Introduction

Welcome to the SIT Staff Research Report for 2009/10. The report showcases a wide range of research projects and performances, and highlights the diversity of research interests among our staff. This has been an exciting and productive period for research at SIT. The Institute has a strong commitment to supporting and growing research activity. This is important in ensuring that teaching and learning on higher level qualifications are informed by the latest research and scholarship. Building upon the achievements and experience of recent years, the focus has been on developing increased research capacity and experience. The SIT Research Fund, a contestable fund to support staff carrying out research, was expanded from 2009 to 2010, and has been heavily utilised. The Research Centres in Massage Therapy and Environmental Management have helped focus activity, and the appointment of Dr Sally Bodkin-Allen as Research Manager in 2010 has further strengthened support for research. SIT aims to play an increasingly central role in regional research outputs. As the preeminent vocational tertiary Institute in southern New Zealand, SIT is an important part of the local and regional community. Growing regional research capacity and establishing collaborations in business, community and environmental management sectors is an important future focus for the SIT research team.

Opportunities for collaboration with other organisations, nationally and internationally, will also continue to develop in the future. The diverse nature of projects highlighted in this report reflects the different areas of interest and expertise of staff, inspired by their curiosity and creativity. Some have sought to analyse problems and to find solutions, including innovative designs in the field of audio technology, the testing and assessment of the quality of the wetland environment, and an assessment of the success of community involvement. Others have expressed their creative interests and talents in works of art, design or performance. This includes holding exhibitions of paintings, drawings, photographs and sculpture, producing and directing plays and shows, musical compositions, and designing costumes for theatrical performances. Fascinating research projects have been carried out into the link between music and national identity, and also into important areas of health and exercise, and elite sports performance. As is appropriate for a vocational teaching Institute, there is a particular focus on research that informs and improves teaching and learning practice. This is an important part of the ongoing work on assessment and clinical learning in the School of Nursing, and on student engagement in learning. Important work has been carried out to foster massage therapy research and education in New Zealand, and to facilitate the development of national and international research networks in this area. A number of staff members have been involved in important collaborative research, including work on the remediation of tone deafness among early childhood teachers, and internationally significant research into the origin and composition of early British ceramics.

I hope you enjoy reading about the varied research activity at SIT over the last eighteen months, and I look forward to the continued development of research capacity and performance into the future.

Penny Simmonds
Chief Executive Officer
Southern Institute of Technology

School of Music
Faculty of New Media, Arts and Business

‘Welcome Home’: music, rugby, and local identity

In a separate project, Sally examined the creation of a sense of place/locality as manifested through the music played at rugby games. This project proved to be an engrossing voyage of discovery, she says, with a particular focus on the South’s connections between bagpipes and rugby. It revealed the potential to be explored further – especially now with the Ranfurly Shield being in Southland, and the role of bagpipes in that! Investigations revealed historical connections between bagpipes and Southland rugby, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s when Southland pipe bands used to parade through the streets of Invercargill whenever Southland and Otago played each other. This connection got somewhat lost when rugby became professionalised during the 1990s, and the music at rugby games has been dominated by pop songs, but the pipe bands are becoming prevalent at games again. Her research is the subject of a chapter in the book Situation Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand, edited by Tony Mitchell and Glenda Kearn, to be published in 2010, by Pearson Education NZ.

Media and consists largely of songs written expressly for this series. Sally wanted to know what kind of national identity was being constructed in this shared repertoire of songs. The findings of the research suggest that the songs in the Kiwi Kidsongs series do reflect a sense of national identity through allusions to place, food, climate, special occasions and particular aspects of New Zealand life and culture. The songs also reflect a certain level of cultural diversity, reflecting Māori, Pacific, colonial and postcolonial roots. She notes, however, that the collection is absent of any recognition of Asian cultures in New Zealand.

Sally presented her research in April 2009 at ‘Many Voices: New Zealand Music and National Identity’ Conference in Dunedin, and her findings will be published in the peer-reviewed conference proceedings.

Continuing her interest in rock performance, in December 2009 Sally collaborated in staging her musical ‘What Santa Does Other Days of the Year’. She rearranged her original score to make it suitable for a rock band, and Mad Mother Productions produced it at Centrestage Theatre in Invercargill, with a total of seven performances. It was a collaborative project with other SIT staff. Emma Cathcart, School of Fashion created the costumes, Aaron Ives, School of Visual Arts and Design, designed the set and was responsible for graphic design.

Remediating tone deafness among early childhood teachers

Sally’s current research draws on her interests in music in education and the vital role that music can play in developing children’s sense of identity. She is working with Dr Nicola Siwan, from the Psychological Medicine Department at the School of Medicine at Otago University, analysing how self-identification of tone deafness among early childhood education teachers can be remediated. Sally became aware of the many teachers who self-identify as tone deaf during her PhD study, and has long wanted to follow it up with more research. The research project is supported...
by a grant of $30,000 through the Otago Medical School and involves the implementation of two different interventions, one using the techniques of Positive Psychology, the other based on group singing. Sally and Dr Swain are writing the programmes, which are then put into practice in group workshops with early childhood teachers from around Invercargill who have volunteered to take part in the study. Research is well underway with the funds from the grant being used to employ a past graduate of the Bachelor of Contemporary Music degree at SIT as a research assistant, gathering the data which will then be analysed by Sally and Dr Swain. ‘It is just wonderful to have someone else involved in the time consuming process of carrying out the data collection’, says Sally. She and Dr Swain are intending to present the preliminary findings at an education conference in Hawaii in early 2011.

