of lateral learning did not happen prior to LCN work. There are also examples of practitioner evaluators and teacher enthusiasts having a higher leadership profile within their schools. The following quote from one network leader provides a picture of network leadership thinking that is on the road towards future-focused learning environments in terms of professional networking but it still has a way to go to include families and community as co-designers of future learning:

We are enjoying the level of autonomy and shared accountability of the network, as opposed to a level of accountability that the Ministry put over the top. It allows the network to be a living, changing and developing learning network of professionals. We are accountable to our learners and community. A positive aspect is shared leadership. We've built a shared language. Trust has been built. Great potential of vertical network – early childhood through to secondary school. This way of working is a model for what we want for our students. Breakdown in the competitiveness of schools and building of true collaborations (Network leader, Whitestone LCN, Oamaru).

Planning for sustainability

Networks that are likely to be more self-sustaining are those that are the more established networks with high level commitment, strong unity of purpose, who are driving their own learning and change frames and deliberately growing distributed leadership and 'agency' at all levels. Networks reported a range of activities, including no deliberate planning, to building learning and change processes into their school plans, taking ownership of learning and change process and directions and leading and facilitating their network activities, and embedding practices school-wide. Planning for sustainability could be strengthened through monitoring the transfer of knowledge and expertise in effective change practices from network to school level and vice versa.

6.3. Growing capability in analysis and use of data

Networks are analysing and using a range of data from learning maps, trends

informing change priorities, information in the evaluative probes, particularly probe 3, and the Leadership and Network/Kura capability tools. This mix of data has been useful to better understanding priority learners' ecology surrounding their learning, inclusive of the people involved in the learning, the tools being used to learn, the interactions between the people and the tools and the sites of learning. The data about the priority learner's learning environments will be extremely useful to analyse in relation to those students' academic achievement trends as the end of this year when two---point---in---time national achievement data will available.

The impact of that mix of data is the growth of a purposeful appreciative focus on priority learners. Leaders report having much richer information and a clearer understanding of their priority learners, parents and whānau, both at a network level and at individual school level. Information from these LCN activities informs the refinement of network plans and actions with a strong collective sense of 'our learners'. Examples of changes in practice include, "...plan to move forward differently to identify 'what do we need to learn and change so that our community of students are successful graduates", "we are having earlier discussions between family and teacher when either have questions about learning and progress", and having "more specific data, resulting in planning actions that are more targeted on accelerating progress".

A leader from a newly forming network articulates how the leaders are coming to grips with the LCN data approach:

"The original data collection combined both quantitative (student achievement data) and rich qualitative data (mapping the environment). For most schools it would have been the first time they had systematically collected this kind of data and then shared with other schools to identify patterns and commonalities. This has informed plans and initial actions -- network participants are getting to grips with the iterative evidence informed change model and are now actively discussing and seeking ways to get valid information to inform plans and to begin evaluating the effectiveness of actions. This latter aspect is just emerging as the network is really only beginning the implementation phase" (Network leader, Tuakau)

Another quote from a leader in a more advanced network captures the way that the LCN data approach includes the views of students and family/whānau:

"There is stronger use of qualitative data. The solid background of evidence informing actions and decisions is now being strengthened by narrative from students, their family and whanau (sic), teachers and leaders. Specific information is sought from priority students and their family/whanau (sic) rather than just general parent/student group" (Network leader, Naenae LEAP)

One more useful quote outlines how the LCN data has a human side to it:

"Finally a place where narrative can be explored to help understand data and dig into the data. The data is a measure that has use for diagnosis and planning it is not of itself useful unless placed within a context. These

students have names” (Network leader in Whakahuihui Tautoko).

All networks are using this data to set a shared benchmark for measuring progress, and determine the cohorts of students they need to track and monitor. Only two networks claim that they are reluctant to focus on National Standards data, but they acknowledge it as a necessity to measure progress. This is a quantum leap forward in terms of trust around data from the beginning of the strategy in October 2012.

