

# Distance Education in New Zealand: An Historical Sketch

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*In February 1922, in Wellington, Miss MacKenzie counted New Zealand's first roll, 107 children, for Correspondence classes; a mile away, the first New Zealand public radio station took the air - two threads, agency and technology, in the weave of New Zealand distance education.*

**HISTORY?** The writer of this historical sketch faces several problems. First, the historian is not usually a participant. While this sketch is based on published records, it also draws on the writer's own thirty years of experience in New Zealand distance education. One person's perception may be another's distortion. Second, until the various participants in New Zealand distance education pooled some of their interests in the mid-1980s within DEANZ, their earlier activities occurred in separate sectors of education, developing at different rates at different times. Third, our participants are very diverse. Among them are thousands of individuals, learners, teachers, administrators, technologists and a host of others. Distance education is such that they almost invariably function as members of some collective group, in an organisation, association, institution, or network. It is on the historical development and interactions of these collectivities that this sketch focuses. Few individuals are named<sup>1</sup>, and where possible, familiar acronyms are used for organisations (which are listed in the two Tables)

Finally, like many histories, this brief account of New Zealand distance education has the

problem of where to start. Were not all imported manifestations of 'pakeha' education a form of distance education curriculum? Do we begin with the first missionaries? Even when, at the earliest universities, instruction was face-to-face but 'external' assessment from England was required, was that really 'tutored' distance education, different in degree, not kind, from the tuitionless 'exemption from lectures' so commonly allowed? (Owens, 1985, 17-25) Or did New Zealand distance education begin when Australian commercial correspondence courses were made accessible here? This sketch ignores (or almost) these pre-cursors because they do little to explain our shape and character for distance education.

To narrate the development of distance education of that kind, we dip in at a time when the New Zealand public advocated, and were answered by, distance education; and when, by coincidence, a new technical venture, its resource significance unforeseen, also began. Correspondence school and broadcasting, later icons of distance education, give us our arbitrary start in February 1922.

Table 1 shows major provider institutions, that together complement and are a counterpart to the national system of public education. There are some others, more ephemeral so not included. Each has a distinctive role and history which some have celebrated in (sometimes very full) detail<sup>2</sup>.

	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Acronym</i>
1	International Correspondence Schools	Commercial correspondence schools; founded overseas and imported early in the 20th century, they provide a range of personal and vocational education courses (heavily marketed) and issue their own certificates.	ICS
2	Stott's		
3	The New Zealand Correspondence School	Founded 1922; provides at all levels of the school programme (including pre-school, second-language for immigrants...) for children unable to get to school and adults whose schooling was truncated; it also teaches secondary subjects in regular schools that lack specialist teachers	NZCS
4	The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand	Founded 1944 as NZ Technical Correspondence School, later Institute; provides wide variety of vocational subjects for diplomas (and recently degrees) and professional certification.	TOPNZ formerly NZTCI
5	Massey University's Centre for University Extramural Studies	Offers dual-mode distance education over a wide range of own university degrees and diplomas and towards degrees elsewhere. Was 'Extramural Studies' first as Victoria U. branch 1960-3, then at Massey U. from 1964. Renamed CUES 1978.	CUES, was 'Extramural Studies'
6	Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit (now Professional & Community Education)	Established at NZCS 1962 (and serviced from there for many years) to provide mid-career courses for schoolteachers (sometimes in close collaboration with the Colleges of Education network). Separated off during one of NZCS's many changes of location, thereafter having quasi-separate entity under the NZ Education Department, until integrated with Palmerston College of Education about 1980.	ASTU (now ASPESA PACE0
7	Workers Education Association-Trade Union Postal Education Service  Trades Union Education Authority	Founded with support from the National Council of Adult Education in 1968; within the framework of WEA's historic policy for workers it has provided NZ trades union officials with on-the-job training (organisational management, labour law, negotiation skill, TU history etc) and TU members and their families with second-chance, non-public-examination basic education skills; amalgamated 1987 with TUEA and was consequently lost when TUEA was disestablished in 1992.	WEA-TUPES  TUEA
8	Continuing Education Unit, Radio New Zealand	Operated 1975-89. Offered radio series targeted at adult interest groups (e.g. new parents, over-fifties, cancer sufferers and their families, Polynesian immigrants, etc); recordings were then distributed via National Film Library and public libraries.	ContEd,RNZ
9	University Extension/Continuing Education Departments	Various departments have or have had courses: local radio instruction and nationally networked voice teleconferences (Otago U.), early childhood education training (Massey U.), training for adult educators (Waikato U.), law and criminology for police and more recently librarianship (Victoria U., Wellington); agriculture (Lincoln U.). The Auckland U. department's New Start programme has served many second-chance distance education students.	-
10	Polytechnics	Interacted with TCI/TOPNZ to support latter's students. Have offered independent courses (e.g. beekeeping at Bay of Plenty Poly, veterinary technician training, etc at Auckland Institute of Technology (which now interacts with eTV). Several polytechnics use materials prepared by other providers, in joint programmes.	-
11	Education Television	Major providers have attempted own support activities using television, several making video cassettes for home viewing, Massey U. broadcasting programmes, NZCS videorecording teachers' comment for students. NZTV now screens series, often imported, some used by students enrolled through other providers.	eTV

