INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Southern Institute of Technology Staff Research Report for 2014. The diversity of research achievements among our staff is showcased here, and it celebrates a wide range of research studies and creative projects.

Research at SIT continued to develop and flourish during 2014. We have a strong commitment to supporting and growing research capability in this area and to ensuring that teaching on higher level qualifications is informed by research. Support from the Southern Institute of Technology Research Fund, a contestable fund available to staff carrying out research, was fully utilised in 2014. The fund also enabled many staff to present their research at conferences in New Zealand and internationally. The fourth Southern Institute of Technology Research Symposium was held in December and provided an opportunity for sharing research results in a collegial environment. This year also saw the Southern Institute of Technology host the National Tertiary Teaching and Learning Conference for the second year running, where hairdressing tutor and winner of the Hairdressing Industry Training Organisation’s Tutor of the Year Award in 2013 Donna Bowman gave a keynote address, and a number of staff contributed research presentations to the conference programme.

As the leading vocational tertiary institute in southern New Zealand, SIT plays an important role in the local and regional community. Opportunities for collaboration with other organisations have continued to grow in 2014. The Southern Institute of Technology Research Institute, led by Research Manager Dr Sally Bodkin-Allen and Research Officer Dr Jo Whittle, worked with Gillian Sim, Nurse Researcher at the Southern District Health Board (SDHB) to host a research forum in November. This event gave presenters the chance to explain their research in just five minutes and brought together researchers from SIT, the Southern District Health Board, and the local community. SIT School of Nursing Academic and Relationship Leader Sally Dobbs won the award for Best Presentation sharing findings from her doctoral study into how clinical practice in nursing is assessed.

During 2014 staff presented their research at conferences throughout New Zealand, but also internationally in Australia, Poland, Canada, and the USA. A number of staff have published their research in SIT’s own peer reviewed journal SITJAR, but there have also been publications in magazines, online and international journals and conference proceedings. Many staff focused on research related to teaching and learning, such as dealing with maths anxiety, facilitating co-operative learning in group situations, and engaging students at the beginning stages of their study through an innovative week of orientation activities. Staff were also involved in postgraduate study in areas ranging from the experience of raising a child with severe allergies, to an examination of the debriefing that occurs after simulation scenarios in nursing education in New Zealand, to the industry perceptions of a massage therapy degree.

Staff working in the creative arts at SIT continue to make contributions both locally and nationally, including exhibitions of art works and performances of original musical compositions. They are working in a varied range of areas which include exploring the concept of a ‘DIY’ museum, through to examining the concept of the body as shared performance in early film and video art.

I congratulate all staff who contributed to the research outputs of SIT in 2014 and thank particularly Sally Bodkin Allen and Jo Whittle for their role in encouraging and developing SIT’s research culture. I look forward to the continued development of SIT’s research capacity into the future and hope you enjoy reading about the diverse research activity here.

Penny Simmonds
Chief Executive
Southern Institute of Technology
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In an interesting and varied agenda at the annual Staff Research Symposium held in December a twelve staff shared their research with their colleagues.

The symposium offered an ideal opportunity for staff to hear about a wide range of research findings and to share work in progress with an engaged and supportive audience. The day was split into three sessions, with staff presenting from across two faculties: Health, Humanities and Computing, and New Media a Arts and Business. A number of topics related to supporting teaching and learning, including research into effective techniques for collaborative learning and the innovative use of simulation techniques to enhance nursing education. Presentations included research which related to the areas of expertise and art practice of individual staff members in the areas of sport and exercise, business, environmental management, visual arts, film and animation. Staff explained how their teaching is informed by their research and how research promotes innovation and improvements in their various fields of teaching.

A popular component of the event each year is the audience vote for the ‘People’s Choice Award’ for their favourite presentation of the day. The 2014 award went to Kathryn Mitchell, Programme Manager for Visual Arts, for her dynamic presentation ‘Performing the DIY Public Museum’, drawing on her doctoral research into museum practice and theory.
The biennial Southland Health Research Five Minute Findings Forum saw researchers sharing their research findings in just five minutes each.

The Five Minute Findings Forum was a collaboration between SIT and Southern District Health Board. This was the second time the forum has been run, and this year it was held at the Southland Medical Foundation Lecture Theatre at Southland Hospital. Sixteen researchers from SIT, the Southern District Health Board and the community presented their findings, each one lasting for five minutes only. A very wide range of topics was covered during the day, ranging across the fields of public and environmental health, natural therapies, medicine, nursing, sport and exercise, and health education.

The audience of around 50 people was made up of professionals from hospital, tertiary education and community settings, and attendees found the event very informative and useful. A panel of two judges assessed the performances of the presenters. Gareth Meech, Manager of Customer Focus, 2018 Census at Statistics New Zealand, gave the keynote address on the topic of the 2013 Census: Families, households and health. His talk provided important information on the latest census data and what the implications were for regional population and health in the future.

The Best Presentation winner of a cash prize of $250, donated by Southland Nurses’ Forum, was Sally Dobbs, Academic and Relationship Leader of the SIT School of Nursing, for her work on “Assessing failing nursing students in clinical practice”.

SOUTHLAND HEALTH RESEARCH FIVE MINUTE FINDINGS FORUM
DEBRIEFING AFTER SIMULATION SCENARIOS IN UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

Simulation technology has advanced considerably in recent times and is now an accepted part of the health education landscape. Nurse Educator ANDREA KNOWLER examines the debriefing that occurs after simulation scenarios in nursing education in a New Zealand context.
Andrea’s interest in simulation began when she commenced teaching nursing at SIT. Andrea completed her Master of Nursing in 2014 and the debriefing experience after simulation teaching became the basis of her thesis. ‘Anecdotal evidence suggests that most nurse educators use simulation technology as an additional teaching modality to other forms of teaching rather than inclusive of them,’ says Andrea. ‘Therefore, the amount of simulation used in teaching is left to the individual educator’s discretion, rather than being a structured and planned part of the school’s teaching plan.’ While the education programme standards for nursing education in New Zealand state that all students must have access to simulation learning resources, each institution can interpret this statement in its own way.

The focus of Andrea’s research was on identifying the ways in which New Zealand nurse educators use the time after a simulation scenario to run debriefing sessions. Andrea argues that the debriefing session is as much a learning tool as the simulation scenario itself. ‘It is accepted that simulation is an emergent and important teaching methodology, yet little is published around debriefing frameworks to guide nurse educators through this process,’ explains Andrea.

Andrea gathered data from a select cohort of nursing educators in New Zealand who were involved in simulation. Her results suggest that nurse educators largely drive the simulation development themselves and that their approach to its use in their classrooms is very individual, based on their own views and philosophical standpoints. ‘My research revealed that there is no consistent approach throughout the sector to the way simulation and debriefing are approached in New Zealand nursing education,’ says Andrea. ‘There are many reasons for this including curriculum differences, different teaching models and differing levels of support for staffing and implementing simulation laboratories in each institution.’