Many networks have moved on from data analysis and use to identify change priorities and are now figuring out how to implement the changes. Part of the process is to articulate the criteria for success for each change priority. For instance, if growing student agency is the change priority, what are the criteria by which students, teachers and families can say that the priority students are becoming better agents of their own learning? Who creates the criteria for success? Is that something for the students to do themselves, and what is the role of the teachers and leaders and does the family/whānau have a say? This area of development is very much a ‘work in progress’ in terms of who will be involved in forming success criteria and when and how they will be used.

6.4. Lateral learning

“We love lateral learning and working as a team” (Network leader Auckland Intermediates LCN)

Lateral learning is the key mechanism being used in LCN to drive the learning and change processes. The extent to which it is being used is on a continuum, generally linked to how long the network has been established. Newer networks report that lateral learning is just beginning to happen, or they perceive it as happening at the leadership level only. Some of the more mature networks report that lateral learning has spread among most groups and is occurring through both formal and informal means within and across schools and out into families, whānau and communities. Growing lateral learning is not just a simple matter of schools working together over time. Networks acknowledge that individual schools are at different stages in that growth area; some embrace it and spread it far and wide quickly while others grow it methodically from small trials and others again take longer to realise what lateral learning is and its value.

How do networks perceive the way they use lateral learning?

- .. There has been a noticeable growth in planned across---network lateral learning activities for teachers and students
- .. Lateral learning is featuring in network and school plans
- .. Some networks are using lateral learning to grow student agency, to personalise the teaching of writing, to develop digital planning
- .. Lateral learning got started with sharing learning maps across---networks with other students, parents and teachers;
- .. New---look writing clubs are forming within schools;
- .. Greater sharing of effective practice through formal lateral learning arrangements, such as joint staff meetings, learning and change teacher

- only days, cross-school moderation activities, sharing expertise through teacher-led professional development that focuses specifically on the network achievement challenge and change priorities, and teacher observation of effective practice both within and across networks.
- .. Some networks are bringing school boards of trustees together to learn about LCN frames and methodology of which lateral learning is a central point of discussion

Organised visits of network leaders to the Manaiakalani cluster in Tamaki and input from Dorothy Burt, Russell Burt and Pat Snedden to regional networking have assisted to grow much greater understanding of the need for a strong digital platform for lateral learning to thrive. Networks are now reporting that the use of digital technologies is opening up greater possibilities for lateral learning of all network participants, particularly communities with reliable access to the internet. Networks are finding that there are many more opportunities to connect, including knowledge sites, methods of communication, and to support learning outside of school and at home. Digital technologies are enabling students to share their learning with diverse audiences, posting blogs and giving and receiving feedback and feed-forward both in and out of school hours. Blogging also enables parents and whānau to provide immediate feedback and feed-forward on their children's learning. At the network organisation level, there is huge development in the use of digital technology to collect, store and centralise network information. Most networks are using Google docs and some networks have begun using the LCN Virtual Learning Network (VLN) for interactive communication.

These examples and others outlined in Appendix 3 show the beginnings of lateral learning infiltrating the learning and change systems with the LCN networks. At this stage, however, it is a small step into the use of lateral learning as a key mechanism for change. Network leaders report that lateral learning is happening predominantly within schools through formative assessment practices, goal setting and three-way conferencing, teaching as inquiry and community meetings. Powerful use of the mechanism will occur when network leaders start thinking beyond the school, teaching and classrooms and start thinking about the ecology of learning and how lateral learning can connect priority students' thinking with the thinking of other people in multiple sites, living on different landscapes and attached to vastly different cultural roots.