Dr Jerry Hoffman
Learning Support Faculty of New Media, Arts and Business
Researching learning and teaching: a case study in student engagement
How do tertiary institutes influence student engagement in learning? Dr Jerry Hoffman has carried out research into this important aspect of teaching practice.
With a Master of Education from Johnson State College in Vermont, and a PhD in Education from the University of Otago, Jerry’s research interests focus on teaching and learning practice. In 2000 and 2010 he was involved in a national project to investigate student engagement in a range of tertiary environments. The Southern Institute of Technology was one of nine participating tertiary institutes, in a project funded through the Ministry of Education’s Teaching and Learning Research Initiative. The aim of the research was to establish factors, both on and off campus, that influence student engagement in learning.
To gather the relevant data, Jerry surveyed Southern Institute of Technology students enrolled in a subject for the first time, and followed this up with a number of interviews. He was seeking information, among other things, on their levels of motivation, interactions with teaching staff, and the amount of time they spent on campus. There were also questions relating to off-campus commitments, such as paid work or childcare, which could influence their levels of engagement in learning. Jerry also surveyed teaching staff, who were encouraged to comment on what they perceived to be the factors influencing student learning and the priorities they gave to addressing student engagement through their teaching. Both students and tutors were asked to reflect on the relational interactions between teachers and learners in the classroom, and within the wider institution.
Jerry observes that, while the response rate to the surveys was relatively low, the data provided useful ‘food for thought’ on the state of learning engagement within SIT. A clear picture emerged of the importance of competent teaching in promoting student engagement. Students also identified constructive feedback from tutors as a crucial factor in improving their learning, more so than the process of assigning a grade.
‘The views of students and teaching staff on the relative importance of factors affecting engagement were remarkably similar’, Jerry says. ‘These included making the subject interesting, tutors being approachable, and students and teaching staff having a shared responsibility for enhancing student engagement’. Another important factor was the extent to which activities in the classroom encouraged collaboration and cooperation among students. This was particularly important for students with family responsibilities or who were in part-time employment and therefore spent little time actually on campus. It was also an issue for students enrolled in courses taught online. ‘It is important that on-line learning environments enable students to connect with each other to create a sense of a community of learners.’
Jerry has used the results of his research to formulate a number of recommendations to continue to enhance student engagement at SIT. When finalised, the findings of the research from the nine participating institutions will be incorporated into a published report.
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Dr Jo Smith
New Zealand Massage Therapy Research Centre Faculty of Health, Humanities and Computing
What factors encourage clients to choose massage therapy as a treatment option on an ongoing basis?
According to Dr Jo Smith, the use of massage therapy is widespread and growing, but little is known about why consumers choose to use massage therapy, in most cases at their own expense. Jo, Programme Manager for the Bachelor of Therapeutic and Sports Massage, has been researching the characteristics and outcomes of the therapeutic massage encounter.
Jo has a background in health science and physiotherapy, and has recently completed her Doctorate at the University of Otago on massage therapy services for health needs. Her investigation into the characteristics of repeat users of massage therapy used telephone focus groups and specifically designed questionnaires, involving a considerable number of qualified massage therapists and their clients. She found that most clients sought massage therapy as a complementary or alternative treatment to conventional medicine, and that they were either self-motivated or encouraged by friends or family to seek treatment. Massage therapy was only occasionally recommended as a treatment by general practitioners, and was only rarely covered by medical insurance.
Those opting for massage therapy tended to take a proactive approach to managing their own health. They sought therapy for management and prevention of musculoskeletal conditions like neck and back pain, and for stress management and relaxation. The direct effects of massage therapy were mostly of short-term duration, however consumers also identified long-term benefits including a sense of support and enablement, and an increase in general wellness.
Jo also investigated the practice patterns of qualified massage therapy practitioners. A national survey of 66 massage therapists revealed a picture of the average practitioner, as female, New Zealand-European, with a Diploma in Massage Therapy. The majority of therapists practised solo, but used a wide and active referral network. They typically used a combination of therapeutic, remedial, deep tissue, relaxation and neuromuscular therapies, and sports massage techniques. As a result of her research, Jo describes ‘the essence of massage therapy’ as ‘a client-centred partnership approach to massage care, modulated by comfort, contact, connection and caring.’
The research had given a new insight into the massage therapy encounter, highlighting important elements of the therapeutic relationship. Jo presented her findings at the Highlighting Massage Therapy in Complementary and Integrative Medicine Research Conference in Seattle, USA, in May 2010. Her research has also formed the basis of articles published in Complementary Therapies in Medicine and the SIT Journal of Applied Research during 2009, and was also presented at the Massage New Zealand Conference in Invercargill in May 2009.

New Zealand Massage Therapy Research Centre
New Zealand’s first centre for research into massage therapy was established at SIT in 2009. It seeks to foster massage therapy research and education in New Zealand, and facilitates the development of national and international research networks.
The close association between the Research Centre and the Bachelor of Therapeutic and Sports Massage programme nurtures and informs research projects, and encourages students to participate in research as part of their final year of study. According to Jo, the degree programme and the Research Centre have proved to be ‘a vehicle for change’, raising academic and professional awareness of the role and value of research for the development of massage therapy practice.

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Dr Ross Ramsay

Centre for Research Excellence in Environmental Management
Faculty of Health, Humanities & Computing

On the trail of early English ceramics

Dr Ross Ramsay of the School of Environmental Management, and Gael Ramsay of the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, have analysed the chemical composition of some 60 pieces of eighteenth-century ceramics produced by the Bow Porcelain Manufactory in the United Kingdom. Their research reveals the historical importance of these beautiful pieces.

Ross has wide research interests in the fields of environmental science, mineral resources and chemistry, and in eighteenth century history and the decorative arts. He gained his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science (Hons) at the University of Auckland, and his PhD at the University of New England, where he researched the geological evolution of the Solomon Islands. During his career he has worked in industry, the government sector and academia. Prior to coming to Invercargill he was in the School of Environmental Sciences, Deakin University, in Melbourne. He teaches on the Environmental Management programmes at Southern Institute of Technology.

Ross has been working with his wife, Gael, to illuminate the production attributes and glaze ‘recipes’ of a number of mid-eighteenth century English porcelains. They have identified a group of hitherto misunderstood porcelains, produced by the Bow Porcelain Manufactory from the early to mid 1740s. Their research reveals this ceramic group to be one of England’s most important wares, technically, compositionally and artistically. "The group can best be regarded as England’s mid-eighteenth century answer to Meissen, rather than Chelsea as has been believed for many years," Ross explains. "Until now there have been numerous attempts to give these porcelains away to the Italians and even the Scots!"

Ross was recently awarded research grants by Southern Institute of Technology and the American Ceramic Circle to continue his research. During December 2009 sampling was undertaken of items of Bow porcelain held at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the Bristol Art Gallery and Museum, the Plymouth Art Gallery and Museum, and in numerous private collections in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Analytical work is now in progress, in collaboration with the Scanning Electron Microscope Unit at the University of Otago’s School of Anatomy.

Ross is also working with Ken Sutton, in the School of Computing, to detail the glaze compositions used at Bow. The results of their research will be published in the Journal of Historical Archaeology. In June 2009, Ross published an article on the Bow Porcelain Manufactory in the Southern Institute of Technology Journal of Applied Research.
Continued...

South Island Kokako Recovery Programme

Could the South Island Kokako, thought to be extinct, still be living in remote parts of Fiordland? Ross says that the kokako could still exist in parts of the South Island, according to Ross. ‘Up until now there have been numerous reports of sightings, but nothing concrete.’ By analysing Glenn’s recording, a number of independent experts have been able to compare the harmonics of the call with calls of other birds, and their advice to date is that the recordings are indeed likely to be the call of the South Island Kokako. Comparable work has been undertaken by Rhys Buckingham and his research group. The current research priority for Ross and Glenn is obtaining photographic or film evidence of the bird in its home environment.

New Zealand’s Inaugural Furniture History Symposium and Exhibition

October 2010 will see a first for New Zealand, when the Southland Museum and Art Gallery hosts an international symposium and exhibition on the history and tradition of early furniture and furnishings in this country. Ross and Gael are organising the event, which has attracted a wide range of international presenters. ‘There is a growing appreciation of the value and importance of New Zealand’s heritage furniture’, Ross says.

The exhibition will showcase a wide variety of early furniture and furnishings, with significant items provided on loan from private collectors and public institutions in New Zealand and overseas. Topics to be addressed at the symposium include the construction, conservation and curation of furniture, international influences on furniture design, the history of early interiors in both New Zealand and Australia, and the work of important individual cabinet makers and designers.

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Monitoring water quality in the Awarua Wetland

The Awarua Wetland was the first in the world to be recognised under the 1971 Ramsar Convention’s list of Wetlands of International Importance. It is home to many threatened species endemic to New Zealand, including fish, birds, insects and plants. In recent years there have been rapid changes in land use across the wider catchment, including a significant increase in the number of dairy farms. There is a concern that the long-term viability of the unique Awarua habitat could be threatened by increased levels of nutrients and sediment entering the waterways that flow into the wetland. The behaviour of nutrients in the waterway is more complex, she says. Testing during 2009 showed the levels of nutrients to be fluctuating between the different test sites along the creek, and these fluctuations did not appear to be linked to weather conditions. ‘It certainly warrants further investigation and analysis.’

A pilot project in 2009 established a baseline against which further change could be measured. The pilot project involved regular collection and analysis of water samples at four sites along the Armstrong Creek. This creek flows through lowlying pastoral land, before joining the Waipuna Creek and flowing into the wetland. The monitoring sites were chosen in consultation with water management staff at the regional council, Environment Southland, and with the Waipuna Landcare Group, a local community group working to conserve the wetland. Water samples were tested for a range of key physical, chemical and biological indicators, including temperature, visual clarity, and levels of dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorous and the bacteria E. coli.