Andrea hopes that her research will help to support the development of simulation processes in New Zealand nursing education, but believes that further research is required to fully address the gaps in this field in New Zealand. ‘There is the opportunity to develop an educational qualification in simulation scenario debriefing as part of a post-graduate qualification. There is a real need to train and inform nurse educators in simulation approaches.’ Andrea notes that there is a world-wide increase in the use of simulation technology in nursing education: ‘More research in this area to develop guidelines and to strengthen these processes would be beneficial’.

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FOOD SHED MODELLING FOR A SUSTAINABLE INVERCARGILL

The threat of peak oil has motivated many cities to consider how they can re-localise food production. Research by ERINE VAN NIEKERK and recent Environmental Management degree graduate Josh Fisher examined the potential for the city of Invercargill to feed itself.

Erine is Programme Manager for the Environmental Management degree. She has a particular research interest in environmental modelling using GIS: Geographical Information Systems. Supervision of a student research project by Josh Fisher using GIS to model sustainable local food sheds provided a wealth of interesting information which Erine presented at the International Geographers Union Regional Conference in Krakow, Poland in August 2014.

‘Urban sustainability is increasingly important in national environmental planning and policy development,’ Erine explains. ‘This study focuses on one important aspect of urban sustainability, that of food networks and whether cities can feed themselves from within their own land areas.’ Research by Josh and Erine looked at whether this was possible for the city of Invercargill.

We tackled this question by modelling hypothetical future food sheds and food maps based on a number of sustainable agricultural scenarios including livestock, vegan, permaculture and chemical assisted farming.’ A further aim of the research was to assess the value of GIS as a tool for assessing the ability of a settlement to re-localise the food systems that provide its material needs and, therefore, its potential as a planning tool for assessing and implementing sustainability measures.

The results of the research were positive Erine says. ‘We were able to show that, physically at least, there should be no major obstacles to overcome in terms of suitable available land for meeting Invercargill’s food requirements.’ Modelling does show barriers around legislation, economics and ethical and social factors. The research showed that the extent of food production based on various tangible environmental limitations can be spatially represented using GIS, and at the same time the modelling can highlight any possible issues and barriers.’

Erine found attending the conference in Krakow very inspirational. ‘It is a long-running international conference held in a different country each year,’ she says. ‘There were 1600 delegates attending from all over the world with an incredible diversity of themes and presentations.’ The conference is aimed at showcasing new and upcoming ideas in geography and environmental research. ‘In addition to new ideas about the use of GIS in environmental research I was also interested in the latest research on heritage conservation and heritage tourism, which was a particular highlight of this conference,’ says Erine. ‘I learned a great deal I can share with students here and it was great to be able to share research done at SIT in such a prestigious international setting’. 
THE EXPERIENCE OF RAISING A CHILD WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES

One in ten children in New Zealand is born with severe allergies. Research by nurse educator CASSIE CARSTENSEN explores the experience of raising a child living with severe allergies.

Cassie’s research is autoethnographical in nature and charts her personal journey and that of her family raising a child diagnosed with life-threatening allergies. The research was undertaken as part of her Master of Nursing degree at the Eastern Institute of Technology. ‘My family includes a child who was diagnosed with severe allergies when just eight months old,’ Cassie explains. Her research methodology involved detailing her experience, identifying common themes through that experience and then carefully analysing those themes.

There have been very few New Zealand studies focusing on the experience of being a parent of a child with severe allergies, despite international and national evidence that the numbers of children with allergies, and the severity of allergic responses, are increasing. As Cassie notes, there continues to be a lack of knowledge about the causes of allergies and how to best manage them and this contributes to the levels of frustration felt by those who live with allergies. ‘As I am the mother of a child with severe allergies and the potential for an anaphylactic reaction, as well as a nurse, I was in a prime position to inform people about the intricacies of living with allergies,’ she says. ‘Through the use of autoethnography I have been able to take readers through a journey of an aspect of my life, using my story to both inform and educate.’

Some of the key themes that emerged from the narrative included dealing with parental guilt, conflicts arising from being in the dual roles of professional nurse and mother, gaps in support networks and a parent’s desperate desire for knowledge. At one point, for example, Cassie describes the experience of raising a dangerously allergic child as being in a state of ‘constant supervision and fear.’ In another revealing passage she describes the ‘mother guilt’ around the possible but largely unknown causes of severe allergies in children.

Cassie believes that the methodology she used demonstrates how personal narratives can produce relevant and insightful information in the field of nursing. She argues that: ‘the autobiographical story can be used to start a conversation about what is done well with regards to managing children’s severe food allergies and what could be done better.’ It highlights the potential for nurses to play a major role in assisting families as they come to terms with an allergy diagnosis.

Cassie’s findings highlight a need for more education for nurses about allergies and allergy management. She also recommends the creation of specialist nursing roles for allergy management, and the distribution of education packs for families with information on recognising, managing and treating children with severe allergies.
PRESENCE: ARTISTIC PRACTICE, POETRY AND PHENOMENOLOGY

In 2014 PETER BELTON’s research and studio practice took two not incompatible directions. The first has been the continuation and development of his practice with drawing into painting, and the second has produced a series of poems about painters, both contemporary and historic.

Wednesday; Foveaux Coast. (2014). Oilstick drawing on board. 600x900mm
Peter created several poems as part of his artistic practice in 2014. "Through these poems I have brought to bear my interest in teaching art History and Theory," Peter explains. "Each makes reference to an event, or a trauma, in another artist’s life and each identifies saliencies about that artist’s method or style." Peter started writing in mid-2014 and completed a series of 18 poems about painters, some of which have been published in Landfall and on the National Library Website; Poet Laureate’s Blog.

Between the 2nd of May and 15th June Peter exhibited four paintings in South, a Celebration, at the Southland Museum & Art Gallery in a ‘by invitation’ group show. These paintings were part of a continuing development of his interest in constructing the sensation of movement in and through landscaped space, presented on a flat rectangular surface. "Compositions such as these rely for making sense on both phenomenological and analogical associations," says Peter. "And, what is meant by this? Phenomenological association happens through the medium of our own bodies; through physical sensations and the discovery of limitations, challenged and recalled. Sensation arouses recognition and memory."

By way of illustrating his point Peter has invoked, when teaching a first year art history class, a story about J. M. W. Turner. "When Turner’s painting Rain, Stream and Speed on the Great Western Railway (1844) was shown for the first time at the Royal Academy exhibition, in London, its sensational surface effects caused offence. One gentleman, standing in front of this canvas, declared it to be a nonsense. There was, standing near, a woman. She had been looking and seeing into this painting for some time. She turned to this gentleman: "It is true," she said, "I was there." And, she described what she saw. When travelling on the Great Western line from London to Bristol the train pulled into Pangbourne Station. Outside it was dusk and the weather was atrocious; raging wind and driving rain. Into her compartment stepped a thickset middle aged man; his oilskin shedding water. When the train rocked into motion he asked if this lady would mind if he opened a window. Thinking of travel sickness, she assented. He then hung out of the carriage window up to his midriff, in the tempest, for a good ten minutes. Then, with no apparent ill effect, he shut the window and sat down. Captured by her own curiosity, she tried the same; if only for a few seconds."