6.5. Summary

Network leaders are clearly committed to improving educational success for priority learners. There is also good progress being made to grow capability in data analysis and use, in leadership and in lateral learning. Signs of the growth tend to be small conservative steps that start with the instructional core and tentatively move out into other aspects of the learning ecology. This is a typical safe approach to move towards future-focused learning environments. As Valerie Hannon, one global thought-leader in the field, says:

"School is not a place for random or unfocused experimentation" (Hannon, 2010). What is most encouraging in the way LCNs are carefully dipping their toes into the future is that they are bringing up front the role of the parents, family and whānau

to sit alongside teaching professionals as invaluable scaffolds to support priority learners, not too little and not too much.

SECTION 7

INSIGHTS FROM EXTERNAL AGENTS

External agents attached to the LCN strategy have been (i) the Martin Jenkins team that completed an evaluation of the strategy leadership in 2013, (ii) OECD directors and consultants attached to the OECD Innovative Learning Environments (ILE) project and (iii) the Global Education Leaders Programme (GELP) consultants and colleagues that have followed the strategy from its early days. This section responds to the first two external agents as they are within the scope of the contract. GELP falls outside the LCN contract. However, the story may be of interest to the Ministry when considering the significant influence of GELP on the facilitation services (it is included in brief in the ILE Monitoring Note 2), particularly in terms of learning how to design sophisticated frames that activate agency in energising ways.

7.1. spones to external agents feedback in 2013

Actions have been taken in relation to the findings from the 2013 Martin Jenkins evaluation report and the recommendations from OECD officials who visited New Zealand in September 2013. Essentially the messages were about clarifying the nature of the partnership between the Ministry of Education and UniServices/Faculty, reducing tensions at the strategic end of the strategy, growing more challenging conversations around change within network developments and future---proofing the outstanding elements of the strategy.

Clarification of the partnership arrangement at the strategy end has been straightforward. Agreement has been reached that the arrangement is not that of a partnership. Rather, it is a contract for services arrangement whereby the Ministry stipulates and purchases services and the UniServices/Faculty team deliver those services. With that clarification in place, most of the tensions from 2013 have dissipated. There is now a business relationship for contracting and monitoring and a professional relationship for the delivery of the services.

“Growing more challenging conversations” has been partly answered by networks moving into the implementation phase where there will inevitably be agreements and disagreements about best ways to do things and the extent to which those actions are successful or not. The role of the practitioner evaluator was, in part, designed to instil rigor into negotiating next---step decisions. The roles of the facilitation team and Ministry advisors have also been considered in two ways. These are to make explicit the change leadership principles that guide facilitation teams and networks as change agents² and to reflect on the facilitation and advisory roles in relation to influencing network shifts in perspective from: schools to ecology, competition to collaboration, passive to active and needy to appreciative.

² In relation to Change Leadership: expert input was sought from Alfred Ngaru and Russell Burt (Manaiakalani and Tamaki community leaders), Linda Bendikson and Deidre Le Fevre (The University

Future---proofing the key influential elements of the strategy is addressed in the next subsection regarding LCN involvement in the OECD ILE project.

7.2. Initial response to OECD Innovative Learning Environments (ILE) directors and consultants in 2014

LCN in New Zealand was selected early in 2013 as an innovative strategy that was worthy of becoming one of five intensive case studies for the OECD ILE project. The four other countries involved are British Columbia, French Belgium, Peru and South Africa. Commitments included preparation of a series of monitoring notes and attendance at workshops, seminars and conferences through to November 2014. OECD is to produce publications about innovative learning environments that incorporate elements of the five case studies. There are considerable reciprocal gains in this arrangement. New Zealand's government and education sector are gaining much credibility in terms of leading global innovation and, we are learning invaluable lessons from the experiences of other countries, sharpening our thinking around levers for change.

