Individual, Institutional and Environmental Factors Influencing Online Distance Tertiary Teaching in New Zealand

BY

Belinda Jane Dawson, M.A., PGDipTT

(née Lawrence)

A thesis submitted to the University of Otago in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Higher Education Development Centre, The University of Otago

2018
Abstract

Online and distance teaching requires careful negotiation between the goals, beliefs and philosophy of the teacher and the inherent pedagogy of the technologies and system they are working within. While the relationships among individual teacher beliefs, experiences and technology use in online and distance teaching has been well explored, the impact of other influential factors such as institutional systems, government policies and opportunities for professional development remain comparatively under-researched. The current research addressed this gap by investigating the individual and environmental factors that influenced teaching practice in the New Zealand online and distance learning (ODL) environment at three tertiary institutions. Fifteen teachers and educational designers from two universities and one polytechnic shared their experiences of designing and teaching online through three annual semi-structured interviews held between January 2014 and July 2016. Publicly available information about strategies, policies and systems at each institution was also collected and analysed. The research used a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) for initial data collection and coding, complemented by the use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2000) as a framework for systemic analysis of the data collected from the three institutions. The longitudinal design allowed for capture of chronological change and consideration of the dynamics and evolution of each institutional system. To further contextualise the individual and institutional changes observed, data from the wider tertiary teaching environment were reviewed, including governmental strategies, policies and funding, and international education trends. The findings are discussed in relation to the key dimensions of the CHAT model – subject, goal, tools, rules, community and division of labour, where participants provide the subject perspective for each institution. In all three cases institutional and individual goals were slightly divergent, with institutions focusing on meeting performance indicators for funding agreements, and individuals focusing on creating good teaching and learning experiences for the students. Use of technologies for teaching was mediated by institutional requirements, support and funding, and participants observed challenges in finding time to explore new technologies due to competing research and teaching pressures. Across all three institutions, staff discussed an abundance of rules impacting teaching practice, although polytechnic staff were more highly regulated than university staff. Participants reported high workloads, and challenges finding the time to meet research requirements in addition to teaching and service requirements. Teaching participants were more likely to be involved in a
community of practice than educational design participants, with the most common source of professional development for teachers being communication with other teachers. The structure and division of labour for creating courses varied across institutions. The more highly regulated the relationship, the more tension there was between teacher and educational designer roles. Government policy, funding and reporting requirements were clearly felt by all participants, and changes in these requirements had clear flow on effects to teaching practice and course design throughout the research period. The findings will be useful to practitioners and researchers who are interested in the impact of systems, processes, professional development and teacher experiences on course development.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank those without whose support I would not have been able to succeed in this lengthy project. Firstly, a heartfelt thank you to my fellow PhD travellers Amanda Cossham and Gradon Diprose, who were there with me from the start and encouraged me every step of the way until the end. You shared your experiences, your resources and your challenges with me. It was your light that brought me out of the many dark places that a PhD candidate has to travel through. Secondly, I am incredibly grateful for the never-ending encouragement given to me by my primary supervisor Sarah Stein. You nurtured me, mentored me, guided and supported me, and taught me the value of unconditional belief in your students. To Russell Butson, my secondary supervisor – thank you for inspiring me to start on this PhD, and for your incisive and intellectually stimulating feedback which honed and sharpened my thinking. Thank you to my interviewees, who shared their own personal experiences over a period of three years so generously, trusting me with their individual stories so that a greater story could be told. Finally, thank you to my family and friends and most especially my husband and children for understanding when I had to work on the thesis rather than be with you. Your support made this work possible.

This research was also partly supported by the TEU Crozier Scholarship (2016), which covered many of the costs associated with travelling, interviewing, and preparing data for analysis. I am grateful for the additional support provided by this scholarship, and hope that my work will be of some interest to the scholarship committee, and the wider TEU community.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... iii

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... v

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................. vii

List of Tables .................................................................................................................. xvi

List of Figures .................................................................................................................. xvii

List of Abbreviations ...................................................................................................... xviii

Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................................................... 1

A Need for Institutional Level Analysis ........................................................................ 1

Definition of Terms ........................................................................................................... 3
  eLearning ..................................................................................................................... 3
  Distance Learning ........................................................................................................ 4
  Online and Distance Learning (ODL) .......................................................................... 6

Outline of Thesis Chapters .............................................................................................. 7
  Chapter 2: Literature Review ...................................................................................... 7
  Chapter 3: Method ...................................................................................................... 7
  Chapters 4, 5 and 6: Institutional Cases ...................................................................... 8
  Chapter 7: Summary of Institutional Cases ................................................................. 8
  Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations ........................................................... 8

Chapter 2: Literature Review ........................................................................................... 9

Research Questions ......................................................................................................... 9

Online and Distance Learning within New Zealand ....................................................... 10

New Zealand Tertiary Education System ...................................................................... 10
  Policy and Governance .............................................................................................. 12
  TEC Funding and Tertiary Sector Management .......................................................... 13
  Performance Based Research Fund ............................................................................ 14
    Challenges of the Performance Based Research Fund ............................................. 15
  Online Distance Education in New Zealand ............................................................... 17
    Distance Student Profile and Funding Impact ........................................................ 18
  Summary of the New Zealand Tertiary Education Context ........................................ 18

Global Context ................................................................................................................ 19

Global Trends in Tertiary Education .............................................................................. 19
  Education from public good to private benefit ......................................................... 19
  Higher education as a business ................................................................................. 20
  Responsibility to community ....................................................................................... 22
  Removal of staff voice from decision making .......................................................... 22
  Unbundling in higher education ............................................................................... 23
  Technology driving change ....................................................................................... 23
  Learning analytics ..................................................................................................... 24

Macrosystem, Mesosystem and Exosystem context ....................................................... 24

Economy ......................................................................................................................... 24

Globalisation .................................................................................................................. 25

Socio-political context .................................................................................................. 25

Technological Development ......................................................................................... 26

Social technology use .................................................................................................. 26

Internet and broadband usage ..................................................................................... 27
Distance Education provision ................................................................. 71

Open Polytechnic 2014-2016 ................................................................. 72
Vision, Mission and Goals .................................................................... 72
Keeping up with technological change .................................................. 72
Meeting TEC funding targets ............................................................... 73

Goals ............................................................................................................ 73
Institutional goals ..................................................................................... 73
Unclear organisational vision ................................................................. 73
Diversified revenue .................................................................................... 74
Disaggregated value chain ..................................................................... 74
White labelling ......................................................................................... 74
Media-rich curriculum ............................................................................. 75
Industry driven curriculum .................................................................... 75
Implicit goals .......................................................................................... 75
Courses teach themselves ...................................................................... 76
Cost over pedagogy .................................................................................. 76
Reusable modules and the Cookie cutter approach ................................ 77
Technology replacing teachers ............................................................... 78

Individual goals ....................................................................................... 78
Educational as societal service ............................................................... 78
Supporting the organisational model ..................................................... 79
Collaborative co-constructive teaching .................................................. 79
Conflicting Goals ..................................................................................... 80

Tools and Technology Use .................................................................... 80
The LMS: Moodle (The Online Campus) ................................................ 80
Moodle lockdown .................................................................................... 81
Minimum guidelines templates ............................................................... 81
Staff desire to keep up with technology ................................................ 82
iQualify ...................................................................................................... 82
iQualify vision unclear ............................................................................ 83
Using Role to Achieve Technology Changes ........................................ 84
Technology affecting course design ...................................................... 84
Tools restraining academic freedom in course design ........................... 85

Rules ............................................................................................................ 85
Policies and Regulations ........................................................................ 86
Industrial model ....................................................................................... 86
Quality processes for Online Courses .................................................. 86
Tension between fixed courses and responsive teaching ....................... 87
Lying about hours spent revising courses .............................................. 89
Staff resistance to policies ................................................................... 91
Workload ................................................................................................. 92
Research .................................................................................................. 93
Impact of TEC funding ........................................................................... 95

Key problems within the rules ............................................................... 96
System unknown or unknowable? .......................................................... 96
Rules are unclear ..................................................................................... 97
Rules are time consuming and bureaucratic ........................................... 98
Micro-management constraining staff effectiveness .............................. 99
Rule setting excluding front line staff .................................................... 100
Rules and finances .................................................................................. 100
The disconnected marionette ................................................................. 102
Relationships and personalities keeping the system together ................. 102
Working the system ............................................................................... 103
Silos .......................................................................................................... 103

Summary of rules problems ................................................................... 104

Community ................................................................................................ 104
| Page |
|---|---|
| Using technology to achieve teaching goals | 135 |
| Communication & engagement | 136 |
| Information provision | 136 |
| Identifying student needs | 137 |
| Lack of institutional technology restrictions | 138 |
| Student drivers and expectations | 139 |
| Adoption of Technology | 140 |
| Technology needs to be manageable | 140 |
| Providing alternative options | 140 |
| Challenges of technology | 141 |
| Technology requiring fine tuning | 141 |
| Landscape changes rapidly | 141 |
| Using technology properly requires practice change | 141 |
| Using new technology takes more time | 142 |
| Usability issues leading to workarounds | 143 |
| IT support for technology could be improved | 143 |
| Benefits of Technology | 144 |
| A key focus: The move toward video | 144 |
| Using video to increase accessibility of content | 144 |
| Using video to minimise deviation from original course design | 144 |
| Technical issues of lecture capture | 145 |
| Moral issues with lecture capture | 145 |
| Pedagogical issues with lecture capture | 146 |
| Lecture capture project rolling out | 148 |
| Face to face vs online teaching | 148 |
| Distance and internal students are different cohorts | 148 |
| Keeping distance and internal cohorts separate | 149 |
| Blurring lines between distance and face-to-face | 150 |
| Block contact courses | 151 |
| Community building harder by distance | 152 |
| Preferences between face-to-face and online cohorts | 153 |
| Judging the effectiveness of distance teaching | 155 |
| Trying to bring distance closer to face-to-face | 155 |
| Increased student expectations | 156 |
| Face-to-face teaching more pressurised | 157 |
| Rules | 158 |
| Policies and regulation | 158 |
| Course design | 158 |
| Lack of rules breeds good and bad practice extremes | 159 |
| Moodle page rules | 159 |
| Variation across schools | 160 |
| Lack of enforcement | 161 |
| Disregard for rules | 161 |
| Regulations for course amendments | 162 |
| Need for greater structure | 163 |
| Cottage industry vs. centralisation of course design | 163 |
| Burdensome bureaucracy | 164 |
| Retentions and completions | 165 |
| Workload | 167 |
| High workload | 167 |
| Juggling to fit everything in | 167 |
| Research and service commitments take up teaching time | 168 |
| Teaching is time consuming | 168 |
| Personal life and work balance | 169 |
| New workload review processes | 170 |
| Research | 170 |
| PBRF always in the background | 170 |
| PBRF portfolio pressure | 171 |
Chapter 6: Victoria University of Wellington ........................................................................191

History of Victoria University .......................................................................................... 191
Origins of Victoria University .......................................................................................... 191
Online and distance teaching ......................................................................................... 191

Victoria University 2014-2016 ...................................................................................... 192
Vision ............................................................................................................................ 192
Research ....................................................................................................................... 192
Links from government to institutional strategy ............................................................. 192
Internationalisation ..................................................................................................... 193

Goals ............................................................................................................................... 193
Institutional goals .......................................................................................................... 193
TEC influence on institutional goals .............................................................................. 193
The corporate university ............................................................................................... 194
Students as customers .................................................................................................. 194
Increasing layers of management ................................................................................ 195
Fiduciary approach to online teaching .......................................................................... 196
Keeping up with technological trends ......................................................................... 198
Earthquake resilience .................................................................................................. 199
Teachers’ goals ............................................................................................................. 199
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tools and technology use</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations in technology use</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LMS: Blackboard</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Blackboard for communication</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed efficacy of forums</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LMS influencing course design</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from paper to video for teaching</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges of using video for teaching</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied use of the LMS between face to face and online cohorts</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions of student technological capability</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the affordances of the particular technology</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovating with technology</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time to innovate</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed experiments</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incompatibility between systems</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional interest in technological innovation</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face vs online</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferring face to face teaching</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of synchronicity seen as a barrier</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring student understanding and progress</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a community</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of student learning online</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student feedback about online vs face to face classes</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online courses attracting less capable students?</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended courses</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online engagement dropping under pressure</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unappreciated work of teaching online</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online teaching easier now than in the past</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and regulation</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules affecting teaching practice</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endless paperwork to create new courses</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental influences on teaching</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New management</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Standardisation</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within discipline course consistency</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging pressure on completion rates</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of rules or guidance for current courses</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure of policies</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No policies for online teaching</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilful ignorance of rules</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High workload</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time to renovate courses</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable hours</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental variation</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing career with work/life balance</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced hours on paper but not in practice</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time to research</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBRF pressure</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBRF doesn’t reward teachers</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish or perish</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and qualifications in teaching</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Academic Development</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional sessions inconvenient ................................................................. 232
Peer support ........................................................................................................ 232
Learning from students ................................................................................... 233
Professional organisations and conferences .................................................. 234
VicTeach ............................................................................................................. 234
Sharing Practice ................................................................................................ 236