**Table 1. Provider agencies**

	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Acronym</i>
1	NZ Correspondence School	Founded 1936, supports NCCS's pupils individually and collectively, and Parents' Association provides substantial political advocacy for NZCS.	CSPA
2	International Council for Distance education	International Conference/Council of Correspondence Education/Educators [ICCE] (founded 1938 was professional body to encourage formerly correspondence education in North America and pan-Pacific, then worldwide. Became in 1982 ICDE, marking wider range of DE systems.	ICDE formerly ICCE
3	NZ Council for Educational Research	Founded 1936, this major research agency has maintained a watching brief on DE and on educational telecommunications since the late 1970s.	NZCER
4	MU-Extramural Students Society	Founded 1963 for social purposes but re-organised with fresh authority 1977 for advocacy and political voice.	EXMSS
5	Australian & South Pacific External Studies Association	Regional professional group, founded 1973. Emphasis on tertiary sector; included NZ agencies: now more national as Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia [ODLAA] since separate DEANZ and South Pacific Association for DE established.	ASPESA (now ODLAA)
6	PeaceSat	Organisation established (c.1973) to manage communication and research functions of US Pacific-located redundant satellite ATS1; NZ terminal in Wellington controlled many pan-Pacific sessions including for DE; gave experience of satellite use for DE and was base for pan-Australasian DE discussions of DE technology; subsystem Satellite Network USP-Net formed basis for U. South Pacific inter-island DE communication links.	PeaceSat
7	University of the South Pacific Extension Services		ATS 1 USP-Net
8	Rural Activities Education Programmes	Initiated c.1977 to counsel rural students about options for learning and to provide back-up. Some now superseded by regional polytechnics.	REAP
9	Asian-Pacific Programme of Education Innovation for Development	UNESCO regional network which NZ joined in 1981 with NZCS, NZTCI and CUES among NZ centres named to support Asian DE ventures.	APEID
10	Distance Education	Initiated 1984 to encourage support and study of DE in NZ; open to all who manifest interest in NZ distance learning.	DEANZ
11	Commonwealth of Learning	Founded 1988 under aegis of Commonwealth Secretariat to disseminate DE practices among 'developing' country members of Commonwealth.	COL

**Table 2. Support agencies and networks**

Table 2 lists other agencies that have played a part - student societies, media organisations, experimental programmes, support networks, and so on, and there are others which could have been listed. Not all distance education professionals are teachers. There are broadcasters who create programmes for children at NZCS and elsewhere or screen educational television series for adults that other agencies use to complement their own courses. Communication specialists with computers and satellites create and disseminate instructional packages. Like the providers, these agencies, specialists and networks recur and interact throughout our distance education history.