The test results show that water quality in the creek is greatly affected by rainfall and an associated increase in runoff from farmland. Suspended sediment levels rise dramatically after periods of heavy rain, as do faecal contamination rates. As Nessa O’Sullivan explains, ‘much of this ultimately ends up in the wetland. This can alter conditions in the wetland ecosystem, impacting negatively on flora and fauna.’ The levels of nitrogen and phosphorous in test results measure nutrient runoff into the waterway. ‘The behaviour of nutrients in the waterway is more complex’, Erine says. Testing during 2009 showed the levels of nutrients to be fluctuating between the different test sites along the creek, and these fluctuations did not appear to be linked to weather conditions. ‘It certainly warrants further investigation and analysis.’

2010 has seen the scope of the monitoring project expand considerably. Long-term water quality testing will continue, but it will also be supported by data collected from biomonitoring of macroinvertebrates, and a survey of aquatic and riparian plants at each of the sites. Macroinvertebrates – insects and other aquatic invertebrates big enough to be seen by the naked eye – are useful bio-indicators for monitoring the ecological condition of freshwater environments. ‘While water sampling for chemicals provides a snapshot of what is happening at the time of collection’, Erine van Niekerk explains, ‘studying macroinvertebrates, as well as monitoring the plants that they feed on, allows us to look at the long-term health of organisms in the waterway.’ Longer-term monitoring of these factors provides a picture of seasonal and annual variations and long-term trends. ‘Over the five years of the study, we hope to establish the relationship between all three components: water quality, macroinvertebrates and aquatic plants,’ Erine says.

Findings from the research carried out in 2009 were reported to Environment Southland and the Waipuna Landcare Group. Results were also shared with the owners of properties adjacent to the creek. An analysis of the research was presented at a research seminar at the Southern Institute of Technology in March 2010, and published in the Department of Conservation newsletter, ‘Bog Paper’, in June 2010.

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Anna Palliser

Centre for Research Excellence in Environmental Management
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Natural resource management in local hands?

Anna Palliser is researching how local communities and government agencies are sharing responsibility for conservation and resource management. She recently spent time working with two local community groups at Akaroa Harbour, near Christchurch. She found that power-sharing was less satisfying for groups with a deep local ecological knowledge, who challenged agency governance policy directions.

Anna holds a Master of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development degree from University College of Wales, Trinity College Carmarthen. She moved to New Zealand three years ago, and teaches in the Environmental Management degree programme. Her work at Akaroa forms part of the research for her PhD at the University of Otago’s Department of Tourism. ‘My PhD research examines how communities are looking after their natural resources,’ she says. ‘I am very interested in how local people come together to manage local natural resources, sharing their different knowledge and approaches to managing natural resources.’

The latest international research on sustainability and ecological resilience has found that local community participation in natural resource and conservation management is imperative for moving toward sustainability outcomes. While in principle this appears self-evident, it is not a simple process. Successful models depend on just how much power local communities actually have in decision-making about natural resource management, and whether they have adequate resources to support their efforts. ‘Do all sections of a local community have equal power in this?’ asks Anna. ‘How do they work with representatives from government agencies and local councils, and how do they deal with local conflicts of interest?’

Her research at Akaroa examines the impact of these issues on the ground.

Anna’s research involved two different community groups, each working with government agencies to achieve resource management and conservation outcomes. The first group is helping restore native bush habitat north of Akaroa township. It focuses on eradicating predators and replanting native vegetation. Members of the group are mostly recent arrivals in the area, who wanted to make a contribution to improving their newly adopted local environment. The second group, the Akaroa Harbour Taupure Management Committee, manages the customary fishing area, or taupure, of the Akaroa Harbour. This committee is made up of local people, both Maori and non-Maori, who earn their livings from the harbour. Many have lived in the same remote rural area for seven or eight generations.

Akaroa Harbour is heavily used by commercial and recreational fishers, aquariculturists and boaters. It is also very popular with wildlife- watching tourism operators. There is a great deal of pressure on harbour resources from over-fishing and harbour pollution from sewage and stormwater run-off. Anna wanted to identify the different approaches of these two groups toward these problems, and how these approaches have contributed to the degree of satisfaction locals have in undertaking voluntary natural resource management. ‘I was investigating ecological knowledge in the community, and how this is learned, shared, valued and used in natural resource management.’ She also elicited people’s perceptions about their local ecosystems, and local natural resource management processes. ‘I spent extended periods of time in the area, and attempted to embed myself into the local communities, Anna explains. ‘I attended meetings, socialised locally, and got involved in both the projects.’ She also interviewed fishermen and farmers, and representatives from government agencies, conservation groups and nature tourism operators.

Both groups demonstrated the passion and enthusiasm local people can bring to natural resource management, however Anna found significant differences in how satisfied they were with their experiences of participating in local resource management. ‘The first group – working on pest eradication and replanting – are mostly newcomers to the area. They were willing to learn from government agencies and, as they were carrying out work that the Department of Conservation and others wanted done anyway, they found it easy to get along with agency representatives.’

The taupure committee, by contrast, includes people who have lived and worked in the area for many generations. Their livelihoods depend on the long-term sustainability of natural resources in Akaroa Harbour. They have an intimate knowledge of natural local resources and ecology, but found that their knowledge, and their goals for the area, were not necessarily accepted by government agencies. Anna has recorded their dissatisfaction with the degree of actual power-sharing that they were offered. ‘Committee members expressed quite a lot of frustration over the limited role they had, to make recommendations on issues of fish take. They wanted more power to affect the quality of the harbour water, which many thought could be having a detrimental affect on the fish stocks. They were willing to question local government agencies, pushing for higher standards of environmental quality and a bigger role in decision-making. This made it more challenging to maintain good working relationships.’

Anna’s research highlights an unequal balance of power between local groups and agencies, and the tensions and potential conflicts this can create. It suggests changes needed in order to create satisfying outcomes for groups who have both a long-term, strong investment in local natural resources, and a deep knowledge of local ecosystem processes.

Anna stresses the importance of the outcomes of local community resource management projects. ‘What local people do, all over the world, and how they work together to learn more about and to look after their local ecosystems, adds up to a global impact on global ecosystems,’ she says. Anna presented her research at a dissemination hui at the Hokonui Runanga in Gore in March 2010 and has plans for a published paper.

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Shakespearian actors Hamish McGregor, Taylor Barrett and Wade Millar, with director Fiona Forrest in front (photograph by Grace Images).

theatre, slapstick and audience participation. The production proved a popular choice, attracting large numbers of school children and families.

The key areas of research included story and physical theatre. The collaborative project included the production of the play, which marked the tenth anniversary of Shakespeare in the Park. Performances were held in Queens Park, Invercargill, during February 2010.

The star cast of Taylor Barrett, Hamish McGregor and Wade Millar were supported by stage manager Jason McGregor and Wade Millar were well-known in Southland. Performances were held in Queens Park, Invercargill, during February 2010.

The star cast of Taylor Barrett, Hamish McGregor and Wade Millar were supported by stage manager Jason Fraser and producer Angela Neville. A minimal set – a lone red leather cage and a large painted screen of a cage and a large painted screen of a paradise business.