Peter suggests that stories are sustained, as myths, through the relevance to our own circumstances and a necessary connection to feelings such as anxiety, desire and fear. "I wasn’t sure whether this story was apocryphal as one account gave it, or based on a real event," says Peter. "I had read the name of the woman in one account. Imagine my delight when an art student at SIT, with the same surname, told me this was a story told in her own family of a meeting with ‘the’ Turner."

Peter’s work is based upon the concept of presence or being there. He sees this as essential to the thread of connection, be it in the domain of poetry or painting. ‘Presence is a fragile condition; it can be easily erased or overridden and altered. In that case any replacement is a palimpsest; as when a new text or meaning is written over the top of the old. Nothing holds permanence and what we thought of as indubitably being seems to be slipping away into the realm of the spectral; as with memory.’
FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

An Ako Aotearoa workshop on Collaborative Learning facilitated by Jill Clark and Trish Baker, led to FIONA TYRIE’s interest in developing classroom tools and management techniques for group work. In 2014 she teamed up with DEBBIE RUWHIU to carry out a project into facilitating collaborative learning with students studying the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Enterprise.
Fiona is a tutor in the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Enterprise, a 60-week programme that follows a traditional MBA model of a short series of taught papers followed by a substantial self-directed research dissertation on a business topic of the student’s choice. Debbie works in SIT’s Academic Support Unit and promotes collaborative learning techniques based on the seminal work of Johnson and Johnson as part of her role supporting teaching excellence at the institute.

Group work is a significant part of what happens both in the classroom and outside the classroom for Fiona’s students. ‘I knew that students needed to develop their group work skills to better prepare themselves for the world of business enterprise where tapping into business networks can provide many of the resources needed for start-up or business growth,’ says Fiona. ‘Anecdotally we knew that graded group work isn’t always popular because of the high risk of social loafing which means that some group members do all the work while others earn the grades,’ explains Fiona. ‘But we also knew that some tutors use collaborative learning really effectively to engage students to achieve remarkable results. The tools from the Ako Aotearoa workshop provided a great start to managing assessed group work for both students and tutor.’

Data was collected from all three paper deliveries throughout 2014 and a questionnaire was used to gather information from students before and after their course with regards to their experiences of working in groups. The process involved the class spending the first teaching session learning about group expectations and collaborative learning techniques, talking about social loafing and recognizing the benefits of working in teams to achieve a common goal. Over the next few sessions student groups had to complete group roles, group expectations and team policies paperwork and graded work needed to show who had contributed to each aspect of the assessment. There was an individual confidential peer assessment that contributed to each student’s final grade and students knew that there was a process to follow if a group member didn’t contribute. ‘You can’t just expect students to “go sort it out”’, says Fiona, ‘it was important that students knew they had a safety net if it was required.’

The results show that most participants had experience of working collaboratively and that they understood which factors contributed to high performance groups. ‘The stand-out finding was that social skills were consistently the most significant issue that interfered with teams coming together to create remarkable outcomes,’ says Debbie, ‘the responses for the open-ended questions show that while some groups could find the good in the experience of working in very diverse teams after seven weeks together, others were less enamored with this experience.’
People with mental illnesses have a higher risk of physical health problems than that for the general population. Nurse Educator DEBORA ANDERSON explores the role that mental health nurses feel they should also play in addressing physical health issues.
Debora teaches in the School of Nursing and holds a Master of Nursing. Her interest in the physical health of mental health service users was inspired by her own observations while working in the mental health field. ‘I observed common and complex disease processes occurring among service users but found that that addressing these issues did not seem to be part of any one’s nursing role,’ she says. In New Zealand and internationally the gap in mortality between the general population and those with mental illnesses is widening. ‘I wanted to learn what would be the most effective way for nurses to assess and plan for the care of mental health service users and how they could help reduce the impact of diseases through assessment and treatment.’

Common physical illnesses or ‘comorbidities’ suffered by mental health service users typically range from poor dental health or eyesight to more debilitating conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. At the same time international research has shown that mental health nurses are often uncertain about their roles and responsibilities for treating physical health issues in their patients. Debora’s research looked at the professional and organisational factors that influence nurses’ provision of physical health care to mental health service users. ‘Mental health nurses are in a position to provide assessments and arrange treatment for service users with physical illnesses,’ Debora explains. ‘I wanted to assess their views on service users’ physical health issues and also how they approached the provision of care for such issues.’

While concerns about comorbidity in mental health patients are common around the world it has not been explored widely in New Zealand. Debora’s research replicates an Australian study by Dr Brenda Happell of Queensland University in Australia, with data collected from nurses based in a New Zealand district health board. As Debora describes, ‘I was seeking the opinions of mental health nurses on the physical illnesses that mental health service users experience, as well as organisational factors affecting their activities.’ She also asked nurses what further training they would like in this area and whether they thought there was a potential need for a new specialist nursing role to provide physical health assessments for service users.

Debora’s findings draw on a sample of 39 nurses who shared their views on a range of issues around practice and responsibilities. Her research shows high levels of uncertainty about roles and responsibilities of nurses toward mental health service users. She found that both attitudinal and organisational factors contribute to a lack of physical health assessment and intervention in service users’ comorbidities even by experienced mental health nurses. ‘Overall, my findings correspond fairly similarly to the Australian study,’ Debora says. She recommends more transparent direction and guidance from mental health services be given about the provision of care expected by mental health nurses to address service users’ physical health issues. Debora’s research has raised considerable interest and she has been asked to share her findings and recommendations with nursing and medical practitioners. She also plans to present her research at an Australasian nursing conference in 2015.
KEEPING IT REAL

DONNA BOWMAN, winner of the Hairdressing Industry Training Organisation’s Tutor of the Year Award in 2013, shared her deep knowledge and love of her industry in a keynote address at the recent Ako Aotearoa National Tertiary Learning and Teaching Conference.

Donna is a highly experienced tutor in the School of Hairdressing and she has held a wide range of positions within the hairdressing industry. She was invited to give a keynote address at the National Tertiary Learning and Teaching Conference in Invercargill in 2014. Her presentation focused on her key teaching philosophy of ‘keeping it real’ for her students. ‘Everything I teach is directly relevant to what they need to know in the salon,’ Donna asserts. ‘This includes hairdressing skills but also life skills such as time management, teamwork and critical thinking. Even technical information such as ratios and other mathematical skills can be related to a student’s life outside the classroom.’ She advocates using a wide range of different teaching strategies to embed numeracy and literacy into the classroom so as to reach a diversity of students, and she recommends making numeracy and literacy exercises simple, quick and fun for learners. Donna also noted the importance of tutors modelling high standards of behaviour as a vital element in ‘keeping it real’ for students. As she explains: ‘we insist on students maintaining high standards of personal presentation and good time management, in line with employer expectations – but don’t expect all this to happen if you don’t model it yourself!’