**A PATTERN?** What pattern has evolved that gives New Zealand its own identity? Again, my suggestions and selection may not match what others would choose:

*Our distance education is, and has long been, kaleidoscopic:* The kaleidoscope's central structure comes from the key public institutions which offer qualification courses, at various levels. Alongside are the shapes and designs of many other distance education agencies. There are commercial schools, flourishing like Stott's and ICS, succumbing like Hemingway's; or newcomers who seek high fees for new instructional methodologies or a knowledge

product by distance learning in a newly evident market; or those who offer new-age alternative/complementary therapies or non-Western religions and spirituality. Some are voluntary agencies, hard hit now by loss of government support, notably WEA-TUPES. Government departments, among them the police, inland revenue and the military (and also temporarily TUEA) run training schemes at a distance, as do banks; or they employ other agencies to tailor courses for them. Churches, too, improve the theological or counselling skills of their congregational workers by distance education means. Alongside providers are student- or parent- or community-based support organisations, CPSA, EXMSS, REAP staff. Among this diversity, and other activities not listed here (Bewley, 1988/9), overlap is a recent and still unusual phenomenon. Not all programmes have formal outcomes: while some do satisfy public examinations, others offer qualifications of their own, and some eschew altogether formal assessment either as unnecessary for self-motivated students or because they may deter those hesitant to confront examiners. The propriety of the distance mode is rarely nowadays questioned. Fortunately, in the openness of DEANZ to membership, a kaleidoscopic collegiality has developed<sup>3</sup>.

*Membership socially of learner 'communities' has always figured large:* Apart from contributions from some very substantial learner support organisations, there is a long record of efforts to make students feel less alone, more part of a group. NZCS's pioneer programme of Social Learning was applauded at the 1938 first international meeting of correspondence educators (ICCE, 1938). The School's radio broadcasts have for many years created the sense of school community (and public awareness) with weekly principal's talks and the annual public end-of-year ceremony (now televised). Many polytechnics have made support for distance learners, wherever they are enrolled, a part of their community programmes.

*Approval comes more readily from NZ public and political sources than some educational ones:* The formal agencies, NZCS in 1922 and TOPNZ in

1946, arose from post-war public pressure that ready access to education was not to be denied to returned soldiers' families nor ex-soldiers themselves who wanted to learn a trade. From 1936 CSPA was there to stir political support on behalf of NZCS. Teacher shortage, potentially another denial of education, kept pressure on universities to retain extramural studies, provided there was tuition. It was pressure *within* the teaching profession that caused ASTU to be set up at NZCS and ensured continuing mid-career distance study for teachers.

*NZDE agencies usually began tentatively (and parsimoniously) before discovering appreciative and growing clientele:* There is a myth that distance students occur because 'normal' provision is temporarily over-extended, but they will be no more when 'the crisis' ends. The myth has been prevalent in New Zealand, so each new venture has been thought to be undeserving of long-term investment. NZCS, TOPNZ and CUES have suffered this myth but by their persistent growth have contradicted it. New distance learning opportunities for other social and vocational groups have been perceived and these have encouraged more growth.

*Conventional courses and their distance learning counterparts usually interchange:* Although NZCS and TOPNZ operate independent distance programmes, their single-mode approach is moderated by much similarity of programme, interchangeability and complementarity with their counterpart face-to-face institutions. Curricula and courses are frequently designed together and are taught in parallel. CUES courses are dual-mode versions of Massey University's degree/diploma courses and cross-credit freely to qualifications at other universities. Even before Prior Recognition of Learning became well-nigh obligatory, most distance education agencies earned full credit from their peers.

*Formal (that is, qualification-oriented) New Zealand distance education programmes have until recently been print-beset:* Most major credit-awarding agencies (with the exception of the University of Otago's distance learning programme) rely on print. They have also developed uses for

other media and technologies, some in a subsidiary teaching role, some as student support, some for management. This is a very fast-growing area, but teaching, including distance teaching, has lagged for dearth of investment.

*NZDE has been culturally pakeha until recently and changes are limited:* The style and models of distance education worldwide, including here, derive from European intellectual culture, curriculum, institutional organisation and individualised learning. Maori and Pacific languages and cultures are now taught in distance mode, with culturally appropriate content, teaching and learning in the mix. Less common, if at all, are such elements in other subjects where there are Maori or Pacific Island distance learners.