Fiona has drawn on the experience of her research on the processes of creative performance for outdoors. This included an analysis of performance technique in song, vocal rhymes, dance, mime and physical theatre, along with the creation of a wide range of colourful props and costumes. She carried out interviews with professional theatre directors with experience of directing outdoor arts entertainment. Audiences, too, have been given a part in the project. ‘Members of the audience were asked to complete a questionnaire about their experience of the play’, Fiona explains. The cast created a forum at the end of each show, allowing them to meet and greet with the audience, and this became a vital element of the experience for everyone involved.

The production was very successful, attracting far larger audiences than anticipated. Groups of high school students who attended opening night returned to see the play again, bringing along their families and friends. Fiona describes the joy and the challenges of performing throughout the summer, ‘amongst the bees, trees, dogs on their walks, and four resident ducks, in the beauty of Queens Park’. Aeroplanes frequently flew overhead, which the actors spontaneously and artistically utilised for sound effects. ‘It was an honour to work collaboratively with Taylor, Hamish and Wade in creating this show for the tenth anniversary of Shakespeare in the Park’, she says. ‘On a personal note, it made me very proud to stage this fine piece in Queens Park, where I was employed as a 17-year-old, designing floral displays and learning the art of plant propagation!’

The Twits

In association with Cat’s Pyjamas Theatre and Southern Institute of Technology, Fiona successfully directed The Twits by Roald Dahl, at the Invercargill Working Men’s Club for the Southland Festival of the Arts 2010. The cast included graduates and current students of the SIT Sir Anthony Hopkins School of Dramatic Arts, with Peti Seiuli as Mr Twit, and Hollie Henderson as Mrs Twit.

Roald Dahl created some unsavoury characters in his time, but few can compare with the nosiness of Mr and Mrs Twit. Fiona laughs. The show was a delightful mix of singing, dancing, puppetry skills. Taylor Barrett, 17 years old, displayed a natural aptitude for comedy and tragedy, producing compelling performances throughout the season. ‘He is an exciting force to look out for’, says Fiona.

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Peter Skerrett
School of Music
Faculty of New Media, Arts and Business
Musical inspiration
A need for high quality, professionally arranged charts for contemporary music inspired Peter Skerrett and his colleagues to produce their own arrangements. Peter is working with Asher Skerrett and Aaron Ives on original arrangements of 300 popular songs, for use by students in the Bachelor of Contemporary Music programme.

A working musician for much of his life, Peter describes himself as a bass player. He has given thousands of performances, touring in New Zealand and overseas. He currently plays with Ppeework, a group which features a diverse range of instruments, including bagpipes, bass, drums, guitar, keyboards and vocals, supported by a mix of modern and Highland dancers. The blend of rock, Polynesian and Celtic music is very well received, not only in New Zealand, but also in faraway places like Canada and Germany. There is also the cold gig with Southerns Dixie, a Dixieland jazz band. Recent performances include playing bass as part of the Southerns backing band at the Gore Gold Guitars, an annual event. Peter has had extensive experience in musical directing and also likes to create his own arrangements of popular songs.

Peter Skerrett with Moana Maniapoto at the Silver Scroll Awards, Christchurch 2009.

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Now in the third year of a four-year project, they have completed full arrangements for 130 songs, some of which have already been incorporated into the curriculum. These include recent songs, along with classic works by the Beatles, Al Jarreau, Michael Jackson, Elvis Presley and Burt Bacharach. ‘At the outset, some of the younger students ask why they have to learn to play instrument arrangements written before they were born’, says Peter. ‘Once they start learning the old songs, they really begin to appreciate them.’ He emphasises the value of access to these arrangements as part of their teaching practice.

‘The first question I ask about any arrangement is: what can we learn from it? ’ Peter adds.

A number of the completed arrangements have been trialled in the Invercargill Musical Theatre production of Jim Back Tight, the Second Time Around, during November and December 2009. When all the arrangements have been completed, they will be published in the form of a book of individual and ensemble charts for all instruments used in the degree programme. The book is also likely to have wide application, such as for use in high schools.

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For Fiona Forrest, the project was a valuable experience, and one that has helped her to develop as a researcher. ‘I have been able to work closely with a number of people on this project, and to develop my research skills and knowledge. It has also been a great opportunity to work with a number of talented and creative people, and to see the fruits of our labour in the final product.’

Fiona Forrest
Research Report 2009/2010

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Dramatic Arts
Sir Anthony Hopkins School of
Technology, Fiona successfully
produced exquisite costumes for
SIT graduate fashion designer,
Shannon Thomson, of Grace
Images, successfully captured
the essence of the performance
season through her lens. The set
design created specifically for
the production included a caravan,
a cage and a large painted screen of
a South African scene, professionally
produced by Bryant Williams. Out
Front Design, Winton. There is
no denying that this production of
The Twits provided Southland audience
with experience of directing outdoor
theatre, along with the creation of
a wide range of colourful props and
costumes. She carried out interviews
with professional theatre directors
with experience of directing outdoor
arts entertainment. Audiences, too,
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‘Members of the audience were
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art of plant propagation!’

Continued...
reflect critically on related theory performance contexts. Candidates with a range of musical theatre is designed to show familiarity of Trinity Guildhall of London, examination, run under the auspices of the Southern Institute of Technology Dramatic Arts and Certificate of Music courses. A Trinity Guildhall of London examiner assessed the performance, at Centre Stage Theatre in Invercargill, during August and September 2009. Helen also gave an oral presentation before the examiner, describing and discussing the work. This was followed by a viva voce component, designed to test her knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of the genre, including performance techniques, space and timing, sensitivity to the material, and knowledge of relevant literature.

The real challenges and work in presenting for this examination lay in having sole responsibility for tutoring and directing all three components of the show – singing, drama and dance – while developing and extending good technique and best practice from all cast members, many of whom had not worked in this genre before. Helen is currently working on the second section of the qualification, which involves an analysis of the practice of staging the musical.

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‘Fings Ain’t Wot They Used T’be: the art of musical direction

Helen Williamson-Manson staged and directed the musical at Centre Stage Theatre in Invercargill in August and September 2009. Analysis of the practical process of direction forms the subject of her fellowship in musical theatre. Helen’s artistic career has embraced soloist singing, dance, speech and drama since childhood. Time spent living in the north of Scotland also saw her singing as a soloist at Mods (Gaelic language festivals) at both regional and national levels. She has had a long-standing career in education, teaching across all areas in the school system. She is currently teaching on the Bachelor of Applied Media Arts (Dramatic Arts) programme and in the English Language Department. She continues to perform professionally in musical entertainment and the spoken word.

As part of her research, Helen undertook the practical component for a Fellowship in Musical Theatre Directing. This examination, run under the auspices of Trinity Guildhall of London, is designed to show familiarity with a range of musical theatre performance contexts. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to reflect critically on related theory and practice, and to analyse their own directing work as well as the work of others. This experience must be brought into the planning, preparation and staging of a particular musical theatre show. Throughout, candidates must be able to integrate and demonstrate the teaching and directing of all disciplines of musical theatre.

‘Fings Ain’t Wot They Used T’be’, written by Lionel Bart (of Oliver! fame) was the chosen musical. Helen worked with a cast of students selected from the Faculty of Health, Humanities & Computing Faculty of Health, Humanities & Computing and the Dramatic Arts at the Sir Anthony Hopkins School of the Sir Anthony Hopkins School of Dramatic Arts. This was followed by a viva voce component, designed to test her knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of the genre, including performance techniques, space and timing, sensitivity to the material, and knowledge of relevant literature.

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Hennie Piennar and Bachelor of Sport and Recreation graduate Phil Surgenor have been researching the factors that influence physical activity amongst people in New Zealand with Type 2 Diabetes. Their findings challenge some of the general assumptions about attitudes toward regular exercise amongst those with this serious medical condition.