As Donna revealed during her talk, a passion for her area of expertise has been an important factor in her success as a teacher. ‘Being able to pass on this passion and watching my students developing the skills and knowledge they need...’
for the workplace is magic to me! ’ She insists that being a teacher is a privilege. ’ As tutors we hold our students’ futures in our hands, ’ she says. ’ We have the power to build or destroy their dreams, and we need to treat every student as an individual and value what each one has to offer in our classrooms. ’

The development of strong links with local industry and other stakeholders in the hairdressing sector has also been fundamental to Donna’s teaching career. She and her teaching team have built effective working relationships with local industry, hairdressing companies, HITO (Hairdressing Industry Training organisation) and other training professionals. ’ We support them and in turn they support us and our students with work experience opportunities and employment, ’ she says. ’ We also regularly bring guest speakers into the classroom and they help our students to set employment goals and to “dream big” for their futures. ’

Donna has been on the executive of the ITP Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Association since its inception in the early 1990s and is also on the executive of the Southland Hairdressing Association. She has been involved in the government’s Targeted Reviews of Qualifications or TRoQ, and has helped organise a number of New Zealand Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy annual conferences. ’ These activities offer me opportunities to “give back” to the industry that has given me so much enjoyment over many years, ’ says Donna. In 2013 that industry recognised her contribution by awarding her the national Tutor of the Year Award for exceptional industry knowledge and training achievements. ’ Getting the award was an amazing experience and it gave me the time to reflect on my working life so far, ’ she says. ’ I believe I am one of those very fortunate people who has loved my industry from the beginning of my career, and still do. ’
The therapeutic massage industry remains ambivalent about the necessity for degree-based education for the growth of the industry in New Zealand. DONNA SMITH explored the reasons for this in her recently completed doctoral thesis.
The model suggests that stakeholders in the massage therapy industry need to engage with degree-based education and develop a strong professional association if they wish to attain credibility, best practice and a professional identity.

Donna is Programme Manager for the Bachelor of Therapeutic and Sports Massage. She has recently completed her PhD through the University of Otago. Her research investigated a range of perceptions and attitudes toward degree-based education across the stakeholder groups within the massage therapy industry, namely: massage educators; practicing massage therapists, and massage therapy students. The perceived necessity of degree-based education for the practice and growth of massage therapy, and the benefits and barriers to degree-based education, were also explored. The findings from this study suggest that the perceptions of degree-based education over the last 13 years this receptivity towards degree-based education needs to be harnessed by massage educators and promoted for a positive outcome for the massage industry as a whole.’

The lack of a professional image and the unregulated nature of the massage therapy industry were noted as the current issues facing the industry, and many participants wished to see massage therapy become a credible health care choice. A number of strategies for advancing the industry towards professional recognition were noted, including: creating a professional image; involvement in regulation; improving the cohesion of education standards, and profiting and making degree-based education more accessible. There was a role for degree-based education in all of the strategies reported. Donna developed a conceptual model entitled ‘Stepping towards legitimation for massage therapists’ based on the findings of this study. The model suggests that stakeholders in the massage therapy industry need to engage with degree-based education and develop a strong professional association if they wish to attain credibility, best practice and a professional identity,’ she says.

Prior to undertaking this research Donna had anecdotal evidence that there was resistance to degree-based education for massage therapists, and thought that the resistance was due to the lack of knowledge of degree-based education and the benefits associated with it. Donna also believed degree-based education was the answer to most of the issues facing the massage therapy industry. As she explains; ‘my overarching belief was that the massage therapy industry was in no way going to grow and progress without degree-based education as its central focal point.’ Participants’ views have highlighted the disunity, discordance and disorganisation of the current massage therapy industry in New Zealand and the importance of relationships among stakeholders. ‘I am still convinced that degree-based education for massage therapists is an important vehicle for change within the New Zealand massage therapy industry,’ Donna explains. ‘However, degree-based education is only one component of this process and not the only solution.’
ISOLATION, INFLUENCE AND IDENTITY

EMMA CATHCART has been exploring the concepts of geographical (dis)placement, aspects of traditional and modern construction, and embellishment of clothing with regard to Māori and Pacific design in New Zealand.

Emma teaches on the Bachelor of Fashion and Design degree at SIT. She 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. Her current research interest was inspired by a desire to understand more about New Zealand’s history and the way that its unique mix of cultures has informed fashion design here.

In 2014 Emma designed and exhibited five garments that reflect her journey into scrutinising her own cultural heritage, memory and geographical displacement. Emma is originally from the UK and says that when she first arrived in New Zealand she noticed that New Zealand fashion was very different to that of the UK and the way that people wore clothes here also differed.

Her research makes use of postmodern concepts such as deconstruction, reconstruction, scale and juxtaposition. When constructing her garments she incorporated elements such as traditional techniques of knotting, embroidery techniques, and traditional hand-stitching. ‘The time that it takes to incorporate traditional hand-stitch work or knots connects the maker with the garment,’ she says, ‘in turn adding value or mana to what has been created.’

Throughout the process of exploration and calculated experimentation many connections were made between her own design aesthetic and that of Māori and Pacific cultures. Emma sees this as being related to her geographical (dis)placement and its effect on her own creative processes. ‘It is extremely difficult to separate oneself from one’s surroundings, just as it is from one’s culture and heritage, no matter how isolated or dislocated you are,’ explains Emma. ‘Ultimately some level of diffusion and transformation takes place. How we choose to translate these influences is what makes us individual in the end.’

Emma’s five garments were exhibited in the Raw Gallery at the SIT Downtown campus, in October 2014 to coincide with the National Tertiary Teaching and Learning Conference, hosted by SIT.
Emma Cathcart’s work
FROM PRETEND TO REAL: THE POTENTIAL OF SIMULATION

Research by nurse educator JOHANNA RHODES focuses on the use of simulation as a way to bring real-life experiences into the classroom. She shared her innovative teaching methods with colleagues from around New Zealand at the National Tertiary Learning & Teaching Conference in October 2014.

Johanna teaches on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the School of Nursing. She completed her Master of Health Science (Nursing) through Otago University in 2010 and, in addition, she graduated with a Master of Teaching from the University of Otago in 2013. She is constantly seeking ways to bring real life into classroom learning. ‘Much of my research is around ways to keep students suspended in disbelief,’ Johanna explains. ‘I am focused on keeping teaching realistic, spontaneous and highly relevant to their future employment. This means there are actually very few classes where I just lecture students.’ Instead, Johanna uses simulation, role playing and games to reinforce both theoretical and practical knowledge. As she says: ‘students get very caught up in simulations and role playing, and I have found they are more likely to engage in the learning and to retain information longer.’