*NZDE has provided mid-career education including scope for many women to reshape their lives and careers:* Relatively open admission, distance learning courses that are manageable in constrained domestic circumstances, the development of distance education courses attractive to women candidates and the expansion of support networks where women can be at ease with one another, have contributed to the opportunities that various agencies of NZDE have provided. Distance education not only has high proportions of women learners, but of teachers and organisational leaders. Women have led EXMSS since the early 1970s. By 1990, ASTU and TOPNZ (and TUEA and, previously WEA-TUPES) were in the executive care of women, as DEANZ has been from its second president onwards.

Some but not all these features surface during the brief narrative that follows. A longer larger narrative could highlight and elaborate some issues which in a general narrative remain shadowy. The events described form the maintrack, along which some key players in New Zealand distance education have emerged and eventually banded together, in part to discover their individual and their common elements of identity. By banding together in

various situations, and eventually in DEANZ, they have not only managed to protect their own interests but to share the wealth of their experience, within and outside New Zealand.

**OUR HISTORY BEGINS** A week before WWI ended, the attention of the Minister of Education was drawn to the recent example of Australian 'lessons by mail' and he was reminded (public concern had already been expressed) of the need for 'a school of correspondence' for New Zealand 'backblocker children'. In 1921 Miss MacKenzie, the first teacher of correspondence classes was appointed for the start of the 1922 year; 87 children were expected but 107 enrolled for the new year, growing to 204 by August. A second woman teacher was added. In mid-1923 Mr S.M. Mills, 'Headmaster of the Correspondence School' was appointed. Enrolments still rose but were capped at 500. The cap was lifted in 1927; in 1929 a secondary division was added and that year the roll passed 1000 (NZCS, 1947, 5-9).

On Courtenay Place, a mile away from NZCS's original home, the Government Building, the first New Zealand radio station, set up by the Forrest brothers, took the air. National radio evolved three or four years later and responsibility for news and information became greater (ANON, c.1970, 2256, col.1). NZCS and broadcasting first linked in July 1931 when the Principal began a series of talks called 'Correspondence School'. Through the 1930s, and ever since, concepts of radio support developed: NZCS lesson material was provided (1936), NZCS assemblies transmitted and the 'break-up' aired (both in 1937).

NZCS and radio themselves became two significant threads, correspondence institution and technology, in the tapestry of New Zealand distance education. Together they became symbolic of the interest of its providers in cultivating, without wholly converting to, other media than print.

Most agencies now make much use of *audiocassettes*. Radio New Zealand itself became a provider for a time, its Continuing Education

Unit broadcasting non-credit series for adults on significant issues, then distributing them as audiocassettes around public libraries.

NZCS has persisted with radio but its 'break-up' is now an annual *television* event. Apart from videocassette instructional material for a small range of courses, NZCS uses teacher-made videocassettes for direct tuition between teacher and child. Christchurch Polytechnic (as it then was) showed early interest in educational television. TOPNZ has made, and imported, instructional videocassettes. Massey University has produced programmes for recorded broadcast, mostly but not exclusively, for CUES students. CUES now occasionally uses TVNZ's eTV programmes. Most eTV credit courses derive from Auckland Institute of Technology.

*Telecommunications* add another dimension: the major teleconference pioneer has been the University of Otago, but its system has been widely shared, being later joined by Telecom New Zealand Limited and its technological developments. Agencies now use their *computers* to provide (as well as management) student access and enquiries, and variously (because some students lack equipment and skills) for instruction.

**INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION** In August 1938, a Pacific Rim group of correspondence educators (from the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) met at Victoria, BC, Canada for the First International Conference on Correspondence Education, thereby inaugurating the professional organisation that we now know as the International Council of Distance Education. NZCS's Social Learning schemes as described by Principal Butchers brought NZCS to immediate prominence, earned Butchers the chair of ICCE's first Research Committee and the promise of an ICCE meeting in NZ (ICCE, 1938, 56-71). The attention paid to overcoming pupil loneliness, the numerous clubs that children could join to bring them into friendly correspondence with other children, the guidance from peripatetic teachers, the radio broadcasts, the associations of parents and past

pupils, the exhibition of pupils' work in Wellington opened by the Governor-General all established that New Zealand style of correspondence education was infinitely caring for the life of childhood and as satisfying (and probably healthier) as any other pupil could expect – echoing the Fraser/Beeby dictum that then guided New Zealand education.