Division of labour ............................................................................................. 237
Variety in staff involved in course development ............................................ 237
Collaborative course design .......................................................................... 238
Collaborative teaching ....................................................................................... 239
CAD and CAT ..................................................................................................... 240
Lecturer perceptions of CAD staff .................................................................... 241
Uncertain where to seek support ....................................................................... 242

The evolving system .......................................................................................... 242
The system illustrated ........................................................................................ 243

Chapter Summary .......................................................................................... 244

Chapter 7: Summary of Institutional Cases ..................................................... 245

Individual Factors ............................................................................................. 245
Teacher beliefs and experience ......................................................................... 245
Teacher goals ....................................................................................................... 246
Tools .................................................................................................................. 246
LMS ................................................................................................................... 246
Other tools .......................................................................................................... 247
IT Pace of change ............................................................................................... 247
Community ......................................................................................................... 247
Summary of individual factors ......................................................................... 248

Institutional Factors .......................................................................................... 248
Institutional goals for online learning .............................................................. 249
Institutional use of technology ......................................................................... 249
Rules ................................................................................................................ 250
Course design policies and processes ............................................................... 250
Workload ........................................................................................................... 251
Division of Labour ............................................................................................. 251
Summary of Institutional Factors ................................................................... 252

Environmental Factors .................................................................................... 253
Government funding ........................................................................................ 253
PBRF .................................................................................................................. 254
Technology changes ......................................................................................... 255
Higher education as a business ....................................................................... 255
Summary of Environmental Factors .................................................................. 256

Overall Summary of Influential Factors .......................................................... 256

Chapter Summary .......................................................................................... 257

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations ............................................... 259

Implications ....................................................................................................... 259
Goals .................................................................................................................. 259
Tools .................................................................................................................. 260
Rules .................................................................................................................. 260
Division of Labour ............................................................................................. 261
Contextual Factors ............................................................................................. 262
Governmental influences ................................................................................. 262
Global technological and educational influences .......................................... 262
Effective and Ineffective ODL Systems ............................................................ 263

xiv
Limitations and Future Research ........................................................................................................... 266

Recommendations ................................................................................................................................... 267
Recommendations for Individuals ........................................................................................................... 267
Be clear about your goal, and what tools you need to achieve it ............................................................. 267
Be aware of the needs of the distance student ....................................................................................... 267
Recognise the time needed for effective ODL course creation .............................................................. 267
Learn from others; an individual does not have to be the sole expert .................................................. 268
Seek professional development ............................................................................................................... 268
Recommendations for Institutions ........................................................................................................... 268
Provide ODL professional development ................................................................................................. 268
Choose technologies carefully ............................................................................................................... 268
Create the right level of regulation ........................................................................................................ 269
Consult the experts (your staff) ............................................................................................................. 270
Sharing of roles and responsibilities ...................................................................................................... 270
Invest in educational designers and a clear design process ................................................................. 270
Provide time and professional development for ODL .......................................................................... 271
Recommendations for Tertiary Sector Governance ............................................................................... 271

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................................... 272

References ............................................................................................................................................. 274

APPENDIX A: ......................................................................................................................................... 293

Information and Consent Form ............................................................................................................. 293

APPENDIX B .......................................................................................................................................... 297

Interview Schedules ............................................................................................................................... 297
Interview Guide 2014 .............................................................................................................................. 297
Interview Guide 2015 .............................................................................................................................. 298
Interview Guide 2016 .............................................................................................................................. 298
List of Tables

Table 2.1  Internet Usage in New Zealand 2013-2017 ......................................................... 28
Table 2.2  NMC Horizon Technology Reports for Australian Tertiary Institutions and
          Global Higher Education .......................................................................................... 31
Table 3.1  The Eight Step Model (reproduced from Mwanza-Simwami, 2011) .................. 56
Table 3.2  Participant Demographics ............................................................................. 62
List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model of development........................................... 48
Figure 3.2 Engeström’s (2000) cultural historical activity system.............................................. 51
Figure 3.3 The activity system for this study shaped by the CHAT framework.............................. 54
Figure 4.1 Activity system for the Open Polytechnic (2014)........................................................ 123
Figure 4.2 Activity system for the Open Polytechnic (2015)........................................................ 124
Figure 4.3 Activity system for the Open Polytechnic (2016)........................................................ 124
Figure 5.1 Activity system for Massey University (2014-2016)................................................... 190
Figure 6.1 Activity system for Victoria University (2014).......................................................... 243
Figure 6.2 Activity system for Victoria University (2015-2016)................................................... 244
Figure 8.1 Ineffective ODL teaching activity system................................................................. 264
Figure 8.2 Effective ODL teaching activity system................................................................. 265
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AKO</th>
<th>Ako Aotearoa National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CUAP</td>
<td>Committee on University Academic Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTS</td>
<td>Equivalent Full Time Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTS</td>
<td><em>One EFT is defined as the student workload that would normally be carried out in a single academic year (12-month period) by a student enrolled full time. This equates to 120 credits in the NZQA framework or 1200 hours, as 1 credit is equivalent to 10 hours study</em> (Ministry of Education, 2017b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPI</td>
<td>Educational Performance Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full Time Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITP</td>
<td>Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZQA</td>
<td>New Zealand Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODL</td>
<td>Online and Distance Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>Open Polytechnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBRF</td>
<td>Performance Based Research Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEC</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TES</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEU</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>Victoria University of Wellington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction

An underlying assumption of much research in higher education is that a teacher’s practice is substantially within the control of the teacher. However, the way a teacher creates and maintains their course is also influenced by a number of system level constraints and affordances. These can include technologies supported by their institution, the rules and policies for their department, and whether others such as educational designers or academic developers are involved in the course development process. These factors join with the more commonly recognised influences of teacher’s beliefs and experiences, and disciplinary practice norms, to affect how teachers practice online course design and teaching. Many of the factors affecting an individual’s teaching practice may be outside the sphere of influence of the teacher, or even their institution, however some, such as the choice of tools, intended outcomes, and roles and responsibilities of individual players, may be alterable to effect change. The aim of this research was to investigate the individual, institutional and environmental factors that impact on the way faculty create and maintain their online and distance courses, using the systems-based approach of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 2000) as a framework, and to provide recommendations for practitioners, institutions and governing bodies on how aspects of the systems could be changed to promote more effective online distance teaching.

In this chapter I will begin with a definition of the area of research, and clarification of some of the key terms used, including online distance learning. I will then briefly summarise each of the remaining chapters, to provide the reader with a sense of where to find key information in the thesis.

A Need for Institutional Level Analysis

Teaching is both an art and a science (Laurillard, 2012). In order to be effective, teachers need to understand and apply pedagogical theory to their teaching practice with a certain degree of consistency and rigour. However, they also need to be able to respond creatively to students, to respond to their learning needs and have their teaching provide the bridge between a student’s current understanding of the world, and the student’s achievement of the intended learning outcomes. In short, achieving the goal of successful student learning is contingent on the effective application of pedagogy to the particular context of the learner, the discipline and the course. The scholarly field of research into teaching and learning provides a repository of theory and practical applications for
enhancing student learning which teachers can draw on to achieve their teaching goals (Gossman, Haigh, & Jiao, 2009).

The scholarship of teaching and learning has as its core a desire to improve educational experiences for teachers and learners, and the field of distance education research is a strong contributor to this genre. However, despite decades of research into distance education theory and practice, gaps remain in our understanding of how to achieve effective practice in distance learning and teaching. As Garrison (2000, p. 13) noted, “the challenge for distance education theorists in the new century is to provide an understanding of the opportunities and limitations of facilitating teaching and learning at a distance with a variety of methods and technologies”. Although reports of individual practice are useful to individual practitioners who wish to modify their teaching practice, the dominance of individual level case studies have limited benefit to our understanding of how to improve distance education at a higher level.

A review of research in distance education by Zawacki-Richter, Backer, and Vogt (2009) found a noticeable deficit of papers addressing issues occurring at the institutional and governance level of distance education. In particular, issues such as strategy in distance education, management of innovation, organisational development and professional development were identified as areas where additional research would be highly beneficial to the field. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2009) argue that sound research into the effectiveness of interventions at institutional management level are necessary in order for distance education practice to be effectively guided. Further to this, researchers in distance education have historically tended to focus on the affordances and efficacies of certain technologies (B. Anderson & Simpson, 2012; Zawacki-Richter & Anderson, 2014). This is understandable given the centrality of technology as a core mediator in the teaching-learning experience of distance education (explored further in Chapter 2). However, to balance the field there needs to be greater consideration of the social, pedagogical, psychological, economic, and political influences on distance education.

This research sought to address this gap in the literature by investigating the provision of online distance learning at three New Zealand tertiary institutions. The study investigated individual factors as well as institutional and environmental factors that influenced course design and teaching at the three institutions. Individual factors investigated included participants’ experiences, beliefs and teaching goals. More broadly, the research also investigated the influence of institutional and governmental strategies and policies on individual teaching practice and course design, as well as the influence of communities of practice and professional associations. The influence and effect of various
distribution of roles and responsibilities in the course design process were also explored. The research was carried out over a period of three years, enabling an overview of the dynamics of how the macro (wider educational trends), meso (institutional and governmental policies) and micro (individual level) systems evolved and interacted.

**Definition of Terms**

The area of interest for this study was the domain of online and distance teaching and learning in tertiary education in New Zealand. Because the concepts of online learning, distance learning and eLearning are frequently confused, both within the academic literature, and within and between organisations, this section begins with a brief clarification of how these terms will be used within this thesis.

**eLearning**

As the variety of technological tools available to support teaching have grown, so have the names used to refer to teaching that includes those tools, for example, computer assisted learning (CAL), technology assisted learning (TAL), technology enhanced learning (TEL), computer mediated communication (CMC), web-based learning, web enabled learning, electronic learning (eLearning), blended learning, online learning, mobile learning (mLearning). The definition of what is meant by each concept and what is included or excluded from each concept have varied over time, and sometimes across contexts, leading to a lack of shared vocabulary, and consequently a lack of clarity over the field, both in practice and in research (Mason & Rennie, 2006; Sangrà, Vlachopoulos, & Cabrera, 2012; Stein, Shephard, & Harris, 2011). Over the last decade, there has been increasing usage of the term eLearning as a coverall name to include many if not all of the names previously mentioned, as evidenced by the dying off of previous terms in the literature, and the decrease in usage by professional associations and educational institutions of terms other than eLearning.

Focusing on one term such as eLearning could be seen as providing a focal point for research, and a more common view of what is being enacted and aimed for by institutions in using technology to support learning. However, as Mason and Rennie (2006) note, there exist multiple definitions of the term eLearning, each of which put a different emphasis on the key components of technology, content and communication. For example, some definitions focus on the use of the Internet as a key component of eLearning, while others focus on the way eLearning enables learning and communication to occur across multiple locations. In some definitions, eLearning includes any use of electronic devices to supplement learning, and in several definitions, eLearning is
inclusive of both learning and teaching. Specific definitions of the term eLearning may also be dependent on the particular research agenda or purposes of the author, institution, or researcher (Friesen, 2009). Therefore, the opportunity remains for confusion and lack of consistency in use of the term eLearning. An attempt by Sangrà et al. (2012) to build an inclusive definition of eLearning from which to have a shared conception, resulted in their conclusion that the concept of eLearning was still evolving and that no single definition could cover all of the aspects that specialists from different fields and contexts considered fundamental. The lack of a shared professional definition has resulted in the continuance of each institution or professional group defining its own meaning of the term.

For the purpose of this thesis, the definition provided by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2018a) will be used. It defines eLearning as "learning and teaching that is facilitated by or supported through the appropriate use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)." They specifically note that this can include both blended learning (where eLearning and face to face learning aspects are combined), and learning that is delivered solely online. Within this thesis then, eLearning refers to the use of technologies to support learning in any context, and online learning is subsumed within this definition.