In a presentation at the National Tertiary Learning & Teaching Conference in Invercargill in 2014 Johanna explained how she used well known games such as Monopoly and Jeopardy to make lessons...
Students get very caught up in simulations and role playing, and I have found they are more likely to engage in the learning and to retain information longer.

memorable and effective for a diverse group of learners. To give one example, I was faced with giving a lecture on the disparities of income in New Zealand and I really wanted to inspire my students to think about what this really meant for different groups of people in our society,” says Johanna. She decided to try using an interactive game, ‘Monopoly with a twist’, by dividing the class into groups and setting them the task of living on their incomes. Just as in real life, each member of the group started the game with a different quantity of money. This meant that those who began the game in poverty were likely still to be in poverty by the end of the game no matter how hard they tried to change their circumstances. “I have found that students become incredibly involved in the game,” Johanna says. “They connect emotionally as well as intellectually with the material being taught and for the period of the game they are suspended in disbelief.”

Key learning techniques such as evaluation, discussion and reflection are built into the gaming sessions, and Johanna has also found that the games increase creativity by setting up conflicts and competition and by presenting students with challenging problems to resolve. Feedback from students on this teaching approach has been very positive, with many remembering the sessions long after the event. “Some students have observed that the session encouraged them to look at their patients with a deeper understanding,” she reports.

Johanna continues to expand her knowledge of simulation teaching methods, including moulage (highly realistic imitation injuries) and sophisticated role-playing that involves her in donning life-like masks and taking on enduring patient ‘personalities’ (Mask-Ed™), all aimed at presenting students with real-life situations in a safe learning environment. Johanna’s enthusiasm for suspending her students in disbelief is compelling. “The area of simulation learning is a fascinating one and it is an ongoing research focus for me,” she says. “Within the School of Nursing at Southern Institute of Technology we are continuing to develop our expertise in this very creative and rapidly-developing area of teaching and I am excited about the opportunities it opens up, both for research and for enhanced student learning outcomes.”
MASSAGE THERAPY RESEARCH UPDATING

Furthering the provision of research and clinical information to the industry was the focus of JO SMITH’s research in 2014.
Dr Jo Smith is Programme Manager for the Bachelor of Therapeutic and Sports Massage. She has a background in health science and physiotherapy, and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Otago during which she examined massage therapy services for health needs. In 2014 Jo carried out a variety of research activities. She contributed regular articles to the MNZ (Massage New Zealand) Magazine, acted as an external supervisor of Donna Smith’s PhD, and was voted in on the Massage New Zealand Executive as Researcher Officer for 2014/2015.

Jo is a long term advocate for recognition of the therapeutic massage industry as a highly professional and legitimate industry. In 2009 she established the New Zealand Massage Therapy Research Centre (NZMTRC) (https://www.sit.ac.nz/nzmtrc) along with colleague Donna Smith, to foster and encourage massage therapy research in New Zealand. ‘One of the aims of NZMTRC was to integrate massage therapy research and teaching by promoting research in the massage therapy field,’ says Jo. ‘We wanted to make research findings more accessible to massage therapists.’ In 2014 Jo has written three articles for MNZ, a magazine that is a seminal source of information for those working in the industry. These articles share relevant research in the field of massage therapy with the intention of disseminating the information to the diverse stakeholder group: massage therapists, massage therapy students, massage therapy clients, and medical and allied health professionals. ‘Research traditionally gets published in academic journals,’ Jo explains. ‘But these tend not to have a very wide audience. The purpose of my articles is to summarise recent published studies and present the information in a way that makes it easily perusable and accessible. Readers might then follow the links to read the full study if they are interested in a particular topic.’

Jo bases each article around a specific theme or issue in massage therapy. The final contribution for 2014, for example, focused on education for massage therapists. It reviewed an article about the professionalisation journey that the New Zealand massage therapy industry has and is taking, and the role that degree based education has in this journey, says Jo. ‘It also looked at a study about online education for massage therapy, and its challenges and potential. Another article that was reviewed was an evaluation of the quality of massage education in the US.’ One of the strategies of the NZMTRC is to promote massage therapy research and research informed education, Jo’s work in 2014 is one way that this is being achieved.
PERFORMING THE DIY PUBLIC MUSEUM

Public museums in New Zealand are concerned about funding, collection care, audience engagement, building maintenance and staffing. KATHRYN MCCULLY’s focus is on a radically different concept: a ‘DIY Museum’ and in 2014 she presented her research at the 7th International Conference on the Inclusive Museum in LA.

Kathryn is an artist, and a tutor and programme manager in the School of Visual Arts, Film and Animation. She has a Master of Fine Arts from the Otago Polytechnic School of Art and brings her considerable experience in art practice to her teaching and research. Her current area of research looks at the challenges and opportunities in reorienting museums from the periphery to the heart of their communities, initiating social action and facilitating public access to cultural heritage. In August 2014 she attended a conference facilitated by the Inclusive Museum Knowledge Community which aimed to draw together a community of those who are passionate about ensuring public museums are engaging and accessible civic spaces for all people irrespective of their backgrounds. This year’s conference was hosted by the Autry National Center of the American West, and had a distinctly interdisciplinary focus, bringing together a diversity of scholars, researchers and practitioners to discuss challenges, new initiatives, and most importantly and more specifically how museums are addressing relevance in the their respective communities. Papers were presented under the themes of ‘Visitors’, ‘Collections’, and ‘Representations’. The paper Kathryn presented was titled “Performing the DIY Museum: Shirting the Frame of Conception, Production and Representation”. It reflected Eilean Hooper-Greenhill’s notion that ‘the museum in the future may be imagined as a process or an experience. It is however, not limited to its own walls, but moves a set of process into the spaces, the concerns and the ambitions of communities.’

Kathryn says that some of the highlights for her included hearing plenary speaker Charmaine Jefferson’s address reflecting on her significant experience in the sector. ‘Jefferson recently concluded 11 years as the Executive Director of the California African American Museum,’ says Kathryn, ‘and issued a challenge to the sector to discard preconceptions about what a museum should be and do and focus on what museums need to be and do in the here and now’. The Natural History Museum tour was particularly enhanced for her by the evident passion and drive of its staff who have developed
a number of initiatives that reach out into their community including, for example, Zombee Watch. This project is a partnership between the Museum and the San Francisco State University’s Department of Biology to discover more about zombie fly parasitized honey bees,’ explains Kathryn. ‘Participants can become “ZomBee hunters” in order to contribute to research around this issue and to this end the Museum website provides instruction on, for example, safe handling of bees, the construction of a light trap and how to collect, store and share the collected information with the Museum.’

‘There were numerous conference paper presentations I found inspirational which will continue to inform the development of my own research,’ says Kathryn. ‘I am grateful for the support of the Southern Institute of Technology in attending the Inclusive Museum conference.’
WHO’S AFRAID OF MATHEMATICS?

When faced with a mathematics problem many students become anxious or even fearful and this can impact on their achievement. JOHN MUMFORD has published on the subject of math anxiety and how to resolve this widespread teaching and learning issue.