The most recent development has been to prepare Monitoring Note 2, present at a two---day workshop with leaders of the five jurisdictions and attend a one---day seminar about innovation and evaluation at OECD headquarters in Paris. New Zealand's Monitoring Note 2 will be posted on the LCN website [when](http://www.lcn.education.auckland.ac.nz) it is finalised for public viewing (<http://www.lcn.education.auckland.ac.nz>). The New Zealand team³ formulated four points to share with senior Ministry officials in New Zealand and with OECD directors and consultants in Paris. These points are outlined below. The four points are:

1. New Zealand's indigenous Māori team members, Te Kepa Stirling and Arihia Stirling, were able to explain the tribal partnership arrangements and connectivity within and between kura, whānau, hapū and iwi in ways that the world can appreciate the talents and future---focused thinking of Māori. Those explanations sat alongside the images of LCNs in English---medium attempting to shift mindsets from school---centric thinking to school---family/whānau---community thinking.
2. Diffusion of LCN principles into the broader New Zealand schooling system was a priority agenda item. New Zealand's LCN strategy was given considerable recognition as an innovation in future---focused learning environments. Valerie Hannon, world---renowned director of the Innovation Unit in London, critiqued the NZ team's presentation of the LCN strategy and was overwhelming in her praise; *"an innovation in its true sense of the word and off the scale in comparison to what is happening around the world"*. Valerie said she would like to come out to NZ and see LCNs in action because she believed we were

³ The NZ team that attended the workshop and seminar was made up of Brian Annan (PhD), UniServices/Faculty, Rose Carpenter (MoE), Arihia Stirling (NKAI), Te Kepa Stirling QSM (NKAI), Jean Annan (PhD) UniServices/Faculty and Jill Farquharson and Colin Dale (both LCN network leaders and

inspirational and truly understanding the shifts that need to be made by countries to be innovative and sustainable.

3. Evaluation of learning and change in innovative learning environments has raised new questions for educators. While LCN networks are moving into a new paradigm of ecological learning, evaluation tends to be shackled by traditional evaluation practices that do not fully reflect the language of innovation or the values and experiences of contemporary society. For New Zealand, it will be more important and worthwhile to participate in international collegial thinking between innovation leaders from different countries that are inventing evaluative tools and metrics with support from future-focused consultants to move into the new paradigm.
4. It is important the NZ team see through their involvement by attending the final OECD ILE event in November 2014. The NZ team would also like to present our OECD presentation to the Cross Sector Forum and any other interested groups to grow understanding of a learning system that could transform the education system here in NZ. We also believe it would be beneficial to invite Valerie Hannon to New Zealand to support the systems-change work and to acknowledge the value of the changes we are making now and proposing for the future.

SECTION 8

POINTS OF POLICY INTEREST

There are two points of policy interest from this Milestone 4 timeframe.

8.1. Using LCN as a systems lever for change

Note that the OECD Innovative Learning Environments (ILE) Project Monitoring Note 2 discusses this point in more detail.

The Minister of Education has publicly presented the LCN strategy as an exemplar to promote networking via the IES policy. This is entirely appropriate as long as the policy—to—practice work in between the Minister and those expected to make the policy work are fully cognisant of the fundamental and essential elements of these effective communities of practice. To date, there has been little interaction between those designing IES and those leading LCN and where this has occurred, only the surface features of LCN networking have been regarded. There appear to be assumptions among some educators that communities of schools will form in the same vein as LCN networking via new career positions for teachers and leaders and through Ministry regional advisor support to establish communities of schools. However, there is little resemblance between the establishment of IES and the way networking arrangements have developed via the LCN strategy. IES policy developers and sector leaders have made some visits to the LCN networks, mainly in the northern region, to share thinking about IES policy and to learn about LCN. Those connections have involved largely ad—hoc consultation at network leader meetings with no visits to schools and communities to explore networking developments between students, teachers and families/whānau, which is at the heart of LCN networking.

There are several ways to think about this situation.

One way would be to allow LCN to be absorbed by IES and assume that those involved in IES will continue to grow the lateral networking catalyzed through the LCN strategy. That assumption is better assured than assumed. Professional networking across schools is a much better prospect than professional growth within individual schools but it is unlikely to extend to LCN—type networking among students, teachers and families/whānau. If LCN—type networking was to be integrated alongside professional networking, that would set up a powerful networking environment in New Zealand.