**Distance Learning**

The term distance learning is often used interchangeably with distance teaching and distance education. As Keegan (1996) and Moore and Kearsley (2005) argue, these are not synonymous terms; distance teaching and distance learning are two halves of the system of distance education, and each refers to different aspects of the education experience. However, for the purposes of this thesis, and the comparison between distance education and eLearning, the term distance learning will be used as an equivalent to distance education, in the same way that the term eLearning is used to encompass both learning and teaching.

The genesis of distance education was synchronous with developments in technology and communication around the time of the industrial revolution that supported learning to occur despite physical separation of the teacher and learner (Keegan, 1996). There are four key aspects of distance education that distinguish it from other forms of education. Most importantly, (a) distance education occurs when there is a physical separation of the learner from the teacher, and from other learners. In order to bridge this distance, (b) some form of technology is used to mediate communication between the learner and teacher, and between the learner and other learners. There have
been several stages of development in the types of technology used to support distance 
education; these are commonly referred to as the three generations of distance education 
was supported by printed correspondence (first generation), then through the use of 
television, radio and film (second generation), and most recently through interactive 
technologies such as audio and video conferencing, and Internet-based technologies 
(third generation).

If distance education is defined solely on the basis of the physical separation of 
teacher and student, and the use of technology to facilitate the educational process, this 
would also inadvertently include self-paced and informal learning. Therefore, Keegan 
(1996) argues that a complete definition of distance education needs to also recognise (c) 
the involvement of an educational institution in preparing the material and providing 
student support (distinguishing between formal and informal study), and (d) the 
provision of two-way communication between learner and teacher (distinguishing 
between the provision of education, and the provision of educational resources).

A further key element that distinguishes distance education from more traditional 
education is the significant difference in the organisational structures and systems used to 
create and support teaching and learning in distance education. Where educational 
resources in a face to face institution are typically created by the teacher at the time of 
teaching, and used (typically) only by that teacher for their own personal teaching 
practice; in a distance education institution there is often a separation of roles between 
those who create educational resources, and those who interact with the students using 
those educational resources. In effect, most distance education institutions follow an 
industrial model, where involvement in the educational process is separated out, and each 
person involved in the process has a specific role, such as course writer, or course 
facilitator. An industrial approach to education involves greater layers of planning and 
preparation compared to traditional education (Keegan, 1996) but has the advantage of 
standardisation, and therefore greater quality control, as well as enabling mass 
production or delivery of education 'at scale'. Moore and Kearsley's (2005, p2) definition 
of distance learning captures this important element:

*Distance education is planned learning that normally occurs in a different 
place from teaching, requiring special course design and instruction 
techniques, communication through various technologies, and special 
organisational and administrative arrangements.*
Chapter 1: Introduction

Online and Distance Learning (ODL)

Online and distance learning (ODL) can be thought of as a subset of both distance education and eLearning. Approaches to distance education have evolved alongside social and technological developments, and the current use of online learning technologies within distance education could be seen as simply the most recent stage in the evolution of the field. In fact, due to the longevity of distance education as a field compared to eLearning, some would argue that eLearning is a subset of distance education (e.g. Sangra et al., 2012), although this would not take into account eLearning that occurs in non-distance education contexts.

Confusion over the differences between eLearning and distance education have caused many authors to conflate the two (see for example Williams, Nicholas, & Gunter, 2005; Zemsky & Massy, 2004), leading to confusion in the literature. There seems to be "a common misleading tendency to refer to online education as a synonym for distance education" (Guri-Rosenblit, 2014, p. 109), particularly by campus-based institutions that have recently entered the field and are taking advantage of digital technologies to change how they offer courses. The advent of 'blended' modes of teaching and learning have blurred the boundaries between distance teaching and face to face teaching even further.

It is worth noting that because of these overlapping roots, while some online distance educators have years of experience in teaching by distance and online teaching is simply a change of tool and mode, there is also another cohort of online distance teachers who have emerged from a face to face teaching background, where the organisation now wishes to branch into online distance teaching. These educators may be completely unaware of the history of the field, the existence of distance specific teaching and learning research, or even the potential differences between eLearning for face to face cohorts compared to eLearning for distance cohorts. As Moore and Kearsley (2005) note, working and researching in a field without knowing the theory or history is like traversing a foreign country without a map, and one consequence of this is misuse of the vocabulary in the field, and the proliferation of research asking questions that have already been answered.

This thesis explores the teaching that occurs in an online and distance learning setting, comparing organisations that have come to ODL through a history of distance education, and organisations that have come to ODL through the development of eLearning to supplement face to face teaching. Further details about the history and context of each organisation is detailed as part of the individual cases discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Outline of Thesis Chapters

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 reviews the literature in key domains related to the area of interest that correspond with the study's findings. The chapter begins by providing context to this study, outlining the New Zealand tertiary education system including its funding and governance and the place of online distance education in the New Zealand tertiary sector. Global trends in tertiary education are reviewed, along with political, social and economic movements that colour the chronological setting. Technological developments are discussed, including the impact of changing technology, the relationship of the educational sector with technology, and the pedagogical impacts of technological choices in teaching online.

Systemic issues at an institutional level are explored through review of the wider literature, as well as through review of institutionally specific public documents such as strategies and investment plans. Individual factors that can influence teaching practice are reviewed, including beliefs about teaching and learning, teachers’ beliefs and uptake of technology in teaching, linkages between curriculum design and teaching practice, and the influence of communities of practice. Consideration is given to key areas such as workload, and research and teaching models, as well as professional development and institutional support for teachers.

Chapter 3: Method

Chapter 3 provides details of the methodological approach and analysis undertaken in the study. The research was undertaken from an interpretivist, co-constructivist perspective, seeking to develop a shared understanding of the research area with the research participants. A constructed grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) was used for initial data collection and coding, supplemented by tools for activity systems analysis developed by Mwanza-Simwami (2011). Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2000) was used as an overarching framework for systemic analysis of the three institutional systems investigated. Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the data collection methods, which included semi-structured interviews with 15 participants over three years, as well as observations of practice, and review of institutional documents. An explanation of the CHAT model and how it can be used to understand systemic change is provided.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapters 4, 5 and 6: Institutional Cases

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are the institutional cases which provide the findings of the research. Chapter 4 details the case of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, Chapter 5 is Massey University, and Chapter 6 describes Victoria University. For each case, the history of the institution is outlined briefly, along with a summary of the strategic focus of the organisation for the research period, 2014 to 2016. The remainder of each chapter is divided into sections that match the CHAT framework - subject, tools, goal, rules, community, and division of labour. Within each chapter tensions and contradictions in the systems are identified and discussed.

Chapter 7: Summary of Institutional Cases

Chapter 7 draws together the three institutional cases discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, and summarises the findings in terms of the individual, institutional and environmental factors influencing online distance teaching practice. Comparisons between the current findings and the previous literature are made, highlighting new understandings emergent through the research.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter 8 consolidates the outcomes of the study and discusses the implications of the findings. Limitations of the research are observed, and suggestions for further research are provided. To conclude, recommendations are made for individuals, institutions and governing bodies on how to achieve effective online distance teaching within the New Zealand tertiary education system.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Research Questions

The aim of this research was to investigate the individual and environmental factors that impact on the way faculty create and maintain online and distance courses. While an underlying assumption of much research in higher education is that a teacher’s practice is wholly within the control of the teacher, a systems-based perspective would highlight that the way a teacher creates and maintains their course is influenced by a number of system level constraints. These constraints can include the technologies approved or supported by their institution, and the involvement of others such as educational designers in the course development process. Teachers may also be affected by the norms, rules and policies for their department, as well as by prevailing government policy and funding regimes. The guiding question for this research project was:

*What are the individual and environmental factors that influence course creation and development in the New Zealand online and distance learning environment and how do these factors change across context and through time?*

The guiding question was elaborated upon to a number of more specific questions which helped narrow the focus on the area to be researched. These were:

- **How do faculty and educational designers create and maintain online learning environments within their institution or context?**

- **What common tensions and contradictions do faculty and educational designers perceive in their institutional systems that affect course design and maintenance?**

- **What similarities and differences are evident across institutions, and how do these similarities and differences relate to the variations within organisational structures and processes?**

- **What impact do wider environmental factors such as government policy and funding have on the way faculty, educational designers and institutions work toward their goals?**

Following a grounded theory approach which is explored more fully in Chapter 3, the literature was engaged with in a general way during the development of the initial research area of interest and questions, and was then returned to during the coding and
data analysis stages to help identify linkages between the emerging findings and the current state of knowledge. Regular use of memos when engaging with the literature supported a reflexive practice (Dunne, 2011) to minimise the influence of pre-existing conceptualisations from the literature influencing theory development. The research questions therefore guided the initial review of the literature, while the research findings refined the areas of prior knowledge that were most relevant to present in this chapter of the thesis. The literature presented in this chapter provides contextualisation and an overview of the current state of knowledge to the reader that can then be used as a comparison point for reflecting against the three case studies presented later in the thesis.

Online and Distance Learning within New Zealand

In the literature there remains a divide between researchers focusing on the use of eLearning technologies to support distance learning, and those focusing on the use of eLearning as part of campus-based teaching. This study has focused on the use of technologies within distance and online teaching, and therefore the literature discussed is primarily, although not exclusively, from the domain of distance education. However, where a publication contains content that is relevant or comparable to distance and online teaching as experienced by the participants in this study, it has been included even if its point of origin was campus based, or, in some instances, outside tertiary education.

When investigating any social issue, a review of the current social, political and economic context is necessary in order to set the scene and provide insight into the wider macro-level factors at play. In this section I briefly review the tertiary education system in New Zealand that provides the background for the experiences of the participants in this study. I also note wider global issues in higher education and the waves of change that can be seen influencing New Zealand from the wider community. This includes consideration of changing political and social influences on policy making, and the impact of technological development on education and society more broadly.

New Zealand Tertiary Education System

New Zealand is a relatively young country with a small population, and had only one university from 1874 to 1961, the University of New Zealand. The University was made up of a number of local colleges, based in the main population centres which granted degrees under the auspices of the single institution. When the University dissolved in 1961, there were then four independent universities - Auckland, Canterbury, Otago and Victoria - and the two agricultural colleges Lincoln and Massey. In 1964 the University of Waikato was opened, the first new university in New Zealand that had not
been part of the initial University of New Zealand. The most recent addition to New Zealand’s universities is Auckland University of Technology, which began as Auckland Technical School in 1895, and was granted university status in 2000 (Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2018).

To provide vocational training, New Zealand had technical schools, also known later as technical institutes, polytechnics or institutes of technology (ITPs). These were widely dispersed around the country, operating in up to 50 towns and cities, and provided education for those entering the workforce after primary schooling (Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2018). Initially serving as technical high schools, they were separated in the 1960s into technical high schools and tertiary level polytechnics. The Technical Correspondence School, later renamed the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, was a technical school catering specifically to apprentices who could not attend their local technical school, and was initially the only distance teaching tertiary provider in the country.

Serving a current population base of approximately 4.8 million, New Zealand now has 16 polytechnics and 3 wānanga which comprise the ITP sector. These, along with the country's eight universities are the sum of publicly funded tertiary institutions. In addition, as of September 2018, there were 440 private training establishments (PTEs) in New Zealand, of which 187 received partial government funding (Ministry of Education, n.d.). There are also six government training establishments providing training to emergency responders, the defence force, and prison officers (Ministry of Education, 2017b). These institutions provide tertiary education to approximately 430,000 students per year (Ministry of Education, 2017c), which is funded by about 1.7% of New Zealand’s GDP or about $4.4 billion (Ministry of Education, 2017e).

Education in New Zealand is considered to be of high quality. All eight universities rank within the top 500 (or top 3%) of universities in the world (Universities New Zealand, 2016). New Zealand has an above average rate of citation of publications (1.24, compared with a world average of 1.0), with 73% of New Zealand publications produced in the 2011-2015 period being cited by other publications (Ministry of Education, 2016, 2017d). This is a significant achievement, given that New Zealand tertiary institutions are funded below the OECD average, leading to claims that New Zealand universities are particularly efficient and effective at producing research (Sutherland, 2018; Universities New Zealand, 2016).
Policy and Governance

The Education Act (1989) made several changes to the tertiary education sector in New Zealand, so much so that the changes are commonly referred to as New Zealand’s education reforms. One key change was to encourage independence and competition between institutions. For example, the Act provided polytechnics, colleges of education, and wananga the right to confer degrees, which had previously been the domain only of the universities. The Act also provided for polytechnics to gain university status if they met certain criteria. Auckland University of Technology is the only polytechnic to have achieved this status thus far, although the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand had hoped to be able to change its status to become the Open University of New Zealand (C. Seeling, personal communication, 2014).

