Introduction

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Thank you for your patience in waiting for this issue of the *Journal of Distance Learning*. A number of factors have delayed publication, but please be assured that there *will* be another issue published this year. The theme for that issue has already been set.

This issue includes papers from contributors to the 2002 DEANZ Conference, *Evolving eLearning*, as well as other papers of a general nature and four reviews of books and a CD-ROM.

Many readers will be familiar with Christchurch College of Education's Primary Open Learning Option (POLO). In "Empowering an Indigenous Rural Community: Local Teachers for Local Schools," John Delany and Derek Wenmoth present us with an honest and interesting evaluation of POLO's distance delivery of three-year primary teacher education to student teachers in a remote and isolated community (Panguru, in Northland). This paper explores the need for contextualisation, especially for Maori, and examines how individuals in the community gained a sense of self-worth and developed professionally. Delany and Wenmoth make a passionate plea for the development of local teachers for local communities, the sort of people who are:

> grounded, owned, and accepted in their local community. They were not required to uproot

themselves and their families in order to train for teaching, and their commitment to their local region remains intact. Rather than attempting to manufacture a commitment to teach in such isolated areas from graduates who would much prefer to remain in the big cities, the answer at least in part lies in educating local teachers for local schools.

June Kean's paper reports on a survey of the perceptions of New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC) students enrolled as distance learners in the college's Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) programme, and although aspects of studying by distance learning selected for the survey were limited to those that NZTC had identified as of importance in informing directions for future delivery, students saw studying by distance to be effective providing certain conditions were met. But some disadvantages were perceived, the major one being a lack of interaction with peers. She reports NZTC's response to this.

Fred Lockwood was a keynote speaker at the DEANZ Conference. His paper contrasts speculation in 1995 by David Hawkridge on likely developments in the field of open and distance learning with actual development seven years later. Hawkridge's five original terms

of globalisation, electronification, commodification, domination, and liberation are revisited and examined critically in terms of changes that have occurred and new challenges identified. Lockwood believes the latter are significant and suggests:

> The question is becoming, not whether flexible learning can enhance the cost effectiveness of traditional teaching (important though that question is), but whether a university will survive and prosper in the next century without rapidly integrating the various dimensions of flexible learning into its process, culture and values. (Moran, 1997, p. 181)

Online is the answer, but what is the question? Elspeth McKay addresses this familiar theme through the examination of commonly held beliefs about eLearning. She describes the gaps in expectations that novice learners have with Web-based courseware. Do Web-based courseware designers deal effectively with information that is central to each learning event? If eLearning is an holistic process and experiential learning events are seen to be important, what place is there for the social aspects of community learning?

With "Becoming a 'Communal Architect' in the Online Classroom: Integrating Cognitive and Affective Learning for Maximum Effect in Web-Based Education," Robert Woods and Samuel Ebersole explore how we might contribute to the kind of communal infrastructure that builds connectedness and promotes learning. They posit:

> Practitioners must ... recognize that a positive social dynamic requires intentionality—that is, community just doesn't happen but is created through a variety of verbal and nonverbal communication cues

and suggest that there are no shortcuts to building community—that it begins with "precise definitions and measurement of community and the collection of data beyond simple self-report by students." They insist that it is necessary to structure time between teacher and students, and students and students, to facilitate the "transfer of intellectual and emotional capital."

This issue also sees four reviews. Ken Stevens reviews books by Desmond Keegan, *Distance Training: Taking Stock at a Time of Change*, and Anthony Picciano, *Distance Learning: Making Connections Across Virtual Space and Time*. Jay Reid reviews Fred Lockwood and Anne Gooley's (Eds.) book *Innovation in Open and Distance Learning: Successful Development of Online and Web-Based Learning* and Mark Nichols's CD-ROM *Teaching for Learning: Designing Resource-Based Learning Courses for the Internet Age*.

I hope you enjoy this issue. It touches on a range of sectors and matters of interest. The book reviews cover material that is highly topical and the CD-ROM reviewed is published by a New Zealand author. That's a feat in itself.

The next issue of the *Journal of Distance Learning* will be a themed one with preselected contributors. Nicki Page will edit this. Don't, however, let that put you off sending us material to be published in 2004.