John is a tutor in the School of Computing. He and co-researcher Frank Smedley of the School of Language and Culture at Auckland University of Technology have carried out a review of literature on the widespread issue of math anxiety. They recently published a paper that highlights current thinking on the risk factors for math anxiety and suggests strategies for managing the problem in teaching and learning situations.

As John explains, math anxiety can evoke strong emotions including real fear and distress. ‘Being asked to solve a mathematical problem may make some people feel anxious or produce a kind of performance anxiety’, he says. ‘Other people may have much stronger reactions including panic, helplessness and fear.’ These feelings have a negative effect on people’s wellbeing and significantly impact on their ability to learn. As he and Frank highlight in their paper, math anxiety is a persistent challenge to teachers across many academic levels. ‘Mathematics has wide applications in life situations,’ John says. ‘This means that succeeding or failing can have long-term consequences, such as lower self-confidence and even reduced career opportunities.’

The researchers note that there may be multiple elements to math anxiety including a fear of taking tests, anxiety about trying to manipulate...
numbers or to comprehend statistics or abstraction anxiety. The literature also supports our belief that math anxiety often begins with negative early experiences in learning mathematics,’ John says. It is not just students who may suffer math anxiety; parents and even teachers may also feel anxious when faced with mathematical problems, and this can further compound student discomfort. ‘If the teacher suffers from math anxiety then this may make the student more anxious too.’

John and Frank found that the most influential extrinsic factor is the influence of teachers. A key challenge facing teachers is their own lack of mathematical knowledge, which impacts on their ability to give full explanations of strategies and concepts to their students. Also influential is the ability of the teachers to manage stress in their students while encouraging them to aim high. John argues that: ‘many risk factors can be addressed by increasing teachers’ knowledge and their confidence in their mathematical abilities.’ He does however note that a high level of mathematical knowledge does not automatically correlate to good teaching. ‘Some teachers may be highly skilled mathematically and yet not be able to relate this to their students in a way that they can understand,’ he says. ‘It is important that teachers are able to share the benefits of their knowledge with their students by being enthusiastic about their subject and using multiple approaches to mathematical problem solving.’

Helping students view mathematics as an integral part of their everyday lives can also help to reduce their fear of the subject. ‘A technique I have found useful in the classroom is to demystify mathematics jargon by relating it to ordinary language,’ John says. ‘This is a very simple approach that really can improve student confidence and reduce anxiety levels.’ Students can also take responsibility for reducing their own anxiety by developing persistence in their efforts at solving problems, managing their emotional responses and seeking help.

The paper highlights the value of a positive approach when students make mistakes. ‘We need to see these as opportunities to stimulate discussion and further discussion, rather than simply pointing out where a student got it wrong,’ John insists. There is also evidence that cooperative learning, especially in small groups, is another useful way for students in managing math anxiety. Collaborating with others has been shown to encourage sharing of ideas and exposing students to a wider variety of learning styles.

‘What is very clear from the literature is just how pervasive math anxiety is for many students and teachers, at all levels of teaching and across countries and cultures,’ says John. He plans to carry out further quantitative research in this important field of teaching and learning.

The full paper can be accessed via the website of the Southern Institute of Technology Journal of Applied Research:

https://www.sit.ac.nz/SITJAR#310064-2014
GEOCHRONOLOGICAL DATING OF DETRITAL ZIRCONS FROM THE PEGASUS GROUP, RAKIURA AND ATTRIBUTION OF MID-18TH CENTURY ENGLISH PORCELAINS

In 2014 Dr ROSS RAMSAY continued his research relating to the natural history of Southland and his ongoing interest in raw materials, forensic science, and mid-18th century English porcelains.
Ross holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science (Hons) degrees from the University of Auckland and a PhD in Earth Science from the University of New England. He teaches on the Environmental Management degree programme. He has headed a collaborative research project with Dr Chris Adams (Geological and Nuclear Sciences) and Mr Russell Beck into radiometric dating of detrital zircons contained within the quartzose metasediments of the Pegasus Group, Rakiura (Stewart Island), New Zealand.

These rafts of metasediments ranging from quartz-rich to partially calcareous rocks are found included within a spectrum of later granites. As Ross explains: 'traditionally these metasediments have been dated to around four hundred million years old, however our research is revealing that the some contained zircons are actually much older than that – some dating to 3 billion years +.'

Zircon is a zirconium silicate mineral (ZrSiO4) that belongs to the tetragonal crystal system and has an SG of 4.7. ‘Zircon has the ability to take in and incorporate crystallise small amounts of the unstable element uranium,’ says Ross. One isotope of uranium is 238U which decays with a half-life of 4.47 billion years to 206Pb (lead). Another isotope of uranium, 235U decays to 207Pb with a half-life of 704 million years (0.704 billion years). ‘We know the rate at which these isotopes decay so we can use that information to find out when the detrital zircons within the Pegasus Group metasediments on Rakiura crystallised.’

In January 2014 Ross, Russell Beck, and Dr Adams collected representative samples from Table Hill, Blaikies Hill, and Mt Allen on Rakiura. ‘Our sample sites were very remote,’ says Ross. ’We were very remote,’ says Ross. ‘We were lucky to have help from Helisouth who provided helicopter access to the high mountain areas.’ Representative quartz-rich samples were collected and crushed, and those that contained heavy minerals including zircon were separated. The researchers found that, as sampling progressed south from Table Hill, the sediments based on texture appeared to increase in the grade of metamorphism.

Using the GEMOC facilities at Macquarie University, Dr Chris Adams was able to analyse and date 56 detrital zircon mineral grains from a sample collected from Table Hill. Preliminary analysis of the age data reveals a curious history. ‘The analysis indicates that some zircons, derived from very old sialic crust that is no longer recognised in or adjacent to New Zealand, have been shed into sediments that were reworked and finally incorporated into the Pegasus Group metasediments of Rakiura,’ Ross explains. ‘This dates the age of the host sediments (Pegasus Group) which we know to be no older than about 350 million years.’

In addition to his geological studies Ross has also continued his ongoing forensic science research into mid-18th century English magnesian porcelains. To date published research by Ross has established that three recipe types were used at Lund’s Bristol porcelain works (1749-1752), namely a porcellaneous stoneware (Si-All), a soapstone - lead body (Mg-Pb) and a soapstone-bone ash-lead body (Mg-Pb-Pb). He has also found that three refractory recipe types were used at the Limehouse porcelain works from 1766-early 1748, based on three previous published works by Freestone, Owen, Jay and Cashion. Work by Ross has finally recognised the long-rumoured presence of a Limehouse soapstone body only. ‘Current research questions whether this soapstone – bone ash body was ever made at Limehouse and at least two other factories operating in this general time period need to be considered,’ he says.