The Education Amendment Act (1990) allowed tertiary institutions to charge international students full fees (in comparison with national students whose fees were subsidised), increasing the value of international students to institutions as a source of revenue (Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2018). This was particularly the case for PTEs, with their limited government funding, although programmes to attract international students have become a priority for universities and polytechnics as well, as funding has tightened.

During the initial tertiary education system reforms led by the Education Act (1989), bulk funding was introduced, where tertiary providers were funded on the basis of how many Equivalent Full Time Students (EFTS) they had enrolled; albeit with a moving cap to set a maximum that institutions could claim from the government (Crawford, 2016). Fees for studying at tertiary level were introduced and providers could set their own fee levels. In the late nineties, the government settled on paying 75% of tuition fees, with students to self-fund the remainder through student loan if necessary (Crawford, 2016). In the early 2000s, after several years of institutions increasing fees for student tuition, the government provided additional funding to tertiary providers on the condition that fees were held stable. This decision, combined with uncapped EFTS, led to large numbers of student enrolments below degree level, prompting further review of funding models from 2005, which in turn resulted in shifts in funding away from polytechnics and towards universities (Crawford, 2016). This is discussed further in the section on Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF) below.

Quality assurance in the tertiary sector is the responsibility of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) who approve all new programmes of study, and accredit providers (Ministry of Education, 2017b). In the University sector this responsibility is
Chapter 2: Literature Review

delegated to the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) to approve programmes on behalf of NZQA.

**TEC Funding and Tertiary Sector Management**

Tertiary education in New Zealand is funded through the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), which is a crown agency tasked with effecting the government's Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-e). The TES is mandated through section 159AA of the Education Act (1989), where it is required for the Minister for Education to set a strategic direction for tertiary education that aligns with the government's long term economic, social and environmental goals, in consultation with sector stakeholders and the TEC. The TEC is required to contribute to the development of TES, and to give effect to the strategy through funding tertiary organisations and monitoring their performance.

There have been four tertiary education strategies since the initiation of this approach. The first two were created under a Labour government, the second two under a national government, however as Sutherland (2018) notes, the key themes have remained fairly consistent across the strategies. The main overarching goal is to align tertiary education in New Zealand with the needs of industry, community and the global economy (Ministry of Education, 2014), and the strategy specifies a number of priority areas that will theoretically lead to achievement of that goal. The current priority areas as identified in the 2014-2019 Strategy (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014) are:

1. Delivering skills for industry
2. Getting at-risk young people into a career
3. Boosting achievement of Maori and Pasifika
4. Improving adult literacy and numeracy
5. Strengthening research-based institutions
6. Growing international linkages

High dependence on government funding constrains institutional change, and enforces institutional alignment with governmental strategy (Marshall, 2014). Institutions are required to complete regular investment plans in which they detail how their organisational strategy and plans align with the current Tertiary Education Strategy, and these investment plans have to be approved by the TEC in order for the institution to receive funding (Ministry of Education, 2017b). The TEC then monitors the performance
of the institutions against key educational performance indicators (EPIs, sometimes also referred to as KPIs) including, for example, how many students are enrolled at an institution in particular qualifications, how many students successfully complete a course or qualification, and how many students go on to a higher level of study (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-c).

At the time of the data collection for this study (2014-2016), part of the funding from TEC for tertiary institutions was contingent on the institution achieving satisfactory student completion rates in the courses and qualifications offered (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-a). This requirement was a reaction to the previous funding arrangement (per enrolled student) having resulted in large numbers of students enrolling in qualifications, but not necessarily passing or completing them. Under-performance on any of the four main educational performance indicators (EPIs) results in financial penalties or removal of funding (Marshall, 2014), so achieving well in these areas is highly incentivised.

Some of the funding that tertiary institutions are able to access is competitively funded and institutions have to tender for funding. This has been recognised as a barrier to cross-institutional collaboration. Such collaboration has become particularly pronounced with changes in technology use in higher education, and the recognition that effective pursuit of digital learning opportunities were only economically feasible if institutions combined resources (ITES, 2014).

In addition to managing the funding and performance of tertiary institutions, the TEC is also mandated to shortlist Council members for each tertiary institution, in preparation for Ministerial appointment (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-b). The TEC therefore has a strong influence over the strategy and direction of tertiary institutions in New Zealand.

**Performance Based Research Fund**

Tertiary institutions that include a research component in the work that they do (this encompasses all universities and some institutes of technology and polytechnics) are also able to seek funding from the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF). This pool of funding is competitively distributed, based on the quality and quantity of research contributions by an institution (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-d). PBRF funding is made up of three parts: external research income or grants that an institution attracts; completions of research degrees (Masters and PhD student completions); and individual researcher performance as assessed through a researcher-created portfolio. All eligible researchers at an institution are required to submit portfolios for PBRF review (Curtis,
2009), which has led to some amendment of job descriptions and contracts so that institutions could minimise the number of under-performing staff submitting portfolios.

It has been argued that PBRF unequally benefits universities, effectively lowering funding for ITPs (Curtis, 2009). As many ITPs do not offer research degrees or attract external research grants, most ITPs can only access one third of the potential PBRF funding. PBRF funding for ITPs can contribute therefore as little as 1% of their overall income. By contrast, universities may gather 8-10% of their income through PBRF funding, or up to 23% of their funding from PBRF and external research grants (see Massey University, 2017; Victoria University of Wellington, 2016).

Similar research evaluation and related funding measures are in place in other countries (De Boer et al., 2015), however the scoring mechanism used by PBRF and its focus on individual researchers rather than groups is unique to New Zealand, therefore international comparisons cannot easily be made (Buckle & Creedy, 2018a). When it was introduced in 2002, the intention of PBRF funding was to encourage and reward quality research in the tertiary sector, and accord tertiary institutions accountability for building capacity in research. Research performance under PBRF is assessed in six-yearly cycles, with the most recent cycle running from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017. The scheme has been regularly reviewed since its implementation, in order to ensure that the application of the funding process meets its intended goals. The next review will occur in 2019 (Ministry of Education, 2018b).

**Challenges of the Performance Based Research Fund**

In other countries, PBRF-style systems have been found to increase institutional focus on prestige (Hicks, 2012), and this was also evident in the early stages of PBRF in New Zealand (Curtis, 2009). New Zealand research has suggested that PBRF funding undermines academic identity by shifting departmental and institutional focus towards research rankings, competition, and individualism (Waitere, Wright, Tremaine, Brown, & Pausé, 2011). It has also been noted that the funding regime has had an influence on the type of research undertaken, as priorities for funding research now often take PBRF-related criteria into account (Roberts, 2013), effectively ensuring that research that does not attract external income, or is not likely to be published in high status international journals, will not get funded. There have also been concerns voiced that PBRF funding potentially undermines academic freedom to teach and research in whatever the academic desires, because of clearly stated governmental commentary indicating that PBRF funding should produce economically beneficial research (Curtis, 2007; Sutherland, 2018).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

PBRF has also been criticised for its potential to undermine Māori research (Roa, Beggs, Williams, & Moller, 2009). Roa et al. argue that the design of PBRF favours short term programmes of research, disadvantages applied disciplines, and focuses on research outputs rather than the outcomes for the community. Research that is conducted in collaboration with the community or that is published locally rather than internationally is disadvantaged, they argue. Furthermore, they suggest that the system advantages those who work full time, thereby disadvantaging young parents, and requires a level of self-promotion that is at odds with many collective cultures. These are not insignificant critiques. The system has also been noted to rate female academics "significantly worse than male academics" (Curtis, 2016, p90), although this may be a reflection of the greater tendency for female academics to work part time.

By some measures, however, the PBRF scheme has been successful. The system has achieved its intended goals, resulting in increased research outputs by tertiary institutions since its inception (Crawford, 2016; Smart, 2009), and improving overall teaching and research productivity (Harland, Tidswell, Everett, Hale, & Pickering, 2010). However, patterns have also emerged indicating increasing numbers of publications year-on-year as each PBRF assessment cycle draws closer to an end, with a concurrent trend toward co-authorship and publishing in lower ranked sources (Hodder & Hodder, 2010). These trends indicate a focus on quantity of research outputs rather than quality, and on publishing in time to meet the next round of assessment, indicating that competitive funding for research may be having a counter-productive effect both on research quality and on timely dissemination of findings.

The PBRF scheme also appears to be having an impact on the weighting that academics give to research compared to teaching. In the Education Act (1989) teaching at tertiary institutions is required to be provided by academics who are researchers, however there is wide variation in how that is interpreted in practice. Sutherland (2018) notes that academic preferences between teaching and research tend to vary dependent on government priorities and funding. She observed that preferences between research and teaching among academics were fairly evenly spread across both domains in the 1990s, whereas now the clear preference is for research (67%) with 22% equally interested in both activities, and only 11% primarily interested in teaching. A similar shift was observed in the time actually spent on each activity. Sutherland (2018, p63) suggests this change has coincided with the introduction of PBRF.
Structural influences outside the university, embedded in government policy and funding mechanisms, appear to have shifted both the preferences towards, and time spent on, various academic activities, and New Zealand academics are now socialised into an academic culture that, in the main, expects more attention to be paid to research activity.

Increasingly, promotion and recognition are based on research outputs (Parker, 2008) rather than on teaching quality, which de-incentivises attention to improving teaching practice (Bacon, 2014). This quote from Anderson et al., (2011, p152) captures the discrepancy nicely:

Departmental and university cultures often do not adequately value, support, and reward effective pedagogy. Outstanding contributions to research are evaluated by standard measures (e.g. publications and grant support); are recognized globally as well as locally; and are rewarded within the university (e.g., with promotions or salary increases). Teaching, in contrast, is rarely judged and appreciated from the outside and often only minimally from within.

Online Distance Education in New Zealand

Distance (extramural) courses in New Zealand’s tertiary system make up approximately 12% of the total courses available (Guiney, 2014). As of 2011, approximately half of those courses were delivered using eLearning platforms or Learning Management Systems (LMSs) as the primary means of teaching (Guiney, 2014). Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education has no more recent comparable data for online distance education, as its interests have been in observing eLearning usage, rather than specifically distance learning provision. In that particular field, according to global comparisons, New Zealand is not seen as a leader in eLearning, but instead as a follower of good practice from other countries (Mindset Research Ltd, 2009).

The majority of distance courses in New Zealand have typically been offered by a small number of tertiary providers. In the ITP sector, The Open Polytechnic has dominated distance learning, having a market share of approximately 66%, with the next largest provider, Southern Institute of Technology (SIT), having a market share of 10% (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2014c). In the university sector, Massey University and Otago University have been dominant providers of distance courses, with other Universities offering smatterings of distance courses but few complete distance programmes.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Distance Student Profile and Funding Impact**

Distance study appeals to students for whom attending on campus classes would be challenging or impossible. This includes people currently engaged in paid or unpaid work occurring during traditional class time, as well as people who are geographically distant from their nearest tertiary campus and whose family or other obligations preclude them from moving away to study. Distance students are more likely than on campus students to be older adult learners, to have work obligations and family obligations, and to be studying part time. Part time students take longer to progress through programmes, which has an impact on institutions’ completion rates as recorded by TEC, and therefore on institutional funding. Adult students with work and family commitments are also more likely to be affected by significant life events (e.g., births, deaths, redundancy, moving cities) than the typical on campus student, which also impact on students’ abilities to complete courses and programmes within expected timeframes. For these reasons, distance programmes tend to have lower completion rates than face to face programmes, and institutions that offer distance programmes tend to have overall lower rankings for completions than institutions that focus primarily on face to face programmes (see for example, Marshall, 2014; Tertiary Education Commission, 2016a, 2016b).

The likely impact on completion rates, and subsequently institutional rankings and funding is a significant consideration for institutions, and may explain why institutions in New Zealand have preferred to adopt eLearning to supplement face to face programmes rather than as a platform for providing distance learning. Guiney (2016) found that completion rates for distance students converged at about 75%, regardless of whether the course was partly or wholly online. However, this was still about 7 to 8% lower than completion rates for courses that were not at all online (the more traditional face to face teaching model). Similarly, completion rates for part-time students studying courses that were partly or wholly online were around 70 to 73%, compared with an 80% completion rate for part time students studying courses that were not online. Given these differences, there remains far greater financial incentive for institutions not to offer online distance courses, and instead to investigate options where eLearning technologies supplement face to face teaching.