In LCN, the professional networking across schools is simply a conduit to create networking among students, teachers and families/whānau and community. The LCN emphasis is on distributed responsibility and agency around student learning, blending formal learning in school with informal learning beyond schools. This LCN places emphasis on breaking away from the professional domination of the education system from the past, which has not addressed the equity challenge. IES, in its current state of development, appears to be a lever that concentrates on

professionalism and the instructional core. Whilst the gap between IES and LCN appears considerable, the Minister of Education's public messages indicate an expectation of the opposite. Should the IES strategy absorb LCN but not activate broad responsibility and agency to address the equity challenge, the Minister of Education and government are likely to be underwhelmed by their latest significant investment into education.

Another way to consider LCN and IES is to treat them as complementary strategies, not as one in the same thing, for as long as it takes for IES to integrate LCN principles into national policy. This option creates time for IES to learn more about the deep features of LCN and diffuse the methodology through learning relationships rather than hand-over encounters.

A third way forward is to keep the two policies separate. That way, IES can concentrate on growing professional practice around the instructional core. There is still much to do in that regard, particularly in terms of effective teaching and leadership for priority learners. LCN networking can still function as that work unfolds, in a similar way that LCN and PLD currently operate. This is not an ideal arrangement because there are overlaps that put schools into the position of having to choose between initiatives or deal with several at the same time, which puts government into the awkward position of creating a cluttered networking environment.

Of all the options, establishing IES with learning connections to LCN seems the most useful to support the Minister of Education's public stance around LCN in relation to IES. This direction would position IES networking as a lever that would extend out from teaching professionals to include the meaningful involvement of students, families/whānau and community. The biggest challenge with this learning connections conceptualization would be to shift it from a professional/instructional-core that reaches out to students/family/whānau and community to an integrated, ecological view of learning whereby students, school professionals, family/whānau and community are all given equal status as they learn to blend in-school formal learning with out-of-school informal, and perhaps formal, learning.

Arihia Stirling, a Ngā Kura-ā-Iwi leader, and LCN national manager, are in the process of setting up meetings with the appropriate national groups associated with IES to ensure they have a better understanding of LCN and to discuss the best way to proceed between IES and LCN.

8.2. Networking from local to regional to national to international

LCN represents a new form of ecological learning that challenges the notion of professional learning and PLD as we have known it during the school improvement and effectiveness paradigm. LCN network participants draw on the knowledge in groups, share that knowledge across groups and seek out and/or construct new knowledge. At times that process does call for interactions with experts in specific fields of knowledge, not as PLD providers or keynote speakers, but to frame ideas

for network participants to discuss, to debate and to form context-specific knowledge that relates to their priority learners. LCN, in this respect, has been a two-year fixed term radically efficient contract (\$7 million) to learn how this approach might operate in the New Zealand schooling system. LCN's significant successes, as stated by the Martin Jenkins evaluation report, feedback from OECD directors and consultants and GELP consultants, would suggest this new type of ecological learning become part of the regular schooling landscape in New Zealand.

Future investment into LCN-type networking goes well beyond setting up localized LCN networks. It is about manufacturing networking at many levels in the systems. Each LCN represents a localised network. The regional networking provides opportunities for those local networks to learn with one another and to learn with experts who have useful knowledge to inform the networks' change priorities.

Then lead participants from those networks are connected with various national reference groups, advisory groups and policy developers. Some of the network leaders extend into international network arrangements, such as the OECD ILE project and the GELP programme. The participants that traverse different levels in the system represent connectors between various networks. They support knowledge mobilization and diffusion in powerful and energizing ways that traditional PLD approaches do not do. This is a networking leadership role that is not well understood within the system and there is considerable value in coming to a better understanding about these roles.