The second ICCE scheduled for 1940 eventually took place after 1945 in Lincoln, Nebraska, USA. Ostensibly Pacific Rim again, it had only one New Zealander, one Australian, a Filipina; the rest came from the USA and Canada, except for two Norwegian correspondence educators and a Yale professor speaking on behalf of Sweden's Hermods School (in 1938 a lone Scot had been the European contingent). At the end of the conference, Butchers (whose paper had presented a general account of New Zealand education, mentioning only two instances of distance education, university extramural studies and the WEA book box scheme) became President of ICCE (ICCE, 1948).

The third ICCE ['of Correspondence Educators'] and the first international distance education conference conducted in New Zealand, was held in Christchurch. Its historical significance lay, first, in the significant contribution and display by the recently established New Zealand Technical Correspondence School (founded in 1946 on the basis of vocational courses developed by the army during and just after WWII and by Wellington High School). Second, there were present, participating (offering advice and experience as well as hospitality) many CPSA members and former NZCS pupils, alongside the professional correspondence educators. Finally, attending were various top level New Zealand educators, the Minister, Director-General, Director of NZCER, Post-Primary Chief Inspector, Officer for Higher Education and various others. Not only did the Principal, NZCS but also his colleague Principal from NZTCS (a former NZCS teacher) attend and, perhaps more significantly numerous staff from NZCS and NZTCS. The distance education topics were shrewdly chosen and carefully prepared, as befitted Butchers final ICCE

activities (ICCE, 1950). The next, 1953, conference regretted his absence, congratulated him on his publications (but could not fund his proposed history of correspondence education).

**STUDYING EXTRAMURALLY** Even before the 1920s there was another thread. Although more the subject of disdain and pity than institutional pride, university 'extramural' students continued to enrol, with no attendance at classes and little advice on what to do about course prescriptions and textbooks, availing themselves of a high probability of failure. In 1925, due in part to these struggling students at a distance, the New Zealand university system reached its lowest point of reputation. According to the Reichel-Tate report, it had 'unrivalled facilities for gaining university degrees, but . . . is less successful in providing university education' (Owens, 1985, 18).

In 1959 the Hughes Parry Report initiated major reorganisation of the New Zealand university system: the federal University of New Zealand dissolved, its colleges in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin becoming autonomous (Massey and Lincoln Agricultural Colleges somewhat less so) although all owing considerable responsibility to the University Grants Committee. One anticipated change did not occur, namely, the abandonment of the 'exemption from lectures'/'extramural studies' system. Instead, because of a teacher shortage and the need to upgrade other teachers, it was agreed that 'exemption' would carry an obligation to enrol for tuition; and that tuition would be provided by Victoria University staff located in Palmerston North (where they also provided degree classes for students at the local teachers college). It was later agreed that Massey College would be accorded full university status in 1964 but would take over responsibility for the Palmerston North outpost college, with its General Studies (that is, Arts) courses and its concomitant extramural teaching (which in 1963 included second year courses for the first time). With enrolments beyond 1000, extramural studies, 'study guide'-driven and tutored, had defied expectations that enrolments would soon plateau and reduce (Owens, 1958, 50-57).

Already the other universities realised that they could abandon not only 'exempted' students but also evening part-time classes, redirecting students to extramural studies. Throughout the 1960s extramural numbers grew, encouraging departmental and institutional growth at Massey University, where faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences, Education and eventually Business Studies grew and diversified.

In 1962 the Currie Commission on Education had reported on all other education outside the universities. Among its many findings it highlighted the need for improved and expanded teacher education, some obtainable part-time and extramurally from the universities. Some however needed to be more practical and classroom-oriented. So a group of retired school inspectors was gathered as an Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit into a section at NZCS to develop correspondence diploma in Teaching courses. Growth there escalated too, the more so when Massey University developed in the early 1970s a BED degree, allowing credit from ASTU courses. ASTU stayed for some administrative purposes with NZCS long after the School went to yet another site - there is a separate history of NZCS to be written around its many changes of location - before settling, in the care of the New Zealand Department of Education, at Wellington Teachers' College, then Palmerston North.