**Summary of the New Zealand Tertiary Education Context**

Although the New Zealand tertiary education market is small, competition is encouraged under the Education Act, and through the funding and reporting system. Research related income is a particular priority for universities, which disincentivises teaching by comparison. Online and distance teaching makes up only a tenth of total
courses offered at tertiary level, and there are a small number of dominant providers in this area, including the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, and Massey University. Distance students tend to be studying part time and have work as well as family responsibilities. These factors tend to result in lower rates of completion than face to face students, effectively discouraging tertiary institutions from entering the online and distance learning space.

Global Context

Global Trends in Tertiary Education

*Education from public good to private benefit*

Over the last few decades there has been a shift from the notion of education as a public good, benefiting society as a whole, to education as a private good, benefiting the individual and the economic growth of the country. This has had an impact on institutional strategies and the experiences of staff working in New Zealand’s tertiary institutions (Oosterman, Sedgwick, & Grey, 2017), and has also been observed having significant effect worldwide. This movement has had implications for institutional funding, marketing, management of staff and programmes and community engagement.

Tertiary education institutions worldwide are increasingly expected to generate external revenue from their traditional activities of education, research and service (Hoffman, 2012). In effect, they are required to engage in market-driven behaviour within the academic domain, a concept known as “academic capitalism” (Rhoades & Slaughter, 2004). Academic capitalism sits in direct contradiction to the ideology that academics should pursue knowledge for its own sake. It also places restrictions on the concept of “academic freedom”, currently enshrined in the Education Act (1989). This occurs when marketability becomes a criterion for institutional support of academic research, diminishing the academic’s freedom to choose what to research.

A number of current trends in higher education can be identified as academic capitalism, including the increasing focus on ‘industry relevance’ for research and education, and the interest in applied rather than pure research (Hoffman, 2012; Selwyn, 2007). The increasing casualisation of university teaching and research staff, along with growth in numbers of management and administration staff, are also indicative of the greater focus on profit rather than provision of service that Academic Capitalism engenders. Conceptualising education as a business has a flow on effect to organisational strategies, plans, and resourcing.
Higher education as a business

The language used to discuss an idea matters (Sfard, 1998). The narratives and the metaphors, the way notions are conceptualised and categorised, all have an impact on the way ideas are thought about that idea, and actions are taken (Sfard, 1998). For example, if education is thought about as a social process of participation, that supports very different assumptions about what tools are needed to create effective learning than if education is seen as a product to be delivered or acquired (Coffield, 2008). Emerson and Mansvelt (2014, p. 1874) argue that "the most dominant metaphor in higher education today is the consumer metaphor", in which students pay fees to educational institutions in exchange for receiving qualifications which will enable them to compete effectively in the labour market. In New Zealand, the publication of league tables by TEC for research outputs and successful completions per institution encourages the idea that higher education is a market-based activity and that consumers (students) should be provided information to make knowledgeable purchases (Emerson & Mansvelt, 2014). The language used within this metaphor often refers to academics as components of a service or product (e.g., “value chain”, “education provider” etc), placing academics in the role of responding to consumer need, and placing the student in the role of passive consumer.

Emerson and Mansvelt (2014) identified both positive and negative aspects of the consumer metaphor. Positively, they suggest it encourages increased professionalism of staff and the university, and clearer communication to students of what was being offered. The metaphor also strengthened students’ position of power, enabling them to have greater say in the service being offered. However, there are also several challenges or negative aspects associated with the consumer approach. Emerson and Mansvelt argued that it sets an expectation for students that they can choose what to participate in, and supports the belief that learning is a package that will be delivered, rather than an experience that needs to be engaged with. Furthermore, they argue that it compartmentalises knowledge, assuming that it can be packaged discretely, and creates an expectation that staff will behave as sales clerks to promote their particular packages.

Interestingly, the concept of students as consumers conflicts with alternative business metaphors for education which perceive students as the raw material to be transformed through the education process into a product suitable for the labour market (Colonnese, 2000). Not only do these conceptions of students as components in a business process ignore the complex dualistic interactions many teachers see as inherent to the teaching and learning experience, they also allow faculty and institutions to absolve themselves of responsibility should the teaching and learning interaction not result in the
desired outcome. For example, by conceptualising students as raw material to be transformed through a factory production line process of completing courses, the institution can blame any lack of positive student outcomes on inferior materials provided by the supplier (viz., secondary schools). This then at least partially absolves the institution of the need to review the quality of its educational provision. For high prestige institutions that are reliant on their brand to sell their 'product', admitting only the finest quality raw material is an easier way to ensure consistent quality end products than implementing widescale institutional change to cater to varying levels of initial student capability.

Another interesting point is that in this line of reasoning it is future employers, rather than the students themselves, that are the customers and so meeting industry needs has a significant level of influence on the development of the product (qualified students). The trend towards vocationalisation of degrees in New Zealand has been increasing over the last decade and has been incentivised through TEC strategy and funding processes, which implies that the TEC itself is complicit in this view of higher education. The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (2016) in response to the productivity commission’s issues paper “New models of tertiary education” (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2016), noted that there is increasing demand for learning that is directly applicable to work settings, and that is low cost and convenient to access.

Another conceptualisation associated with the metaphor of education as a business is that students are market-savvy shoppers looking for the best deal on education at the best price. Colonnese (2000) notes that if students are conceptualised as customers, institutions can justify softening of academic rigour in assessment by arguing that is what customers want, and that if they don’t give customers what they want they will take their business elsewhere, something that institutions in a competitive market environment want to avoid. Commensurate with this, a 2016 survey by the TEU of its members showed that more than two-thirds of survey respondents had felt pressured to increase pass rates in their courses by lowering assessment standards, ignoring cheating or passing borderline students in order to meet TEC targets (Oosterman et al., 2017).

Notably all of these conceptions of education ignore the traditional responsibility higher education institutions have to serve the needs of society, and to foster individual student’s intellectual growth. Additionally, the implication that education can be simply transmitted to the learner in response to payment is in direct contradiction to the learner-centred co-constructivist model of learning supported by current technological developments and best practice models of authentic learning.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Responsibility to community**

Where institutions are focused on 'meeting the market' and 'providing quality learning', the responsibility of a tertiary institution to be 'the critic and conscience of society' (Education Act, 1989) can easily get dwarfed. So too can the social obligations that tertiary institutions have to their community. Hazelkorn (2017) argues that university agendas need to focus not just on what happens on campus for students, but on making what happens on campus, namely teaching, research, and driving social change, relevant and meaningful to society. This could be achieved through a social-justice approach, encouraging scholarship that engages with communities, or through an economic approach that focuses on the development of economic growth through development of intellectual property or technology (Hazelkorn, 2017).

**Removal of staff voice from decision making**

Over the last 20 to 30 years there has been a trend toward increasing levels of management in higher education institutions. Despite being a key resource for their institution (Bacon, 2014), academic staff typically have very little influence over managerial decisions affecting their work (Oosterman et al., 2017). Even where governance structures allow for participation in decision making at various levels within the institution, in practice, consultation outside of senior management levels has had little to no effect on determining direction (Bacon, 2014).

As Bacon (2014) notes, there are many ways in which educational institutions subtly disempower the academic voice in decision making. These include elements such as who has control over agenda setting, what methods are used to record agreement or dissent to proposals, and how meetings are chaired (Bacon, 2014). Extending from this, other methods of limiting academic voice might also include devolved decision-making committees that are not advertised, timing meetings or proposals to conflict with academic availability to participate, and having working groups that include academic participants but which have no authority other than to provide 'recommendations' to higher level groups that can then be 'noted' but not acted upon.

Another common feature reducing the academic voice are 'hollow consultations'. Bacon (2014, p. 10) found a clear pattern of "consultations happening after decisions had been made and the opinions gathered in consultation exercises being ignored", suggesting that a more accurate description for the occurrence might be "an insultation" rather than a consultation (Bacon, 2014, p. 10). This type of event, along with 'rubber stamping' of decisions by committees where the decision had clearly already been made elsewhere, combines to effectively disenfranchise staff.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Unbundling in higher education**

An emergent trend has been that of 'unbundling', or the separation of elements in the teaching and learning process in higher education. This can occur at the level of academic staff, at institutional level or at the systemic level in higher education. Evidence of the unbundling trend can be seen in the separation of roles in course design and delivery, the reduction of permanent staff and the increase of casual academic roles and the development of cheaper or non-branded courses for on-selling (McCowan, 2017).

McCowan (2017) describes two types of unbundling. One type of unbundling occurs where products that were previously sold together are sold separately. This can be seen in the education sector where assessment is offered without the course learning, or where courses are offered without assessment. The second type of unbundling occurs where a cheaper 'no frills' version of the original product is offered. An example of this in the education sector is where institutions create white-labelled courses without branding or any kind of organisational or cultural flavour in order to sell them to other institutions.

The unbundling movement creates changes in the roles of academics and others in the education sector by disaggregating the components of traditional academic practice into components performed by several people rather than having one academic 'all-rounder' (Macfarlane, 2011). These 'para-academics' then have responsibility for specialist areas of the academic role, for example teaching fellows, research fellows or educational technologists.

Interestingly, this disaggregation of roles has been in place for many years in distance education institutions, although this was primarily related to the specialist needs required to manage the technologies used in creation of distance course materials, rather than for the financial motivations that McCowan (2017) suggests are driving the current trend. It is perhaps not too surprising then, that the Open Polytechnic (2016) suggests in its response to the New Zealand Productivity Commission's (2016) issues paper, that an unbundled approach to tertiary education would be beneficial to the wider sector.

**Technology driving change**

In 2014 following the release of the 2014-2019 Tertiary Education Strategy, a summit was hosted by the then Minister for Education for the purpose of engaging tertiary institutions in discussion about innovation in tertiary education. Among administrators of tertiary education attending the Innovations in Tertiary Education Delivery Summit (ITES, 2014), current technological developments were seen as both enabling and disruptive to higher education.
Invited speakers discussed issues such as use of international delivery to boost competitiveness, blended learning, and open education, with a focus on recently emerging technologies that supported these trends. It was noted that emerging technologies (such as MOOCs) would be able to support self-directed learning and bite-sized credentialing, and provide more cost-effective education through the potential for economies of scale (ITES, 2014). Alongside this, the administrators attending the summit suggested there would be a need for cross-institutional collaboration in order for individual institutions to remain profitable (ITES, 2014).

**Learning analytics**

An increasing trend from the mid-2000s has been the use of learning analytic data to make predictions about student performance or success, and to identify potential intervention points that could make the difference between a student passing or failing a course (Core Education, 2014; Jayaprakash, Moody, Lauría, Regan, & Baron, 2014; Picciano, 2014). LMSs contain a large amount of log data that can be used for such analysis, and the potential for 'improving learning outcomes' became a 'fad' by the time of the research presented in this thesis, particularly as championed by IT focused associations such as Educause (e.g., Campbell & Oblinger, 2007).

**Macrosystem, Mesosystem and Exosystem context**

Within a society there are a number of cultural norms and ideologies that form the basis of the cultures within it, and have an influence on the economic, social and political systems. These economic, social and political systems in turn then have an influence on schools, workplaces, groups and individuals. The embeddedness of the individual within a wider socio-political, economic and cultural context needs consideration when investigating human behaviour. This section outlines in brief some of the key features of the economic, social and political ideologies in play during the period of the research.

**Economy**

At the time of the study reported in this thesis, the New Zealand economy was still in recovery from the 2008 global financial crisis (Ministry of Education, 2017a). Increased unemployment due to the recession had resulted in greater numbers of students enrolling in tertiary study (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Some of these students were enrolled primarily to access income in the form of student loans or allowances, resulting in lower completion rates for courses and having a consequential impact on institutional funding.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Globalisation**

Higher education has been transforming over the last few decades, moving from separate national systems to an increasingly globalised system where academics and researchers collaborate across geopolitical boundaries and millions of students study outside their country of citizenship (Hazelkorn, 2017). This increasing interconnectedness underlies growth in educational programmes that transgress national boundaries. "Whether we recognise it or not, we are all global citizens, moving across countries and borders, and connected to each other through trade and technology" (Hazelkorn, 2017, p1). One result of this is the increased perception of international students as viable sources of income, and of international markets as viable opportunities to sell education. A global focus has resulted in most tertiary institutions having an international strategy.