Hennie Piennar is an accredited Exercise Physiologist, who has been teaching in the Bachelor of Sport and Recreation programme since 2002. He was inspired to research in this area by his life-long passion to help improve people’s quality of life through the use of physical activity. Diabetes is a chronic condition resulting from the inability of the body to produce or use insulin, resulting in high levels of blood sugar. Type 2 Diabetes affects an estimated 200,000 people in New Zealand, and the numbers continue to grow. Regular exercise is known to assist in improving the health of people with Type 2 Diabetes, by lowering cholesterol, controlling blood sugar levels, and decreasing the likelihood of complications such as eye disease and blindness, heart disease and stroke. Nevertheless, international research has found that many of those with Type 2 Diabetes do not participate regularly in physical activity, and perceive exercise to be uncomfortable and unpleasantly stressful.

With the assistance of Phil Surgenor, an online survey of attitudes towards, and participation in, regular exercise was developed. Seventy-two people with Type 2 Diabetes responded to the survey, which was accessed through the Diabetes New Zealand website. Contrary to international findings, 85 percent of respondents were able to participate in regular physical activity. More than 80 percent had been active within the last month, and 21 percent had been regularly active over a period longer than six months. The results of the survey showed that many people with Type 2 Diabetes actually enjoy exercising, and believed that their health had benefited because of it. They managed to exercise regularly even in the face of many other demands on their time. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who indicated that they found physical activity enjoyable were more likely to be involved in regular physical activity.

This did not mean that they found participating in physical activity to be easy, with 68 percent agreeing that they found regular exercise to be a challenge. Difficulties included accessing facilities for regular physical activity regardless of weather conditions, and building opportunities for exercise into busy lifestyles. Another key finding of the research was that male respondents were more likely to participate in regular exercise, while female respondents, despite being aware of the benefits of exercise, were less likely to be currently regularly active, and more likely to indicate their intention to participate in physical exercise ‘within the next month’.

As a result of this research, a set of recommended strategies to support and improve exercise participation among people with Type 2 Diabetes was developed. Key strategies involve making exercise enjoyable, enabling access to physical activity regardless of weather conditions, varying the methods of exercise available to individuals, and prioritising regular physical activity over other daily demands. The simple acts of asking people to articulate perceived challenges to their participation in exercise, and to identify what they could do to eliminate these challenges, can help them to make the transition from intention to actual participation. Hennie presented the research findings and recommendations at the Physical Education New Zealand Conference in Taungra (2009), and is preparing the results for publication.

The research findings raise questions for future research. Hennie notes that one reason that the results were so different from most international studies could stem from the fact that the survey was hosted by an internet site dedicated to the health and well-being of people with diabetes. ‘The survey population may therefore already be motivated by a higher level of self care than the average person with Type 2 Diabetes in New Zealand’, he notes. He would like to carry out a larger, more complex survey which could eliminate this possible bias. The finding that female respondents were more likely to be contemplating, but not yet actively engaged in, regular physical activity, also raises questions for further research into the difference in attitudes toward physical education between men and women with Type 2 Diabetes.

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Physiological activity amongst people with Type 2 Diabetes

Table: Physical activity amongst people with Type 2 Diabetes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Male Respondents (n=36)</th>
<th>Female Respondents (n=36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyability</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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to be still working in the industry.

Research also has a major influence on the New Zealand Cycling Team, and Will says. He works with top New Zealand athletes to help them gain an edge in their training. ‘Even a small performance improvement can make a huge difference to their overall performance.’

Will became interested in the area of sports nutrition while studying for his Bachelor of Physical Education, Sports and Recreation programme. Will is a tutor in the Bachelor of Sport, Exercise and Recreation School of Sport, Exercise and Recreation at the University of Otago. His recent research has focused on improving the effectiveness of elite sports training. ‘Even a small performance gain can make a huge difference to an athlete’s competitiveness,’ Will says. He works with top New Zealand athletes in a range of sports, including members of the New Zealand Cycling Team, and internationally competitive rowers and synchronised swimmers. Will’s research also has a major influence on his teaching. ‘It is very important to be still working in the industry while teaching,’ he says. This ensures that he keeps up with the latest techniques and strategies in a field that is constantly changing. ‘It is important not to lose those hard skills,’ he says.

In his latest research project, Will wanted to determine what beverages athletes should be consuming after exercise. Athletes consume sports drinks, such as Gatorade and Up-and-Go, in order to rapidly replace energy levels after training. This helps their bodies recover after bouts of sustained physical activity. As Will explains, ‘the faster that glucose lost in exercise can be replaced, the faster that athletes can go back to training at optimal levels.’

His research compared the effectiveness of consuming sports drinks with a high glycaemic index, or glucose levels, against that of sports drinks with a low glycaemic index. Will worked with a group of 14 competitive swimmers, who were swimming 30 kilometres per week during training sessions. Following their regular two-hour training session, Will had the athletes consume one of three sports drinks with different glycaemic indices. He then monitored the glucose and insulin levels in their blood over the following two hours. He found that sports drinks with a high glycaemic index, such as Gatorade and Powerade, produced a high glucose spike immediately after consumption. These high glucose drinks therefore had a more beneficial impact on recovery in the short term, compared to drinks such as Susupen and Up-and-Go which have a low glycaemic index. There was a negative side to this, however. The athletes found that consuming large quantities of the high glucose sports beverages immediately after exercise often made them nauseous. Will found the consumption of a low glucose beverage an hour after exercise helped solve this problem, further aiding in post-exercise recovery.

As a result of his research, Will now recommends to the athletes he works with that they drink a sports beverage with a high glycaemic index immediately after any training session longer than one hour, and that they follow this an hour later by drinking a beverage with a low glycaemic index.

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Researcher measuring blood lactate levels in a young high-performance swimmer

Sally Dobbs

School of Nursing  Faculty of Health, Humanities & Computing

Failing to fail: assessing student nurses in clinical practice

International research demonstrates that assessors are reluctant to fail student nurses in clinical practice. There has been little research into this critical area of nursing education in New Zealand. Sally Dobbs, Academic and Relationship Leader, is asking the hard questions about the practical assessment of nursing students in this country.

Research carried out in the United Kingdom, Canada and other countries has found that nursing assessors avoid failing poorly performing students because of a lack of confidence or preparation, or because of a fear of litigation. Others were reluctant to award a fail because they were unwilling to ruin their students’ careers. The phenomenon of what Sally calls ‘failing to fail’ is not limited to nursing. It has also been reported as an issue in the fields of teacher training, social work and medicine.

In order to gain an understanding of the situation in New Zealand, Sally conducted in-depth interviews with eight clinical facilitators in one nursing school in New Zealand. She sought information on how the facilitators saw their role, and what factors determined whether a student received a pass or a fail in a clinical assessment. She also asked facilitators how they felt about awarding a fail grade.

The research indicated that assessors are reluctant to fail students on clinical placements. When it came to awarding pass or fail grades, they adhered strictly to the marking criteria laid down for assessment, placing a great deal of importance on clear documentation. ‘Some facilitators side-step the assessment,’ Sally reports, ‘treating it as formative, or waiting for someone else to perform the summative.’ She also found that the stage of training that students had reached was also a key factor in decision-making. Facilitators felt that students should not be failed in their final year. ‘They felt that any major problems should have been identified much earlier on, and it was not fair to fail students at the very end of their degree.’ Those who had undertaken further training on assessment had more confidence in failing a student.