After some eight years of research and chemical analysis Ross and co-workers (Daniels and Gael Ramsay) can claim to have dated and attributed the most significant conundrum in current English ceramic research, namely the George II porcelain busts and associated wall brackets. Ross points out that in order to understand these magnificent Mg-P-Pb and Mg-Pb busts and historical wall brackets one needs to interpret the symbolism contained in both bust and bracket. Whilst the English ceramic establishment has yet to comment on this new research, Ross has little doubt that this major conundrum has finally been solved after some 200 years of discussion.

In order to confirm his dating Ross spent several days at the analytical facilities, Monash University, where he undertook non-destructive analyses of various ceramic items including material produced at the pottery works of Whitehaven, Cumbria. ‘This area has made a major contribution to English pottery output including English creamwares,’ he claims. English ceramic experts have failed to understand that there were two main branches of the illustrious Wedgwood family with the Aaron Wedgwood branch migrating to Cumbria in the late 17th C. A monograph on Whitehaven creamwares is being prepared for publication as of January 2015. In November 2014 Ross and his wife and co-researcher Gael were invited to speak at ‘Science Express’ at Te Papa Museum in Wellington. ‘We were able to show how recent forensic analysis of 18th century porcelains is challenging accepted wisdom about their origins,’ says Ross.
I hope that the results of my research will influence the formation of policies and practices to improve the experiences of these overseas nurse educators and thereby to support top quality teaching and learning in New Zealand schools of nursing.

EXPERIENCES OF OVERSEAS NURSE EDUCATORS

New Zealand tertiary institutes are welcoming an increasing number of nurse educators from around the world. As part of her PhD studies, REEN SKARIA is researching the challenges experienced by nurse educators coming to teach in schools of nursing in this country.
Reen is a nurse educator in the School of Nursing. She has a Masters in Nursing from the University of Manipal Academy of Higher Education and has extensive experience in nursing and education. The aim of her current research is to investigate the experiences of overseas nurse educators teaching in New Zealand nursing schools. She is also interested in assessing the potential benefits of faculty development programmes for overseas nurse educators. Her work involves in-depth interviews and focus groups with overseas nurse educators teaching in nursing schools around New Zealand. In October 2014 Reen presented her findings at the Asia-Pacific International Conference in Qualitative Research in Nursing, Midwifery and Health, in Newcastle, Australia.

There is currently a shortage of nurses within New Zealand as many locally trained nurses choose to work overseas. In addition to the demand for more trained nurses in New Zealand there is also a pressing need for experienced educators to train them. Reen notes that it is difficult for institutes to retain highly qualified teaching faculty members as the workforce ages and in the face of the inducement of higher paying positions outside of education. New Zealand tertiary institutes are employing more nurse educators who have been trained overseas,’ she says. ‘It is the experiences of these overseas nurse educators that I am exploring.’ Her interest in this field was inspired by her personal experience of coming from outside of New Zealand to teach at SIT School of Nursing and by the stories she heard from colleagues who have made a similar journey. ‘Some of the challenges experienced by overseas nurse educators are around how to deal with different student expectations and teaching culture,’ explains Reen. ‘A number also face complications in getting their qualifications recognised locally, and of course they have all the usual challenges that migrants face around getting themselves and their families settled in a new country and trying to establish local support networks.’

While most of those she interviewed praised New Zealand as a place to live they shared stories of the cultural confusion, mistakes and disorientation they had experienced at work especially in the first months of teaching. ‘Overseas educators are often unaware of things such as how to claim expenses or cultural safety, things that are taken for granted as “normal” by local staff,’ Reen says. ‘These are the kind of things that need to be included as part of an orientation programme for overseas nurse educators.’ Some of her participants also felt they were not accepted by their colleagues and worried that, to some extent, they would always be regarded as ‘immigrants’ or outsiders.

Reen is passionate about making others aware of the experiences of overseas nurse educators joining the staff of New Zealand schools of nursing. ‘As practitioners we need to be aware of the difficulties these educators face and how to support them. I hope that the results of my research will influence the formation of policies and practices to improve the experiences of these overseas nurse educators and thereby to support top quality teaching and learning in New Zealand schools of nursing.’
‘BEING MADE’: PERFORMING DISCIPLINING BODIES

Artist and educator RUTH MYERS has had a highly productive year working on her PhD project and giving a number of presentations of her ongoing work exploring viewing encounters with the disciplining and gesturing filmic body as shared performance in early film and contemporary video art.
Ruth is an artist and tutor at Southern Institute of Technology in Invercargill. She has a Masters in Art and Design from Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and is currently working on her doctoral thesis in the School of Art and Design at AUT. Her PhD project explores encountering the disciplining and gesturing body as shared performance in early film and contemporary video art. Ruth is particularly focused on the temporalities of display where the present tense, and modes of interruption, situates participants in forms of shared performance.

Ruth presented her paper ‘here and now, this and that, Exploring Temporalities of Display and Interruption in Encounters with the Filmic Body’ at ACTION & DELAY, a symposium on temporality in performance and media arts hosted by AUT in May, 2014. ‘My paper takes as its setting the early films produced for the Kinetoscope, an individual peephole viewing device developed in the late nineteenth century, which, while only prevalent for a couple of years, provides some of the first encounters with the filmic moving body’ says Ruth. ‘These technologies of early film were developed to record movement, and are inherently tied up with a physiological analysis of the moving body, contributing to normative work of measuring, regulating and controlling moving bodies by revealing unseen processes of bodily movement and providing the ability to replay and scrutinise. These very short films of body performances, such as dancing, acrobatics, and sneezing are not about stories, but rather, focus on the momentary acts of display, which are governed by a temporality of immediacy film theorist Tom Gunning describes as “here it is, look at it”’. Ruth explains this present tense is fraught with disruption and dislocation, a complex exchange between viewers and screen bodies that is affected by the viewing apparatus and the social space it occurs within, ‘addressing and implicating the viewer’.

In her research Ruth is experimenting with present tense temporality and forms of interruption to explore a reflexive encountering of gesturing disciplining body as predicament both in the temporality of body display, as a continual ‘happening now’, and in the viewer encounter, navigating viewing apparatuses that require to be contended with, to hold, to bend over, to share. Filmic body performances of labouring gesturing body as disciplining efforts, remain in an insistent momentary act. These modes, Ruth suggests, promote and situate forms of embodied viewing and require the attention of the individual viewer within a social setting. In this, Ruth is interested in exploring encountering the disciplining and gesturing body as shared performance, in which we contribute, and are implicated in. Ruth’s artistic practice will continue to explore these concepts as her doctoral study develops in the future.
SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

DR JERRY HOFFMAN PRESENTED A PAPER RELATING TO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AT THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MULTIDISCIPLINARY (IJAS) CONFERENCE IN TORONTO, CANADA IN 2014.
JERRY is the Learning Support Officer at Southern Institute of Technology, and also teaches on the Postgraduate Diploma of Business programme. He has a Master of Education from Johnson State College in Vermont, and a PhD in Education from the University of Otago.