**Socio-political context**

The socio-political climate during the period of this research was one of increasing emphasis on equality. A number of socio-political movements had occurred in the decade preceding the research collection which had a focus on addressing perceived disparities in power and rights between groups. These included the Arab Spring (Campante & Chor, 2012), the Occupy Wall Street movement (Shrivastava & Ivanova, 2015), and Black Lives Matter (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016), as well as new feminism and an increasing focus on LBGTQ rights and intersectionality (Curtin, Stewart, & Cole, 2015; Jackson, 2016; Terriquez, 2015). These movements highlighted issues of institutional and societal bias, and prompted discussion about what ideal states of equality might look like across different cultures (Hardt & Negri, 2011).

During this time there was also increasing concern about human impact on the environment and climate change partly fuelled by increasing numbers of severe weather events. Efforts to mitigate climate change effects have included a focus on renewable energy, recycling, waste reduction and cleaner technology (Edenhofer, Pichs Madruga, & Sokona, 2012; Riti, Yang Shu, Deyong Song, & Kamah, 2017). Environmental activism has decreased, but environmental action has increased (Dalton, 2015), indicating that environmentalism has become more mainstreamed.
Technological Development

Social technology use

The research occurred in a time of increasing use of online interactions to manage the social and economic aspects of life. Most household services in New Zealand including utilities and council rates transitioned from paper and mail-based accounts to online and email-based accounts. Socialising became less about physically meeting friends, and more about technology facilitated interactions, with an expectation that everyone was contactable via Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Skype, Twitter or Google. There was increasing mainstreaming of open source programmes and projects, and community-based sources of information such as Wikipedia.

In effect, there was a sea change in the way that we expected to interact with people and information, that has happened over a comparatively short time, and societal culture is still adjusting to the ramifications of the change. Traditional ways of legitimising and disseminating knowledge are being eroded through the rise of digital information which anyone can author, and which can be spread globally within seconds through distribution channels such as Twitter, Instagram, blogs, and websites (Hazelkorn, 2017). Social media has supported fast and easy knowledge networks, bypassing traditional knowledge gatekeeping. Positive benefits of this include the increased opportunity for minority voices to be heard alongside dominant discourses, and greater opportunities for self-directed learning due to wider provision of information. However, social media technologies have also provided an easy way to spread fake news, propaganda and misinformation, as it has become more difficult for the average person to distinguish between information that is evidentially informed, and information that has little basis in fact.

Alongside the movements for equality that have highlighted inequalities and abuses of power by those of high status, a general mistrust has developed in some groups directed against authority figures. Politicians and bankers are obvious sources for the focus of disgruntlement, but scientists and university staff have also been caught in this net, making it challenging for higher education staff to argue against the promulgation of un-evidenced information (Hazelkorn, 2017). Equalisation of access to and dissemination of information undermines the traditional teaching model of the ‘sage on the stage’, leading to a need for higher education professionals to reconceptualise their relationship to the development and safe keeping of knowledge.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Internet and broadband usage

There were significant changes to the technologies used in New Zealand to connect to Internet services during the research period. From 2013 to 2017, New Zealanders gained access to faster, more reliable Internet connections, with an increasing number of providers to choose from. Data caps increased from a median data cap of 20-50GB in 2013, to the majority of households and businesses having unlimited data connections by 2017, while the average monthly broadband data usage increased 7-fold from 20GB in 2013 to 147GB in 2017 (see Table 2.1).
### Table 2.1

*Internet Usage in New Zealand 2013-2017*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total # Internet Connections</th>
<th>Dialup</th>
<th>ADSL/V DSL</th>
<th>Cellular/ Satellite/ Cable</th>
<th>Fibre</th>
<th>Median download/ upload speeds</th>
<th>Median data cap</th>
<th>Average monthly broadband use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,871,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>24Mbps / &lt;1.5Mbps</td>
<td>20-50GB</td>
<td>20GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,981,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>24Mbps / &lt;1.5Mbps</td>
<td>50-100GB</td>
<td>28GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,980,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24Mbps / &lt;10Mbps</td>
<td>50-100GB</td>
<td>44GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,894,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24Mbps / &lt;10Mbps</td>
<td>100GB+</td>
<td>77GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1,887,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>&lt;50Mbps / &lt;10Mbps</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td>147GB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Due to rounding percentages may add to slightly over or under 100%. All data sourced from Statistics New Zealand (New Zealand Internet Service Provider Surveys 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).*
The speed of these changes meant that the prevailing wisdom around effective design of web pages became rapidly outdated. A decade earlier, recommended guidelines for what content to put onto pages and how to design web material revolved around minimising file sizes to allow easy download, and ensuring cross-browser compatibility. The increased file size afforded by broadband Internet connections, and the reduction of potential students on lower speed or dial-up connections to less than 5% meant that use of video in online teaching became a lot more plausible.

In 2012, the Commerce Commission of New Zealand identified the education sector as having the greatest potential of all sectors for high speed broadband to bring about fundamental change. Increasing use of cloud computing (including subscription software and platforms), BYOD, bandwidth hungry video, and having multiple users online at once using Internet-based services for educational purposes meant that there was "enormous potential demand for fast broadband" (Commerce Commission of New Zealand, 2012, p3). Assuming that broadband supply was cost effective, the discussion paper noted the potential for education at primary and secondary school level to transform away from traditional learning structures such as the 9am to 3pm day, and set group learning towards self-paced learning at times that suit students. These changes that are expected to occur at primary and secondary schooling levels have a flow on effect for tertiary institutions, as students who have become accustomed to certain ways of interacting with technology and information will bring those expectations to their tertiary study as well.

**Technology use for education**

A number of trends were seen as driving technology adoption in higher education from 2014 to 2016. This was a time of non-distance education institutions making increasing use of blended and online learning options enabled by the mainstreaming of cloud computing and Software as a Service (SaaS). There was strong interest in mining learning analytics provided from online learning systems to optimise learner pathways and course design (see for example, Beer, Jones, & Clark, 2012; Dawson, McWilliam, & Tan, 2008). Alongside this was consideration of how the learning spaces and structures of traditional face to face institutions might change with the shift to greater online and blended teaching opportunities (e.g., flipped classrooms). Social media was becoming ubiquitous, providing opportunity for course designers to leverage off these communication platforms when designing coursework or assessments (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). Openness as a concept in education gained traction, with interest rising in
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Open Educational Resources, Open Learning, and Open Access education (Johnson et al., 2016; Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2014, 2015).

During this time, a number of new technological developments were identified by panel members for the New Media Consortium as having potential for significant impact on tertiary education in the near future. Table 2.2 compares the key technological developments identified in the global reports (Johnson et al., 2016; Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, et al., 2014, 2015) with the Australian Regional reports (Adams Becker, Cummins, Davis, & Yuhnke, 2016; Johnson, Adams Becker, Cummins, & Estrada, 2014; Johnson, Adams Becker, & Hall, 2015). It is interesting to note that while there is some overlap (as shown by the black text), there are also significant differences in the perceptions of the regional report panel and the global panel on the potential impact and relevance of various technological developments for education. This suggests that local factors influencing technological impact such as population, economy, and accessibility of technologies, are not insignificant. This supports the need for localised solutions rather than global one-size-fits-all responses to higher education provision.
### Table 2.2

_NMC Horizon Technology Reports for Australian Tertiary Institutions and Global Higher Education_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time to adoption</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 1 year</td>
<td>Bring your own device, Flipped Classroom, Mobile Learning, Online Learning, Learning Analytics, Massive Open Online Courses</td>
<td>Bring your own device, Flipped Classroom, Learning Analytics, Cloud Computing, Mobile Apps</td>
<td>Bring your own device, Flipped Classroom, Learning Analytics, Online Learning, Adaptive Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>Games and Gamification, Badges/Microcredits, Learning Analytics, Open Content, 3D Printing, The Internet of Things, Wearable Technology</td>
<td>Wearable Technology, Badges/Microcredits, Mobile Learning, Open Licensing, Collaborative Environments, Games and Gamification, Makerspaces</td>
<td>Makerspaces, Wearable Technology, Adaptive Learning Technologies, Location Intelligence, 3D Printing, Augmented/Virtual Reality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Blue = Australian reports, Green = Global reports, Black = appears in both reports*
The New Media Consortium annual reports on higher education (Johnson et al., 2016; Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, et al., 2014, 2015) identified a number of challenges impeding technological adoption and innovation by tertiary institutions. These included:

- Digital fluency of faculty
- Digital literacy of students
- Blending of formal and informal learning (delineating institutional responsibilities, managing accreditation)
- Personalising learning
- Scaling up individual innovations to institution wide innovation
- Managing competing models of education*
- Expanding access to higher education*
- Keeping higher education relevant*
- Rewarding teaching*
- Helping students to balance their use of technology and 'connectedness'*

For the most part these challenges are presented as solvable, or at least identifiable even if solutions may not be immediately obvious. However, a few in each report are identified as 'wicked' problems (identifiable above by the use of *). Wicked problems are those which are both difficult to define and difficult to solve, due to complexities of their context, the diversity of stakeholders, and their inherent dynamism (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Interestingly, rewarding teaching moved from being seen as a solvable challenge in 2014 to a 'wicked' challenge in 2015, indicating that a move to an educational system where teaching is prized equivalently to research is not as simple as it may seem at first glance. Conversely, managing competing models of education (e.g. MOOCs, badges, collaboration, assessment at scale) was seen as a wicked problem in 2015, but only as a difficult challenge in 2016 as institutions began to get to grips with the ways in which technologies could be used to provide quality rather than gimmicky educational experiences.

Educational organisations are continually in flux as they respond to the historical-social-political-economic context. Similarly, new technologies are continually advancing, therefore Marshall (2014) argues that any strategy involving use of technology for teaching needs to be recognised as temporary; relevant only until the next systemic or seismic change.
Summary of Global Context

There were a number of global trends in existence at the time of the research which are likely to have had an influence on participant’s experiences. An increasingly common theme has been the conceptualisation of higher education as a business, with students and industry as consumers. This has affected the distribution of power and control over courses and programmes. Socially, a wider focus on equality and environmental concerns has been seen in the education sector through the rise of interest in MOOCs, OERs and digital resources in general. Social media has successfully broken down barriers between knowledge creators and knowledge users, supporting promulgation of knowledge equally regardless of source, and by extension leading to questioning of the need for experts by the general public. Technology has become increasingly social and open, with a large reliance on back end data and learning analytics. Blended and personalised learning, supported by smart technologies, are of increasing interest.

Individual Factors influencing online distance teaching

In this section a number of individual factors that influence teachers’ ODL practice are outlined. The impact of beliefs and conceptions around teaching and learning are discussed, with reference to their potential influence on practice. Teacher experience and agency is also considered, along with a wider identification of individual motivators and barriers to online teaching. Teachers’ attitudes to and relationships with technology are discussed.

Understandings of teaching and learning

There is no singular understanding among higher education teachers of what it means to teach or learn. Prosser and Trigwell (1999) found a variety of different conceptions of teaching and learning held by teachers, which then translated into different teaching practices. For example, a teacher who believes that teaching is about information transmission will focus on how they prepare and present material to students for their absorption, whereas a teacher who believes that teaching is about enabling student learning will focus more on removing perceived barriers to student learning. Teaching practice is known to have an impact on student learning (Trigwell, Prosser, & Ginns, 2005; Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999), so we can trace a line from teacher’s beliefs about learning to student learning outcomes. In fact, the way that teachers design courses has more impact than individual characteristics of students on effective learning (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Ramsden, 2003), so this is not an insignificant issue to consider.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Teacher's conceptions of teaching are subject to change and development (Bond, Ross, & Madill, 2006). Although early research in the field (Entwhistle & Walker, 2000; Kember, 1997) suggested a developmental pathway through various conceptions, later research has indicated that such a pathway is not singular, but that there could be various conceptions of teaching that teachers move through, in varying orders (Bond et al., 2006). The idealised destination for this journey is also modifiable per individual since there is not a clear preferred or ideal view of what teaching is (Bond et al., 2006).

Bond et al., (2006, p4) summarise various possible views of teaching which include "teaching as telling", which aligns well with the didactic or 'sage on the stage' approach taken in traditional higher education, and "teaching as putting students through a process", implying that students are a material to be shaped or processed and that will then emerge changed. This conception aligns fairly well with the way higher education is typically structured, where students enter an institution, go through the process of completing various courses, and emerge at the other end qualified, and we assume that learning has occurred along the way. Other conceptions observed by Bond et al., (2006, p4) include "teaching as creating opportunities for learning", "teaching as framing knowledge for students", "teaching as building on learner’s experiences", "teaching as engaging students in knowledge and skills", "teaching as encouraging development of skills", and the oft-considered pinnacle, "teaching as co-constructing the knowledge and skills of the discipline". It is clear that the conception of teaching held would influence the teacher's approach to teaching, and consequently the tools used to achieve their teaching goals.