The main reason behind the decision to fail a student was to safeguard the safety of patients. ‘Those assessors who failed a student felt bad, but believed that they were doing the right thing,’ says Sally. One issue raised by a number of facilitators was that of the amount of support for students who had been failed. She also found that facilitators viewed their role as one of supporting and educating as well as assessing students, providing an important link between theory and practice.

This research forms part of Sally’s doctoral studies in education through Massey University. Results will be published shortly, and Sally has already been able to put her findings to immediate use in the School of Nursing. Clinical assessment procedures have been modified, and facilitators are being actively encouraged to undertake further training in clinical teaching and assessment, in order to increase their self-confidence.

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Continued...
This research I have long wanted to do. Pam says, ‘I am concerned about the issue as it affects the health of our students.’ The results of their research will have practical implications for the way that information on the health effects of smoking is presented to students. In the longer term, Pam and Trish would like to investigate options for cessation interventions to support student nurses who wish to stop smoking.

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Andrea received nursing education at SIT in the 1980s. After 20 years in practice, working in hospitals in Australia, she returned to SIT as a tutor on the Bachelor of Nursing programme. ‘I came back to inspire nursing students to practice to the highest standards’, she explains.

By using new simulation technology, educators are able to offer student nurses ‘real life’ experiences in a safe, supportive environment. This helps ensure graduates have the confidence to deal with challenging clinical and surgical situations. There is international concern that student nurses are under-prepared when they enter the workforce. At SIT, student nurses spend a higher number of hours on average in clinical experience than other New Zealand and Australian degree programmes. ‘We place a great deal of emphasis on clinical access, but I believe we can be even better prepared’, Andrea declares. ‘The use of high quality simulation situations can add considerably to current teaching practice, and help ensure that graduate nurses are well prepared for what they’ll meet out there.’

Using life-like Laerdal mannequins and the associated computer programme VitalSim, Andrea can set up a whole clinical or emergency scenario, very much like what nurses can expect to encounter in the course of their work. She can also simulate uncommon situations that students need to be aware of, but which might only occur very rarely on the ward. A mannequin can be programmed to simulate a patient suffering from low blood pressure, or one presenting with a bleeding wound. ‘I can simulate an elderly person who has had a hip operation, and who is not recovering as expected’, explains Andrea. ‘Or I can programme the “baby” to cry fretfully and refuse to accept medication.’ These simulation patients have heartbeats and pulses and, with the help of the tutor, they can even answer a nurse’s questions about how they feel. The sense of realism produces genuine responses in students. ‘They are put into a disorientating dilemma, where they have to take action. Their adrenaline rates go up, and they have to learn to deal with their own responses as well as how to treat the patient.’

Teaching using simulation encourages reflexive learning. Scenarios can be recorded for later analysis of what went well and what could have been done better. ‘Using simulation teaching like this challenges students to analyse how they responded in a situation they had never been in before’, Andrea explains, adding that ‘I like the safety of it. It can really help graduating students to be more clinically-ready.’

An important part of her work involves encouraging other nurse educators to use the simulation technology in their teaching, and subsequently analysing their experiences. ‘Tutors themselves are enormously engaged in the simulated situation,’ she says. ‘It is a quite different experience from standing in a classroom’. By using action research methodology, she is able to analyse and influence the process of change in teaching methods and pedagogies. Andrea is able to use the results of her research to progressively refine teaching methodology. Her research also complements other work being done at SIT to further strengthen clinical learning and assessment.

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Julie Morton (right) and Debbie Watson (left)

JULY MORTON AND DEBBIE WATSON

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Faculty of Health, Humanitites & Computing

Best practice in clinical teaching and assessment

Clinical experience is a crucial component in learning competent and safe nursing practices. Julie Morton and Debbie Watson, tutors in the Bachelor of Nursing programme, are carrying out research into the clinical training and evaluation of undergraduate nursing students. They are working with stakeholders to ensure that teaching staff and their clinical colleagues share a common understanding of clinical learning and assessment.

‘Clinical learning’ refers to the practical component of nursing education, when student nurses spend time in hospitals, working alongside registered nurses. This is the point where theory becomes practice for nursing students. They are mentored by registered nursing staff, or preceptors, on hospital wards. Julie and Debbie are analysing the collaborative assessment process, as part of a larger study into the reliability and validity of clinical assessment of nursing students at SIT. The Nursing Council of New Zealand requires nurse educators to collaborate with practice nurses and students, to provide a tripartite model of clinical teaching, learning and assessment. ‘We see this as a positive model of assessment’, explains Julie, ‘but before we can fully implement it, we need to work with our clinical colleagues to gain a common understanding of clinical competence.’

Julie came to SIT from a role in primary care in the United Kingdom. She trained as a nurse at the Doncaster Royal Infirmary, and holds a Masters Degree in Nurse Practitioner Studies in Primary Care from Leeds Metropolitan University. Debbie gained her Bachelor of Nursing Degree from Chirstchurch Polytechnic, and has a postgraduate qualification in medical nursing from the University of Auckland. After working in both the mental health and general medical fields for ten years, Debbie was drawn to teaching. She has found her experience in the workforce useful when carrying out research that involves busy hospital staff. ‘Clinical staff members have the idea that academics don’t understand the “real world”, but actually I was just there’, she says. ‘I do understand that a staff nurse might not have 20 minutes available to talk to us!’

In 2009 the two tutors facilitated a series of in-depth focus groups with a range of regional nursing education stakeholders, including registered nurses, mental health workers, nursing teachers, and representatives from Presbyterian Support Services and the Public Health Organisation. The focus groups explored the ways in which nurse educators and preceptors perceived their roles as teachers, supporters and assessors of the progress of undergraduate students. Participants discussed their understandings of concepts such as ‘clinical learning’, ‘reflective practice’, ‘feedback’, and ‘clinical competence’, as applied to practical nursing education.

Analysis of the information gathered in the focus groups is currently underway. ‘One issue that has emerged is that students not only have trouble linking theory to practice, but also find it difficult to deal with situations where practice “on the ward” varies from what they have been taught in the classroom’, Julie reports. ‘It takes time for nursing preceptors to explain to students why it is they carry out specific procedures in particular ways, and it can be difficult to do this while working under pressure. Assessment is another area that preceptors find particularly challenging. It draws on the teaching skills of preceptors as well as on their clinical experience, and it also requires them to be as objective as possible in coming to conclusions on the ability of particular students. Not all nurses want the responsibility of mentoring students. ‘Good assessment is quite a specific skill’, Julie says, ‘and it is important to get it right. People’s lives are at stake.’

Their research complements the work being done by Sally Dobbs on the phenomenon of “failing to fail” in student clinical assessments. The results of the research will be used to further strengthen the nursing education programme at SIT. It is also likely to have implications for student clinical assessment and nursing education in New Zealand. ‘Many educational institutes, in New Zealand and internationally, are facing the same issues,’ observes Debbie.

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Tax reforms in the 2010 Budget

The 2010 Budget delivered the most comprehensive review of the New Zealand tax system in decades. Dan Hunt has been analysing the tax reform process. ‘There has never been a more critical time to stay up to date with the latest tax developments’, he says.

After graduating from Auckland University of Technology in 2005, Dan joined the ranks of the world’s largest accounting firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers. As his interest in business and education grew, he has become keenly involved in teaching, in the areas of business, accounting and taxation. A chartered accountant, Dan is a facilitator on the National Diploma in Business programme at the Southern Institute of Technology. He keeps strong ties with the practical world of accounting and taxation, and runs his own consulting business. ‘I feel it is important to keep my hand in the professional environment’, he says. ‘It helps bring real-world knowledge to students, and brings case studies and theories to life.’