LCN programme director Brian Annan outlined the value of this connector role at the international level in a feedback email to OECD director David Istance and consultants Valerie Hannon and Tony Mackay. The feedback is mirrored by many comments made by LCN connector leaders traversing between networking activity at the local, regional and national levels of operation in New Zealand:

“One of the things we're thinking about adjusting in our paper David, is the nature of the reciprocal learning from these meetings and similar ones in the Global Education Leaders Program (GELP) meetings that some of us attend. The power is phenomenal of collegial learning amongst those deeply immersed in innovation and systems change alongside future-focused experts that become equally deeply immersed in the developments through attachment. I've discovered that power is not about case-study leaders informing experts and vice versa, it's about a collective of national and international agents deeply immersed in positive change -- writing it up is one thing, being in it is another and it creates gains that peripheral players often struggle to see. It puts a whole new light on design, implementation and evaluation. Hopefully we'll capture the point in a way that acknowledges the amazing learning we gain from sitting alongside colleagues, understanding their contexts and discussing the common and not common trends in our various endeavors with respectful and insightful pokes and acknowledgements from Tony, Valerie and David.” (Email communication, 1 July, 2014).

This quote indicates successful networking comprises a mix of people who are interested in growing knowledge, groups forming and connecting with other groups and connecting as agents taking ideas up, down and sideways through the system. OECD and GELP are signalling that New Zealand could be a potential global leader in innovation in the field of networking based on what the LCN strategy has achieved in this radically efficient way. We have yet some work to do to realise that full potential. An LCN reference group is being formed to discuss the LCN pathway and will meet for two thought---leadership days in August and October this year.

Reference group feedback alongside OECD ILE reports, milestone reports and the proposed LCN publications will provide an information footprint of LCN. Without strategic investment to support the sector to understand and apply that footprint, the endeavour to date is likely to fragment and become generic and/or bureaucratic networking. Prospects of that eventuality are high unless there have been some decisions made to invest into future---proofing the elements of LCN that are worthy of diffusing into the broader system. The prospect of some continuation of LCN into the future cannot be presumed until 2014---15 budget appropriations are made public.

What is known is that the prospect of LCN seriously influencing either IES or the PLD review are extremely low given the minimal connections between LCN and the IES developments. And, there is no connection between LCN and the PLD review. Policy developers and advisors may consider that LCN theory and practice is too difficult to extend to the entire system and that it is best to take conservative small steps from instructional/professional learning to future---focused ecological learning. Another possibility is that policy developers and advisors do not believe it is useful to move from instructional/professional to ecological learning arrangements. A third possibility is that policy developers and advisors have not given much thought to these shifts as they remain sharply focused on the instructional core. Bringing ecological learning to the table with the voice of those who are activating it would be a transformational act, something that is likely to excite Ministers as well as schools and communities but may challenge those in the middle of the system. New Zealand's education system has been world---renowned and a courageous move toward ecological learning would retain New Zealand's high status in global thinking about schooling.

SECTION 9

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Concentrate heavily on impact checks of LCN methodology in the final six months of LCN, with a strong emphasis on the impact on academic achievement of priority learners.
2. Capture LCN methodology via a practical article about LCN developments in NZCERSET publication or Kairaranga journal, an interview-style article in the National Education Gazette and a substantive induction manual and LCN methodology as UniServices/Faculty--Ministry of Education publications. Also continue to explore and post LCN information on The University of Auckland website, the LCN VLN and the N4L Cloud.
3. Complete the diffusion tasks as specified in Variation 3 of the LCN contract, inclusive of advice to the Ministry's LCN national manager, formation of a reference group, support to Cognition facilitation for Mutukaroa Phase 2 & 3 networks and co-ordination of the OECD ILE project.
4. Setup meetings between New Zealand's OECD ILE team and national reference and advisory groups to ensure a better understanding of LCN in relation to national policy.
5. Inform National ERO representatives of LCN developments.