These distance education providers, NZCS, NZTCI, Extramural Studies, ASTU, had small beginnings, were sparsely funded, and were presumed temporary until other developments removed the problems and the pressures. Except the problems never disappeared! Pressures and numbers increased as other problems were seen to be susceptible to the same distance education solutions. These early providers simply expanded their roles to become more comprehensive agencies, more permanent institutions. The imagination of those who dedicated themselves to these ventures became regularly directed to issues of innovative and creative teaching (with slender resources),

responsiveness to further professional and public interest and, most of all, to the immediate, often complex, needs of those learners whom they enrolled.

## IDENTITY, HOME AND ABROAD

What we have seen so far has been the emergence of several distance learning institutions, each with distinct style and function, each growing within its own market. The remainder of our history veers towards collaboration and a growing sense of unity within a national pattern of distance education. The earliest Director of Extramural Studies outlined a national system when in 1968 he described all three main institutions, NZCS, NZTCI and his own within one account (Freyberg, 1970). Yet the DE institutions still largely ignored each other, going into their separate professional associations, as NZCS did with Australian correspondence schools, and as Massey University did in 1972 when it shared in founding ASPESA, a regional grouping of post-secondary distance education institutions. Both NZTCI and Massey (and other tertiary institutions) in the late 1960s established links with United Kingdom Open University and its coterie of institutions.

The tension between identifying one's sectoral interests, school with school, university with university, and identifying as essentially New Zealand distance learning institutions, was partly resolved in 1975. The then Director-General of Education asked the three major institutions to work together and adopt a common brief to describe themselves as 'New Zealand distance education' for a Commonwealth Conference on Learning and Teaching in Wellington. Although we presented, by present standards, a limited picture, it established for us a sense of comprehensive system, that was re-iterated on other occasions, for example at tenth anniversary celebrations of both the Open University in 1979 and ASPESA in 1983 (Bewley, 1981, 1984).

The next step, again triggered in 1975 by the Director-General of Education was to invite a committee of various parties from various

agencies, under the Director of the National Council of Adult Education, to review the state of 'learning at a distance in New Zealand'. While beneficial to the participants, its public impact was largely dissipated by its delayed publication, more than five years later (Department of Education, 1980). It brought together, however, a group who largely shared the direction of distance education. After the committee ceased meeting in 1977, the principals of NZCS and NZTCI and the Director of CUES made a practice of termly meetings which continued until DEANZ made such meetings no longer necessary.

Despite fresh awareness of one another, each major institution still continued along its own track with little reference to the others. NZCS developed a number of special services, for immigrants, for pregnant schoolgirls, and its adult role increased markedly. Its triumph was its own, custom-built (but under-estimated) School in Wellington. NZTCI found new paths to develop as new Industry Training Boards asked for new-style qualifications and as educational technology grew it presented the most technological of the providers with acute challenges. At Massey, the designation CUES marked a new level of recognition within the University. New policy ushered in third-level extramural courses (Owens, 1985, 68-71), at last asserting that an entire New Zealand degree could be taken extramurally (hitherto extramural students had been obliged to take at least that level of their majoring subject in face-to-face mode, despite long-standing examples from Australia and spectacular new ones from Open University). After a sharp skirmish or two, the step forward to full degrees in the distance mode on a par with any others was secured, leading in due time to the unquestioned advance to distance education masterates. CUES had considerable help in winning these struggles from EXMSS, a reorganised, vocal body that found it could exercise increasing political muscle (Tripe in Crump and Livingston, 1981; Williams and Williams, 1985; Barker, 1992). Many extramural students had by now achieved eminent positions and others were in the van of



significant new movements. Although EXMSS operated for a while within the general Massey Students' Association, conflicts of interest (and financial management) led it towards more autonomy and less-trammelled advocacy.

During the 1970s not only the scope and collaboration of the main provider agencies increased, but contributions were made by other colleagues in new ventures, some of them like the University of Otago's audioconferencing system, challenging the received methodologies (but often finding fellow enthusiasts within the established institutions).