The influence of belief and experience on practice

When lacking in prior online teaching experience, teachers tend to carry over any previous classroom experience to their online teaching. This is problematic because classroom teaching strategies are not necessarily appropriate for online teaching, and also as in most cases the teaching practice is likely to have developed out of experience rather than explicit consideration of pedagogy (Baran, Correia, & Thompson, 2011). To move from face to face to online teaching, Keengwe and Kidd (2010) suggest teachers need to accept that a different pedagogical approach may be required, and that it is pedagogy, not technology, that is critical to online learner success. Baran et al., (2011) suggest critical reflection on one’s practice, and collaboration with other online teachers as pivotal in the development of an online teaching pedagogy. However, institutions usually do not require or support staff to engage in critical examination of their teaching practice, so
whilst this is an idealised state, it is unlikely to be achieved by most online teachers, who will continue to practice teaching based on their experience to date.

**Teacher beliefs impacting tool choice**

Use of technology in teaching is closely related to teacher’s own beliefs about teaching and learning, and is mediated by the complexity of teacher’s decisions about curriculum and pedagogical approach (Bain & McNaught, 2006). Different disciplines engender different understandings of teaching and learning, and an effective online teacher will consider how particular technologies mesh with the content and pedagogy of their discipline and course before implementing them (Baran et al., 2011; Steel, 2009).

Technology choice should also be influenced by the learning philosophy held by the teacher, as technologies can enable or prohibit certain philosophical approaches (Hickey, 2014). For example, a teacher who has a social-constructivist perspective will find technologies that provide opportunities for dialogue to be critically important, whereas a behaviourist is more likely to favour technologies that support transmission of ideas to a broad audience (Hickey, 2014). In support of this, Lawrence and Lentle-Keenan (2013) found that teachers are more likely to make proactive use of technology where they perceive an alignment between the potential uses of technological tools and their intended pedagogical approach.

Shelton (2018) also suggests a link between teacher identity and use of technology, finding that for some teachers the degree to which they felt technology supported or hindered them in expressing their identity to students influenced their use of technology, and their feelings about technology. They highlight the need for consideration of emotional and affective factors in teacher’s use of technology. At present these factors would probably be subsumed under the notion of particular individual’s openness or intransigence to technology usage, a topic frequently addressed in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) literature (e.g., Teo, 2010).

A further factor influencing teachers’ use of technology in teaching are their beliefs about the efficacy, affordances and nature of technologies (Buntting, Williams, & Jones, 2015). Key to this is the notion that technology itself is not causal (Oliver, 2011), and its existence does not have a predictable impact on an activity. Rather, technologies have affordances - a set of actions that are supported or prevented by the technology in question (Norman, 1988). If, when, and how those affordances are brought into reality through the use of the technology depends on the user and the context they are operating within. Bennett, Dawson, Bearman, Molloy, and Boud (2017) found that teachers looked to technology to increase efficiency in teaching, while Buntting et al. (2015) noted
teacher’s choices were influenced by their beliefs and assumptions about student's capabilities and cultural context, so these factors will have an impact on the choices teachers make.

As the affordances dictate, the use of new technologies for teaching can influence teaching style either through supporting current teaching practices, or through constraining them (Shelton, 2018). However, it is worth pointing out that technology is only one of many tools that teachers use in their teaching practice. Bain and Mcnaught (2006) suggest that it is not uncommon for teachers to make use of tools that do not necessarily match their preferred pedagogy, and then work outside of the tool to implement the remainder of their curriculum design. This option can work well for teachers who have blended approaches to teaching, but less well for teachers who interact with students solely through an online distance environment completely mediated by technology.

**Barriers to use of technology**

Inadequate institutional support or infrastructure is a barrier to teachers using technology in their teaching (Bennett et al., 2017). Lack of time to problem solve issues or learn new skills required by a new technology can also affect the degree to which teachers integrate technology into their teaching (Bennett et al., 2017). In particular, teachers need time to reflect on their pedagogical beliefs and consider how the pedagogies of certain technologies might mesh with their pedagogical vision (Steel, 2009).

From a pragmatic perspective, any new use of technology of teaching needs to integrate well with existing technologies, otherwise both teachers and students may give up from frustration (Schindler, Burkholder, Morad, & Marsh, 2017), so immediate operational context needs to be considered when selecting technological teaching tools. Effective integration of technology into teaching requires consideration both of the pedagogical approach intended, and the pedagogical principles inherent in the technology to be used, which will affect the way users interact with the tool (Richards, 2006).

From an institutional perspective, faculty need to be trained in how to integrate technology into their teaching and learning practice, and this training needs to involve discussion of how the specific technology integrates with their pedagogy, rather than simply focusing on the affordances of the tool and how to use it from a technical perspective (Keengwe, Georgina, & Wachira, 2010). There are multiple tools available to teach with so the key to effective online teaching lies in knowing what you want to achieve (the pedagogical outcome) and then making the chosen tool work towards that goal, argue Brinthaupt, Fisher, Gardner, and Woodard (2011).
Individual motivators and barriers in online distance learning

A number of motivators and barriers have been identified as influencing academic staff engagement with online distance education. Maguire's (2005) review of the literature found that intrinsic motivators included personal motivation to use technology, flexibility associated with teaching online (from anywhere, anytime), and the intellectual challenge of teaching online. Teachers were also conscious of the importance of involving students in using technology for the student’s benefit, and of the value of distance teaching in increasing student access to qualifications.

At a higher level, organisational administrative and technical support have been identified as important, and lack of sufficient perceived support as an inhibitor, to teachers engaging in ODL. This includes workload issues, lack of recognition of effort involved in distance teaching, lack of training or development related to distance teaching, and inadequate technical support (Lawrence & Lentle-Keenan, 2013; Maguire, 2005). These systemic issues are discussed in the next section on Institutional factors.

Institutional factors influencing online distance teaching

Institutional influence on goals

An implicit assumption in some areas of the education literature is that academic teaching goals are set by the individual, without reference to wider departmental or organisational goals. This assumption allows for a simplified discussion of motivating factors related to teaching practice, but bears little resemblance to reality. As noted by Knight and Trowler (2000), academic teaching goals are influenced not only by the academic’s own desires, and their self-selected community of practice, but also by the academic department or group they function within. Furthermore, within teams and departments there can be wide variations in how goals are set and managed. Martin, Trigwell, Prosser, and Ramsden (2003) identified six different ways in which course changes were managed within teams:

a) imposed on the teaching team by an individual or group within the department, but not in the immediate teaching team for the subject,
b) imposed by a member of the team on other members,
c) negotiated between the team and an individual or group within the department,
d) negotiated between members of the team and the team leader,
e) collaborated on by the team as peers,
f) managed by individuals within the team without discussion, but in adherence to previously agreed framework.

This suggests that the influence of the immediate organisational community on a particular individual’s teaching goal(s) is likely to be highly varied, dependent on their specific team and departmental context, and that some academics will be more influenced by the goals of their communities than others. This variation is also likely to be influenced by whether a course or programme relates to a current institutional strategy.

Technology use from an institutional perspective

*Education and tool choices*

Although education has always looked to technological developments for potential new ways to engage with students, these don’t always result in significant changes in teaching and learning. In many cases new technologies are greeted with enthusiasm by early adopters, but fail to make the leap to becoming mainstream (Rushby, 2013). Once research has failed to establish that the new technology makes an appreciable difference to learning, and the practical inconveniences outweigh the theoretical advantages, uptake of the new technology will drop and it will join the list of other failed innovations (Westera, 2012). Part of the issue is that without careful consideration of what a specific technology can contribute to a learning experience it is easy to become distracted by the novelty of the tool, and implement it in situations where it is not best suited to the educational need. This is particularly likely to occur where institutional decision makers lack pedagogical training (Moore, 2007).

*Technology is not pedagogically neutral*

It is recognised that the technologies used in online and distance teaching are never pedagogically neutral (Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2007; McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Nunes & Mcpherson, 2007; Payne & Reinhart, 2008; Steel, 2009), due to the socio-political context of their creation (Selwyn, 2007). Technology design makes assumptions about what teaching, learning and knowledge are, and can limit application to fitting within that mould. Because of this, Anderson and Dron (2011) argue that pedagogy in distance education is intricately related to technological developments; that there is an interweaved relationship between the method and mode of teaching. By contrast, Moore (2007) argues that technologies add very little to the quality of current distance teaching in comparison with other elements of the course design and delivery system, implying that other factors in the system are equally if not more important in creating quality
education. There is some merit to this argument, given that eLearning in the majority of cases has been used in a substitutive rather than innovative fashion (Kirkwood, 2014; Salmon, 2005), although more recent developments in technology, particularly Web 2.0, have the potential to disrupt ODL pedagogy and reframe how technology is used in online and distance learning.

**Web 2.0 impact**

The Internet is a different kind of technological innovation for distance learning from those that occurred earlier in the 20th century. Radio, television, film, audio cassettes, video cassettes, and computers were all innovative, but from an educational perspective they did not disrupt the traditional didactic approach to education, they just provided a different method of information transmission (Westera, 2012). The use of technology to replicate or supplement existing teaching practice, rather than transform education has been common (Kirkwood, 2014). Additionally, while educational organisations may wish to be seen as innovative and leading the use of new technology, in many cases the adoption of new technology is a response to an already intended strategic change, rather than the technology itself driving a new organisational approach (Marshall, 2010).

The Internet however, and especially the cluster of Internet based technologies known as Web 2.0 (also known as the social or participatory web) is a different kind of innovation. It connects anyone, anywhere, to almost any kind of knowledge. It has turned knowledge from a thing that comes from authority figures and experts, to something that can be created and shared by anyone who has access to the Internet. Individuals can have as much voice as institutions, and sharing of knowledge is encouraged and enabled by the technology.

A core philosophy of Web 2.0 or social web applications is the encouragement of individuals to create, share, reproduce and redistribute content (Conole & Alevizou, 2010; Dwivedi, Williams, Mitra, Niranjan, & Weerakkody, 2011; Mcloughlin & Lee, 2007; Ruth & Houghton, 2009). From sites like Blogger, Wikipedia and YouTube, to code sharing programmes such as Scratch and Roblox, individuals are encouraged (through the design of the technology) to create, share, use, mix and remix content. Communities have sprung up around the main applications, and discussion, collaboration and co-construction of ideas and content are implicitly encouraged. Content, once created, is freely distributed and available for others to build on, or deconstruct, as individuals see fit. Alongside this, open source software groups have flourished, as have collaborative authoring tools such as the Google suite of cloud-based programmes.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This open source philosophy has translated into education with the development of Open Educational Resources (OERs), Open Access (OA) journals and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), although notably these still support the notion of a 'finished' or 'complete' piece of knowledge created by a teacher and disseminated, rather than knowledge that is co-constructed with the learner. Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis and blogs change how we think about learning and knowledge, emphasising collaboration, connectivism and openness over singular experts and individual assessment. It could therefore be argued that education needs to be more responsive to the affordances provided by Web 2.0 technologies (Brown & Adler, 2008; Conole, 2013; Lau, 2012), and move from providing learning environments controlled by the institution to learning ecologies jointly created by the learner and institution or teacher (Williams, Karousou, & Mackness, 2011). However, this would entail significant review of how learning is measured, given that the core ethos of collaboration is antithesis to the traditional competitive approach to teaching and learning (Ruth & Houghton, 2009).

Pedagogy of the LMS

Learning Management Systems (LMSs) are a key feature in institutions that offer online and distance learning. A standardised platform for teaching makes it easier for both staff and students to transition from one course to another; the familiarity with the system reduces its level of impedance to teaching and learning. However LMSs are not pedagogically neutral, and can sometimes privilege certain types of teaching (information transmission) over others (dialogue, collaboration and co-construction). Therefore there are challenges in institutional adoption of a particular LMS in that it can intentionally or unintentionally reinforce certain teaching philosophies or pedagogies. The underlying philosophy of an LMS may also contradict the philosophy of the teacher, especially if they subscribe to a constructivist or connectivist pedagogy.

There is a danger too for the institutional use of an LMS to direct course design and promote a standardised approach to teaching which may then undermine potential for teachers to innovate in their practice (Hannon, 2009; Lawrence, 2018b). In many cases, teaching innovations are led by the functionality of the available technology (Bennett et al., 2017), so limiting technological access to those tools embedded in or compatible with the LMS can reduce innovations in teaching practice. This may or may not match well with the institutional goals for teaching practice.