Dan spent the first half of this year researching the changes to New Zealand’s tax system that were announced in the 2010 Budget. As part of this work, he has analysed the role and impact of the Tax Working Group, formed to advise the government on reforms. The Tax Working Group was formed in May 2009 by Victoria University in Wellington, in conjunction with the Treasury and the Inland Revenue Department. The Working Group, made up of tax practitioners, academics, business people and government officials, represented not only those whose job it is to examine and set tax policy, but also those who deal with its impacts, as well as experts on international developments and research. The aim was to establish a common understanding of the issues and options for tax reform. The Tax Working Group released its report in January 2010, outlining its recommendations for tax reform in New Zealand. After careful consideration, the government adopted the majority of the recommendations, which were included in the May 2010 Budget.

Dan’s findings indicate that the Tax Working Group played a significant role in influencing the government’s 2010 Budget tax changes. His findings show that when well-respected people get together and devise tax changes and structures which promote equity and fairness amongst taxpayers, the government actually listens and takes action. Dan believes that, in aligning New Zealand’s tax system with the principles of equity and fairness, the government has taken a step in the right direction to ensuring a fairer and more sustainable tax system. ‘In the past, there were a lot of loopholes in the tax system that were advantageous to some people – particularly people who had opportunities in accumulated wealth, and could invest them into certain types of savings vehicles,’ he explains. ‘If the tax system had been left alone, the after-tax distribution of income would have been unfair. The Tax Working Group has persuaded the government to do something about this.’

Dan will present his research at the Strategy Leadership and International Business Series 2010, held in Auckland, in association with the professional accounting body, CPA Australia. His future research plans include an analysis of whether or not a comprehensive capital gains tax should be introduced into New Zealand.

Emma Cathcart
School of Fashion
Faculty of New Media, Arts and Business

Creative costume designer
Fairies, redcoats and reindeer: they’re all in a day’s work for costume designer Emma Cathcart. Her work in stage and film during 2009 has seen her designing and constructing a wide range of unique garments.

Emma has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours Degree from Coventry University in the United Kingdom, and a Diploma in Fashion and Design from the Southern Institute of Technology. Although she majored in print-making, she has always had an interest in garment construction and design from the Southern Institute of Technology. Although she majored in print-making, she has always had an interest in garment construction and design. ‘In the past, there were a lot of loopholes in the tax system that were advantageous to some people – particularly people who had opportunities in accumulated wealth, and could invest them into certain types of savings vehicles,’ he explains. ‘If the tax system had been left alone, the after-tax distribution of income would have been unfair. The Tax Working Group has persuaded the government to do something about this.’

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Continued...
Oku Tuakana, My Brothers

Emma also designed costumes for the short film Oku Tuakana, My Brothers, filmed in various locations near Invercargill during 2009. Written and directed by Southern Institute of Technology student Matt Inns, the film is set in 1846, during the New Zealand Wars. Emma’s challenge was to design and guide construction of the costumes for 25 British redcoat soldiers. ‘The garments had to be as close to the original style of jacket worn by a particular regiment,’ Emma explains. In a stroke of luck, Spotlight in Invercargill happened to stock the correct scarlet melton cloth, suitable for manufacturing early Victorian period British Army tunics. She worked closely with a military historian to ensure accuracy down to the smallest details, including epaulettes, cuffs and tam-o’-shanter style caps complete with pom-poms. ‘This was the first time that I had been asked to design costumes for film, so I needed to be sure that every detail was accurate.’ The film was showcased in the Short Film Corner of the Cannes Film Festival in May 2010.

Continued...
Phil Davison
Diploma of Digital Film
SIT2LRN
Putting the scares back

Nosferatu is one of silent cinema’s great classics, but the 1922 film has been severely damaged by time. It had never been thoroughly restored until Diploma in Digital Film facilitator Phil Davison embarked on a large-scale project to restore the film.

One of the great masterpieces of the early German Expressionist film period, F.W. Murnau’s Nosferatu ran foul of copyright laws on its release in 1922. The production company was successfully sued by Bram Stoker’s widow, on the grounds that the film closely resembled Stoker’s novel, Dracula, and all copies of the film were ordered to be destroyed. However, like the title vampire, several copies of the film survived the destruction. They lay forgotten in dusty vaults around the world, in places as diverse as Paris, Madrid and Petrograd, until the film was rediscovered in the later years of the twentieth century.

Today there are numerous versions of the film freely available on DVD or YouTube. They are of poor quality, and the film suffers from that fact that, in today’s economic climate, there is no possibility of a commercial return on the massive amount of work needed to restore the movie. This left the field open for Phil Davison to embark on a three-year labour of love to restore the masterpiece. ‘We have the original shooting script, and we have what appears to be even more material than was included in the 1922 cut of the movie, but no one has ever put all the pieces back together properly,’ says Phil.

The most obvious aspect of the restoration is that the original film was in tinted colour, not black and white as most modern versions are. ‘At that time,’ Phil explains, ‘it was standard practice to tint the films so that night scenes were blue, daytime was a sepia colour, and lamplight was yellow. So when you see the film in black and white the vampire seems to be walking around in the daylight.’

Furthermore, since all the surviving versions of the film are foreign language versions, there are missing shots. ‘From looking at Murnau’s other films we can see that he avoided using title cards wherever possible. If the plot information is conveyed in a letter we are supposed to see a close-up of the letter on the film – but when the film was released in France and Spain all those shots were removed and replaced with title cards. And these are the only surviving versions.’ With this in mind Phil has been able to shoot new material to replace the missing shots. ‘Of course the new materials look too sharp and clean, so I’ve had to work at aging the new footage to match the original.’

Phil also eagerly took on the task of composing a new score. The result took him by surprise. ‘The film was not really scary – it’s a wonderful atmospheric film with incredible iconic images, but not scary like a modern horror film.’ But now, with a new score that is keyed directly to the on-screen action, the emotional intensity that must have been experienced by viewers in 1922 has been revived. ‘The scares have come back!’ says Phil.

Over the course of the project, which is nearing completion now, improved software was released that made it possible to do an even better job. ‘This has moved the goal posts, so to speak. I’ve been faced with the choice of leaving things as they were, or going back and improving the whole movie with the upgraded software. Since this is a labour of love there really is no choice but to go back and do the best job possible. But at last I can see the light at the end of the tunnel.’

Ruth Myers
School of Design and Visual Arts
Faculty of New Media, Arts and Business

‘Of some use, performativity and the Lost Body’

‘You can’t be found, I can’t make you – and that’s the point.’ Recent work by artist Ruth Myers explores loss, and in particular the failure to connect with that which is lost, from a sculptural standpoint.

Ruth’s research explores the use of body in activity to look for, and be in, the ‘lost’ body. This use of activity where the body becomes both producer of, and ‘lost’ within drive of process, draws on the logic of the part object to explore a never getting to/from body. ‘In exploring the physicality of loss, two things I return to are my attempts to look for connection and the need to make something to “hold on to”; and in both these there is a necessary failure’, Ruth explains. ‘My part objects are the residues of these efforts. They are both a “looking for” and a “not finding”.’ They result from bodily actions or gestures. I am up against it, somewhere, somehow. I am in process in them.

Ruth trained at the Otago School of Art, where she was awarded the R.N. Field Award for the most outstanding sculpture graduate. She has an extensive exhibition record and a distinguished history of artistic achievement. She first came to Southland as Artist in Residence at the Southland Polytechnic, and that experience eventually drew her back to the south to work and teach. She is currently completing a Masters in Art and Design at Auckland University of Technology. Involvement in practice-led research as part of the Masters degree has informed her teaching in the Bachelor of Applied Media Arts (Visual Media) programme, influencing content and approaches to studio research.