## CONTRIBUTION ABROAD, COLLABORATION AT HOME

For a third time, the Director-General of Education challenged the three senior distance learning institutions to work as a national team by all becoming members of the national group of 'associated centres' for UNESCO's Asian-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID). Each approved 'centre' must have a reputation of innovative activity that could be shared with other centres throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The three institutions were able to present a concerted example of the contributions that distance education could make to national development. Two major APEID workshops were conducted within New Zealand: in November 1981, NZCS was the principal host with NZTCI and CUES as co-hosts for a workshop on Distance Learning Systems and Structures (UNESCO-APEID, 1981); in 1985 NZCS shared, with primary school colleagues, in a workshop on Reading and Language. At both, steps were taken to ensure the presence of some Pacific Island educators even if their countries had not yet joined APEID. Otherwise New Zealanders were resource persons in other countries, CUES and other academic staff for training distance education personnel (UNESCO-APEID, 1985) and the impact of communication technologies (Adams *et al.*, 1985), and both Massey and NZTCI staff for work with APEID's companion organisation, UNESCO's Higher Education Consortium.

The presence of New Zealand distance educators at international conferences became common again. NZCS attended correspondence school gatherings in Australia, Canada, Europe and had publications in *Epistola Didactika*. CUES (and EXMSS) members attended ASPESA and published in its books, and in *Distance Education*. CUES shared with the University of the South Pacific the organisation of ASPESA's 1981 Forum in Fiji (Crump and Livingston, 1981), with staff from NZTCI attending. Nevertheless, the sectoral split between primary-secondary and tertiary still affected the choice of professional conferences. In 1982, however, both the Principal, NZCS and Director, CUES attended an ICCE meeting in Canada (where the name was changed to ICDE) and assisted ASPESA's capture of the next meeting in 1985 for Melbourne. There we could expect an all-sector New Zealand presence.

Before that ICDE gathering took place, Massey celebrated the twentyfifth anniversary of extramural studies. Part of the celebration was a professional conference, officially under the aegis of ASPESA but organised by CUES with members of other New Zealand distance learning agencies invited. On the agenda was the speculative question whether New Zealand needed its own ASPESA 'chapter' (ASPESA-CUES, 1984). Debate was lively and its outcome was a resolution to create a Distance Education Association of New Zealand. Membership of DEANZ and of its executive group was to encompass students and support organisations, not just major providers (although they were expected to contribute substantial 'facilitation'). Some members, it was felt, would want to continue within other regional and international organisations. Reciprocally, ASPESA/ODLAA and ICDE members from overseas have attended DEANZ meetings, an opportunity for New Zealand distance educators to reflect in company with international colleagues on their purposes and practices - only a few can go to ICDE far afield or wait ten years or so until it next comes to Australasia. DEANZ, however, continues to be the collectivity where New Zealand issues are aired, and it has become a public voice for distance education.

Prior to the 1985 ICDE in Melbourne, the ICDE President met with the DEANZ Executive. Later, ICDE's Secretary-General visited New Zealand. EXMSS were recipients of an ICDE research grant. Between the two organisations cordial and lasting relations have been established that were further strengthened by DEANZ in 1994 hosting an ICDE regional conference.

Although NZDE activities in APEID waned in the later 1980s, new requests for assistance came from the Commonwealth of Learning. The spread of open and distance learning – especially where communications technology can increase its flexibility – had been seen as a worthwhile alternative to large-scale movement of Third World students away from their home cultures. Long study away leads to alienation: needy countries lose good intellectuals. New Zealand's experience of economical development of distance education at every educational level makes its contribution valuable (as does USP's experience of satellite teaching). The Pacific is represented at COL by a New Zealander with considerable experience at home, at USP and with PeaceSat.

**THE EYE OF THE 1990s** The 1980s and early 1990s saw radical changes throughout New Zealand education. As early as 1982 the National Council of Adult Education, a long-time supporter of distance learning, became a barely-surviving casualty of government financial stringency (Dakin, 1988, 128–134), disappearing altogether in 1990. The government policy document, *Tomorrow's Schools*, proposed radical challenges to schools like NZCS which had substantial adult enrolments. Tertiary education was reviewed against funding principles with limited scope for unorthodox provision or for groups of adult learners who are the targets of much distance education provision. New policies did, however, boost interest in imaginative management and communications technology, so have distance learning ventures particularly attractive to Government.