The conference presentation was a result of previous research that had been carried out for the Committed Learners Project (CLP), with the goal of disseminating the results of the project to as wide an audience as possible. The Committed Learners Project, a study he worked on in collaboration with Dr Sally Bodkin-Allen and Dr Jo Whittle, examined student engagement across the student life-cycle. IJAS has been at the forefront in supporting the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to ensure higher education’s contribution to the common good,’ says Jerry. ‘Since this was an international conference there were participants from all over the world. It was very interesting to hear the various perspectives on education (mostly higher education) from areas of which I had little knowledge.’

Jerry presented an overview of the results of the Committed Learners Project. This is a project that brings together and highlights the good practice of many teaching staff at institutes of technology and polytechnics throughout New Zealand. The focus of Jerry’s paper was on practical ideas that could be implemented in teaching. ‘During the rest of the conference several participants approached me and said they found the session very useful, especially for the practical application,’ explains Jerry. ‘I was also able to provide details of the website from which the report could be downloaded to those who were interested.’ Jerry says that his presentation was immediately after the keynote which resulted in him having a large audience and they asked many insightful questions of him.

Jerry enjoyed the experience of sharing the findings of a New Zealand project at an international conference. ‘Going to an international conference is worth the time and the effort. It gives us a wider perspective of what is going on in the world of higher education. The passion and enthusiasm of the presenters for their field of study was inspirational.’ Jerry says that many of the presentations he attended developed his own teaching and research. ‘Often their presentations gave me ideas of what could be applied here at SIT. Collaboration seemed to be a very important facet. Mostly it was working with colleagues on projects, but it also included some co-teaching and fieldwork.’

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THE GREAT MIX-UP AND MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

Dr SALLY BODKIN-ALLEN was involved in a number of research projects in 2014 that reflected her interests in composing, early childhood music and editing, along with her ongoing research focus in the area of student engagement in the School of Music at SIT.
Sally is Academic Leader for the Bachelor of Contemporary Music and Bachelor of Audio Production degrees at SIT and holds a PhD from the University of Otago in ethnomusicology and music education. Her primary focus in 2014 related to an initiative in the School of Music known as ‘Mix-Up Week’. When I worked on the Committed Learners Project a few years ago it really made me think about the importance of engaging students right from the start of their studies,’ Sally explains.

Sally’s research involved an evaluation of ‘Mix-Up Week’ drawing on interviews with a small number of students from each year of the Bachelor of Contemporary Music programme. The interviews were carried out by a research assistant, who asked the students questions such as if the activities of ‘Mix-Up Week’ made them feel connected to the School of Music, and which activities were the best for getting to know the other students. The two activities that had the biggest impact on the engagement of the students were the staging of a Flash Mob and creating bands that mixed students from different years together to perform at the regular Friday concert. ‘They were also asked if they had any suggestions for future “Mix-Up Weeks”, says Sally. ‘They had some really great ideas which we have been able to incorporate into our plans for 2015.’

Sally is also a published composer and 2014 saw her writing some short pieces for solo instruments and piano accompaniment. ‘I noticed that my children were struggling to find pieces to play in the local competitions for the New Zealand composer section,’ says Sally. ‘So I realised there was an opportunity here to write some music for instruments such as cornet and saxophone for students to play in this category.’ Songs from her previously written musicals were used as the basis for these new pieces. ‘I used melodies from some of my favourite songs I have written over the years and rearranged and rewrote them to suit the new context and the range and timbre of the particular instrument I was writing for. I also altered the piano accompaniment to suit the new context.’ Three instrumental pieces were completed in 2014 and named after the young performers they were composed for. ‘Finn’s News’ for tenor sax and piano, ‘Florence’s Nightlight’ for cornet and piano, and ‘Pirate Jack’ for trombone and piano were published by SOUNZ (Centre for New Zealand Music) and have all been performed on many occasions such as the Invercargill competitions and for NCEA assessments. Sally intends to write more such pieces in 2015 and has plans to get her compositions for solo brass instruments performed at the provincial and national brass band contests.
WHY STUDENTS LEAVE ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

TERI MCCLELLAND has had an ongoing interest in online distance learning and its significance for adult learners who are often unable to attend traditional on-campus study because of family or work commitments. Teri’s research investigated the influence of various factors on why students withdraw from foundation level online programmes of study.

Teri is the Head of Faculty for SIT2LRN, the faculty at SIT which is responsible for all flexible learning programmes. In 2014 Teri completed her Doctor of Education at the Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Her thesis, entitled “Why do they leave? An exploration of situational, dispositional, institutional, technological, and epistemological factors on undergraduate student withdrawal from online studies at an institute of technology in New Zealand” examined a very current issue related to retention and completion rates. ‘Online distance education is an important part of the way higher institutions operate,’ says Teri. ‘Therefore, the need to understand the factors which influence student to withdraw from distance programmes has become vital for higher education.’

A review of the literature revealed that very little is known about the factors which influence a student’s decision to withdraw from their distance study in a New Zealand context. Teri’s research goes some way to address that imbalance. Data was gathered from 117 students who had withdrawn from a foundation level programme who were surveyed via telephone.

Teri’s research found that there were no statistically significant relationships between any of the factors (situational, dispositional, institutional, technological, or epistemological) and any particular respondent age group. Her findings in this area support the conclusions of other researchers into withdrawal from online distance education.

The findings also indicate that student connectivity within the course of study is an important aspect, particularly for women. ‘Women are more likely to feel isolated when studying than their male peers,’ says Teri. ‘And women comprise more than three quarters of the student population for online, distance study.’ Teri suggests that when looking at methods for increasing student connectivity and time management support, institutes could consider ways which integrate connectivity and time management support. ‘The institute could also look further into why female students feel more isolated in
order to identify potential means for enabling these students to feel they are with others and not isolated in their studies.’

In the current online environment there is a great deal of emphasis placed on facilitator responsiveness, with facilitators responding to student emails or discussion board questions within a 48 hour time period. However, Teri explains, it may be more beneficial for students if facilitators initiate correspondence through the tools available through the learning management system, as opposed to waiting for students to contact them. ‘Another initiative that could be undertaken is the initiation of group work, through social tools such as wikis where the facilitator can group students together and provide guidance as they undertake their teamwork.’

Teri is looking forward to sharing the results of her study with the staff in the SIT2LRN Faculty at the staff training workshops at the beginning of 2015.

Women are more likely to feel isolated when studying than their male peers, and women comprise more than three quarters of the student population for online, distance study.
Published papers and articles


Exhibitions


Performance


Musical compositions


Postgraduate theses


Conference presentations


Montayre, J. R. (2014). Head, shoulders, knees and toes: An item analysis of MCQ item exams for the anatomy and physiology class of Bachelor of Nursing year 1 students. Presentation at National Tertiary Learning and Teaching Conference, Invercargill, New Zealand.


Rhodes, J. I. (2014). Responding to diverse learners by engaging and making learning memorable and effective with the use of board games. Presentation at the National Tertiary Learning & Teaching Conference, Invercargill, New Zealand.


Reviews


Public talks