Ruth presented a paper on ‘Loss and the Mantelpiece’ at the AJF Postgraduate Conference in August 2009. Major works associated with the project were exhibited at the Temple Gallery in Dunedin during February 2010. Entitled ‘...and of no obvious use’, this involved the documentation of private performance, through photographs and cast or moulded objects. ‘These “left-overs” are residues of being “in process,” where I am both subject and object.’

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Future plans include a major exhibition: ‘Of some use, performativity and the Lost Body’, in Auckland in late 2010. Ruth has also been invited to participate in the Seaward Downs Art Project, where she intends to use remnants of ‘lost’ activities performed in the edge of the bush as ‘portals’ to experiencing of loss as something that we can no longer get to, and no longer touch.

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Gina van Wichen
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Raising Faith
A recent exhibition by artist Gina van Wichen honoured Colin McCahon, who tutored her as a young artist. The influence of the training continues to have an impact on her current practice, with its focus on issues of spirituality and faith.

The exhibition explored the artist’s journey of early influences, extending from her time as a student of McCahon’s at University of Otago Summer Schools in the 1970s. These took place at Kurow in North Otago. ‘There is not a lot of information about McCahon’s connection with Kurow’, she says. In a series of paintings she portrays the shape, colour and design of the bare hills around Kurow. Gina, like McCahon, finds spiritual meaning in the local landscape. Her landscapes frame crosses, embodying Gina’s current artistic practice, as well as paying tribute to past influences. The story of the journey of influence continued with an earlier painting, ‘Last Supper’, while the exhibition also indicated future directions, with the inclusion of a study of the quite different landscapes of Western Southland.

Gina has a long and distinguished artistic career, as both painter and print-maker. Always keen to extend her artistic range, she has recently completed an Honours Diploma in Arts and Creativity through the Learning Connexion in Wellington. An equally important influence on her work comes as part of her career as an art educator. Gina has taught painting and life drawing, and currently printmaking, in the Bachelor of Applied Media Arts (Visual Media) programme, and finds inspiration for her own work in mentoring the artistic development of others. She is much involved in the Southland art scene. She has been a judge for the Southland High and Primary Schools Art Awards for the past four years, and was also a judge for the ILT Annual Art Awards (Southland) in 2010.

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Gina has found that her recent work ‘has generated a fresh style of personal expression for myself – the artist!’ It has inspired a desire to explore the subject matter in greater depth. During 2010 and 2011 she plans to extend the concept of this exhibition, through new art works relating to the landscapes of Southern New Zealand.

‘Raising Faith’ was exhibited at the SIT Gallery in Invercargill in January and February 2010. During this time, she held a number of gallery sessions for visitors, which generated constructive discussion about the relationship between the works and the subject matter as reflected in the title of the exhibition. She also gave a floor talk about the exhibition at All Saints Anglican Church, Invercargill. In addition to preparing her own exhibition, Gina also exhibited a number of paintings as part of the ‘Glory: Visions of Faith’ exhibition at the City Gallery, Invercargill, in March 2009.

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Emergence
In his solo exhibition at the Southland Museum & Art Gallery, David Shennan took the contemplative viewer on a deeply personal voyage, into dream-like landscapes where time and space were removed from the everyday.

There were no lengthy explanations or autobiographical notes for those coming to view the ‘Emergence’ exhibition. ‘I’d rather people just looked’, David says. Rather than to produce an immediate response, he aimed to make a deeper, longer lasting impact on viewers. ‘To experience a painting is a quite different experience from the way we live most of our lives. It is a moment of contemplation, a time to discern, a time to be’.

David graduated with First Class Honours from the Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland, in 1991. He has a distinguished history of solo and group exhibitions. He moved to Southland in 2003 and combines his art practice with teaching in the School of Visual Arts and Design.

David’s artistic focus has changed greatly in recent years, with the human content and histories becoming increasingly important. His latest works are influenced by Jungian psychology and by the desire to access the dream state. Change is something that is to be expected in a painterly life. ‘Experience and versatility are important in developing an artistic repertoire’, he says. ‘It takes a long time to build a career. You make a lifetime commitment to painting.’ Painting is also an intensely individual and very private act yet, paradoxically, the artist also wants to display his works to an audience. David expresses this as a ‘conflict of interest’. His paintings are incredibly autobiographical, and this leads me to seek anonymity. At the same time I want my works to be seen.

He describes himself as adhering to no specific school of painting, and he does not seek to influence his students in any particular direction. ‘In an internet semi-driven world, people can take elements from everywhere and pull them together in new ways’, he explains. ‘We can now talk about things in other realms. We are able to move away from the structures of society and institutions, and be more inclusive and intuitive.’ This desire to escape the limitations of fixed boundaries and definitions is reflected in the way David paints. ‘I pick up the paintbrush and start painting. It is not about controlling the image. I am taking responsibility as a painter to explore the individual or collective archetypes.’

His 2010 exhibition was made up of ten drawings and three oils on canvas. His meticulous works portrayed figurative landscapes and seascapes, in which individuals seemed alone, and yet deeply immersed in the stories around them. Immediately noticeable to a viewer was the reserved approach taken to colour in the works. David’s paintings start as monochrome, and he finds the image using dark and light tones, bringing in the colour later. He describes how the colours he uses emerge “under the picture, almost like a musical undertone. ‘I don’t want to “dramatise the picture” with high-key colours.’

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John Mumford
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The important role of peer tutoring in tertiary student learning

John Mumford has investigated the role of peer tutors in supporting their colleagues on the journey from student to successful graduate. He has used his findings to inform current teaching practice, and to increase awareness of the role of peer tutoring in maximising learning and achievement in tertiary education.

The use of fellow students for tutoring their peers can provide additional instruction and support to students, complementing more formal teaching provided by lecturers, and in course materials and assessment processes. John carried out research during 2009 into the impacts of peer tutoring in a mandatory first year maths paper in the Information Technology Degree programme. The key aim of the research was to raise awareness of the importance of peer tutoring within a degree programme, and to increase awareness of the role of peer tutoring in maximising learning and achievement in tertiary education.

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The range of crime stories he is analysing include reports on police operations, court reporting, and articles on specific criminal incidents, including homicides, violent assaults and sexual assaults as well as driving offences, and incidents stemming from alcohol and drug abuse. Research published in New Zealand in 2002 found that news reporting on crime was disproportionate to overall crime statistics for those regions over the same period, to determine whether the coverage of crime news is disproportionate to the amount of crime.

Phil brought to his research a strong interest in innovative teaching methods, adult learning, and issues of literacy and numeracy. By using action research methods, he was able to draw directly on the knowledge gained during the research process to progressively enhance teaching practice.

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If it bleeds, it leads
Crime stories help sell newspapers, but are the levels of reporting disproportionate to the actual rate of crime? Research by Phil McCarthy, in the School of Journalism, seeks to answer this question.

Phil is assessing crime reporting as a proportion of daily news. To do this, he is analysing the quantity of crime stories published in the Otago Daily Times and the Southland Times, during May 2009, comparing the proportion of crime reporting to overall news content. He is also comparing this with crime statistics for those regions over the same period, to determine whether the coverage of crime news is disproportionate to the amount of crime.

Phil will present the results of his analysis at the Conference of the Journalism Educators Association of New Zealand in Timaru in December 2010. His future research plans include an analysis of the challenging relationship between the media and the victims of trauma and tragedy.

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