My brief does not go beyond the brink of the 1990s, but 1990 was a relatively high point in New Zealand distance education, in the trust

placed in it by the New Zealand public and by international agencies, and in the self-confidence it has from recognising through DEANZ the essential harmony among the diverse activities that constitute New Zealand distance education.

**FINALLY A PATTERN?** Is there a pattern, a set of characteristics, that recurs? The principal agencies came into being not through the creative imagination of an individual, nor through the ideological thrust of a political party, nor even, until recently through sharp sensitivity to profit in the open market. They arose from recognition of learners struggling in situations for which distance learning could cater, and nagging pressure – public and political because education was almost entirely state-driven – for some provision to be made. Their inauguration and development never had the flamboyance (nor the air of technological advance) of the campaign in Britain for its University of the Air/Open University; nor were they accorded substantial initial investment like the massive recent ventures of some Asian countries. In its attention to learners, flexibility about entrance and quiet innovations in teaching style, New Zealand distance education has evolved its own worthwhile and well-respected national character.

#### NOTES

1. This decision to omit names was not taken lightly nor without regret. For example, we know the debt that DEANZ owes to Ormond Tate. But to analyse and honour contributions such as his (there are many others, colleagues and friends) would need book-length to do them justice. Only Butcher, first Principal, NZCS, and later President of ICCE, is named.
2. Some examples of such celebratory publications are listed in the bibliography. For NZCS, two booklets were published for the twenty-fifth and fiftieth anniversaries (NZCS, 1947; 1972); there is also another for the sixtieth year. CSPA asked its sometime chairman, ex-MP Allan Dick, to compile its sixtieth anniversary booklet (Dick, 1986). NZTCI published a history,

1946-1980, which was largely the work of Col. S.B. Wallace, with help perhaps from T. Houghton's researches (NZTCL, 1982). Dr John Owens, historian and member of the first extramural teaching team from 1960 on, wrote about the first twenty-five years of Massey University's extramural programme (Owens, 1985). EXMSS, which has a worldwide reputation among distance learning student organisations has explained its role in studies by Williams and Williams, 1985 and more recently by Barker, 1992 (and by Tripe in Crump and Livingston, 1981). ASPESA marked its tenth year with Kevin Smith's 1984 compilation. No doubt there are others of this genre already published or to come.

3. If the range of DE is so diverse however, should we be asking what, in this array of agencies, does 'distance education' mean? Are 'distance teaching' or 'distance learning' (or similar noun phrases with 'open' for 'distance') synonyms or distinctively different? Our professional association DEANZ uses 'distance education' in its title. Membership is available to whoever has an interest in that activity however they may perceive its meaning and their own role within it. DEANZ seeks its members widely: teachers, learners, their families, administrators, technologists, employers, etc, etc... To define too rigidly would be to exclude. To define at all is beset with issues (Keegan, 1990, 18-47). Our principal agencies prefix 'education' (or 'studies' or 'learning', etc) with 'correspondence', 'extramural', 'open', 'continuing' and other descriptors. 'Education' is a word already brimming over with meanings; if we add these quasi-synonymous other terms - that by their metaphors extend, not narrow, education's meanings - we must have an inclusive not a restrictive meaning for 'distance education'. Minimally, 'distance education' may mean only instructional material - via print, voice, video, electronic display, or whatever medium - from which, without the live presence and proximity of a teacher, learning can be expected to occur. In our common practice, however, much more in organisation, support and criteria of quality is expected. We can respect attempts by Keegan 1990

(and others whom he cites) to 'define' DE but not feel bound by every attribute he requires. Then we can accept the extraordinary variety of 'distance education' when it reaches out to do all, and more, that face-to-face education undertakes. It forms a comprehensive counterpart to lifelong learning, before, through and after school, formal and non-formal, vocational and non-vocational, public and private.

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