Finally, the affordances of a particular LMS may or may not align well with current educational trends. For example, Brown (2010) observes that traditional LMSs have features that contrast strongly with features of Web 2.0 tools. LMSs tend to be
management led (top down), requiring institution-wide infrastructure, with controlled access over the material produced. By contrast, Web 2.0 tools are usually individually led (bottom up), web-based and open access, allowing modification of material that is not your own. These competing tensions will eventually require reconciliation by institutions between their preferred pedagogical philosophy, and the technological tools they use to facilitate teaching and learning.

**Organisational strategy**

It is recognised that effective use of eLearning requires an organisational level approach, as changes in any one part of an organisation will have consequences across other areas (Kirkwood, 2014). However, institutional systems of investment, reward and recognition tend not to encourage systematic change (Salmon, 2005). Consequently, while there are large numbers of isolated course level experiments into eLearning, there is little in the way of larger institutional innovation, Salmon (2005) argues. An effective institutional response to available technologies requires organisations to clearly identify the benefits of a technology (and its associated operational changes), as well as have a clear strategy that can respond flexibly to the external influences and internal challenges that are likely to occur as a result of making the change (Marshall, 2012). This is of particular relevance to institutions only just beginning with online and distance learning, but the need for a clear vision and direction is equally applicable to institutions that have been working in online and distance learning for some time.

**Organisational support**

Infrastructure support, and effective institutional processes are essential for successful online teaching and learning, argue Orr, Williams, and Pennington (2009). This includes support for the temporal and workload demands of online teaching, and the provision of appropriate technical expertise and administrative support. Staff need professional development to support their teaching practice and their use of technology (Bawane & Spector, 2009; Shephard et al., 2011).

**Workload**

The current expectation of workload distribution among New Zealand universities is that an academic will spend 40% of their time on teaching, 40% on research, and 20% on service or administration (Sutherland, 2018). The literature has reported for some time now increased workloads for academic staff, increased expectations of research productivity and publication, and increasing levels of expectation of service alongside increasing levels of management which seem to be commensurate with increasing
numbers of committees (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Oosterman et al., 2017). In a time pressured environment academic staff do not have the time to explore effective teaching practice, nor to share effective practice with colleagues without negatively impacting their ability to meet research and service expectations of their role.

Contractual working hours per week are typically 37.5 to 40 hours, however research suggests that workloads are typically higher than this, with the average workload reported as being closer to 50 hours per week (Vardi, 2009). Increases in administration and teaching workload have occurred alongside increasing pressure to produce research outputs (Houston, Meyer, & Paewai, 2006). Many departments and institutions have developed workload models in order to address perceived inequities in workload, and staff dissatisfaction, however these have a tendency to be either too crude to effectively manage the variety of workload tasks, or too detailed and cumbersome for implementation (Vardi, 2009). Fairness and transparency in workload models are also of concern to faculty staff (Houston et al., 2006). Within campus-based institutions, workload models may not take into account the higher workload associated with creating online distance courses (Bright, 2012).

**Institutional professional development**

Institutional support for and promotion of professional development in eLearning has been found to have an impact on staff involvement with eLearning (Shephard et al., 2011). Lack of time provided to engage in professional development, as well as difficulty navigating institutional structures to get support, negatively affects staff engagement. In general, teachers are supportive of eLearning, but this dissipates if they suspect that it will negatively affect their career by reducing time for activities that are more closely aligned to promotion (Mansvelt, Suddaby, O’Hara, & Gilbert, 2009; McPherson & Nunes, 2006). Therefore, institutional support and reward strategies are needed for eLearning to be effectively integrated within an institution (Guiney, 2013; McPherson & Nunes, 2006).

Even within distance institutions, moving from a predominantly print model to a predominantly online model requires modification to expected teacher competencies, and changes to professional development to support development of those competencies (Arinto, 2013). This is not always recognised within organisations. However, these skills are important because a well-designed eLearning course can increase learner motivation and success rates, while a poorly designed course that is difficult to access or use will have the opposite effect (Guiney, 2012). New digital technologies can provide an impetus for institutions to revise and redevelop their teaching and learning strategies and support for staff professional development as teachers (Snell & Terrell, 2012). In instances where
Roles and responsibilities in online course creation

The effect of the division of labour on teaching practice is an under-explored area (Lawrence & Lentle-Keenan, 2013), despite the fact that most online and distance teaching institutions have obvious divisions of labour in the creation and provision of teaching materials. Oblinger and Hawkins (2006) argue that it is a myth that an effective online course can be developed by a teacher alone. Instead, they suggest that a team-based approach is required if institutions are serious about providing high quality online courses.

Depending on how an institution has identified and separated out responsibilities, teachers of online courses can take on several roles. These can include instructional designer, educational technologist, technical support and administrator, as well as the more familiar teaching related roles of facilitator, teacher, mentor, assessor, and provider of pastoral care (Bawane & Spector, 2009; Carril, Sanmamed, & Sellés, 2013; Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Overlaid on the actual roles carried out are the teacher’s beliefs about the teacher-student relationship, which will impact on how they carry out those roles. For example, Emerson and Mansvelt (2014) found teachers used a number of different metaphors to describe their relationship with students including: tour guide, mentor, parent, shepherd, facilitator, lighting a fire, ship’s captain, game ranger, master/apprentice, colleague, provocateur, gardener, conductor and co-creator. The combination of role and relationship options leads to the potential for hundreds of different variations with different professional development needs.

Because of the greater degree of emotional effort required to engage with students through online technologies, online teaching can be intense, particularly for teachers who are teaching online for the first time (Conceicao, 2006). Support is needed for teachers making this transition, preferably in the form of professional development. In order to be effective online educators, Bawane and Spector (2009) suggest that professional development for teachers should focus on how to design and implement instructional strategies, how to develop appropriate learning resources, how to facilitate student participation, and how to sustain students’ motivation.

In the context of developing online distance courses, the role of educational technologist or educational designer becomes particularly important. The field of educational technology is concerned with facilitating learning through use of technological processes and resources (Shurville, Browne, & Whitaker, 2009). Unlike
academic staff, who typically have a PhD in the subject they teach, educational designers and technologists come from a range of backgrounds (Shurville et al., 2009). Shurville et al. note that the profession is fragmented rather than coherent, and has not yet fully developed an ethical code or expectation of ongoing professional development, unlike academia. Because of the lack of consistency in required qualifications, and the variation among educational technologists’ engagement with research, as well as inconsistencies between where educational technologists are employed within institutions - as academic staff, or as general staff - it is not uncommon for academics to consider educational technologists as different from themselves.

There are differences too between the academic and educational technologists’ approaches to research in online distance learning. The field of educational technology incorporates a range of theoretical underpinnings that influence learning design, however there is limited critique or development of educational design theory in the literature, Hannon and Al-Mahmood (2014) argue. Instead, there is a tendency toward evidence-based practice and case studies, informed often by instructional design traditions which are based on cognitive behavioural psychological theory, and on the use of learning analytics to modify learning design, independently or agnostically of theory (Hannon & Al-Mahmood, 2014). By comparison, the field of online and distance learning (dominated by academics), while still containing a large number of articles on use of technological tools, tends to focus more on development of distance education theory, and non-technological issues related to online distance teaching.

Summary of Individual and Institutional Factors

Academics teaching in an online distance environment experience a range of factors that influence their teaching practice. Potential personal influencing factors include their personal beliefs and conceptions of teaching, and their teaching identity. These have a flow on effect to pedagogical design and technology choices. Institutionally, teachers are influenced by the technologies supported by the institution they work at, the professional development available, and the internal infrastructure and support. Some staff work with educational designers, and need to navigate a relationship with someone who comes from a very different background, and who may have differing views on course design and technology use.
Chapter Summary

This chapter has identified a variety of individual and institutional factors recognised in the literature as being relevant to the practice of online and distance education. Less clear from the literature, is how these potential influencing factors interact to have an impact on an individual’s teaching practice. Also unclear are the systems, processes or supports within an institution that might best support online distance teaching practice. Governmental funding and strategy has had an impact on research at tertiary institutions, but the impact these policies have had on teaching practice is less obvious. There is also little information available on how different institutions manage the challenges of online distance teaching, or what variation there may be across institutions in the systems, policies and infrastructure provided to support online teaching.

This research seeks to fill this gap by investigating the individual, institutional and environmental factors that influence online distance teaching in tertiary institutions in New Zealand. By taking a longitudinal, cross-institutional approach, the effects of wider governmental policy and funding are explored, as well as the impact of institutional strategies and goals on individual teachers’ practice over time.
Chapter 2: Literature Review
Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter I detail the design and methods used for the research. I explain the chosen methodological approach, and the specific methods used to collect and analyse the data. A discussion of quality assurance outlines the measures by which the quality of the research was ensured. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the way data will be presented in results chapters four to six.

Research Approach

As noted earlier, the guiding question for this research project was:

*What are the individual and environmental factors that influence course creation and development in the New Zealand online and distance learning environment and how do these factors change across context and through time?*

The guiding question was elaborated upon to a number of more specific questions which helped narrow the focus on the area to be researched. These were:

- How do faculty and educational designers create and maintain online learning environments within their institution or context?

- What common tensions and contradictions do faculty and educational designers perceive in their institutional systems that affect course design and maintenance?

- What similarities and differences are evident across institutions, and how do these similarities and differences relate to the variations within organisational structures and processes?

- What impact do wider environmental factors such as government policy and funding have on the way faculty, educational designers and institutions work toward their goals?

A key aspect of the research questions asked is their focus on the individual in relation to a wider system. This wider system includes not just the individual's immediate colleagues, but also their discipline as a whole, their department, their institution, and more broadly, their socio-political context. Individuals do not act in isolation. We exist within communities and our identities and goals are actively and subtly influenced by the beliefs, norms and goals of the community environment we exist
within. One common way of envisioning these spheres of influence is through Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), shown in Figure 3.1.

![Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development](image-url)

**Figure 3.1.** Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model of development. Reproduced with permission from http://drewlichtenberger.com/6-shaping-influences-human-development/

The concentric circles in Bronfenbrenner’s diagram indicate the overarching nature of the influence of each part of the system. The further away an element is, the greater the spread of influence, with arguably a correspondingly reduced impact. For example, the micro-system is seen as being directly influential on individuals, while the exo-system and macro-system are seen as having an indirect influence. Bronfenbrenner’s model was created to describe human social, cognitive and emotional development and it can be used to conceptualise the graduated influence of various environmental factors on an individual’s activities in all spheres of life including work (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).
Chapter 3: Methodology

The latter decades of the 20th century and the early stages of the 21st century have seen an increasing recognition of the influence of factors outside the individual on the individual’s actions and behaviours, and therefore an increase in the development of systems theories and models to conceptualise and explain the complex interactions we observe in our communities and workplaces. In the fields of education, information systems, and management, various systems theories have been used by researchers in order to try and capture the complex interaction between individuals, their work, and the tools or technologies they use to achieve their activity-related goals. These include Situated Learning Theory (Lave, 1996), Systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1972), and Actor Network theory (Latour, 1996). While these theories do consider the relationship between the individual and their immediate context and community, they were not ideally suited to the research area reported in this thesis. For example, Situated Learning Theory tends not to consider the wider environment or exo-system-level influences on a person’s activities, focusing more on immediate context. Systems theory assumes an equal level of influence by all elements in the system, and Actor Network Theory focuses on linkages between items in a network (human and non-human alike), but not on how or why those linkages exist or change over time.

When looking specifically at how individuals make use of technology in their work, theoretical constructs such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989), and the Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge framework (TPACK) (Koehler, Mishra, & Cain, 2013) have been used by educational researchers, especially in the K-12 and face to face teaching fields. However, TAM and TPACK do not consider the impact of an individual’s wider environment on their use of technology, and assume a level of agency that teacher’s may not necessarily have in choosing technological tools for teaching.

For this research I have made use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as my theoretical framework. This conceptual approach was the best fit for the phenomenon I wished to investigate, for several reasons. CHAT:

- Focuses on how actors use tools to achieve goals within a system.
- Supports investigation of how communities, rules, and shared roles and responsibilities affect individual actions.
- Recognises that systems are dynamic and change over time.
- Recognises that when one aspect of a system changes, it then can reverberate through and change the rest of a system.
Chapter 3: Methodology

- Recognises that there is no such thing as a system that is not in conflict – all systems are always in some level of conflict, contradiction or tension, all systems are dynamic.
- Focuses on the subject and the system from their perspective, which also acknowledges that there is no one perspective on a system and that each perspective can highlight different relationships, conflicts and tensions.
- Recognises that every system is nested, and that an end point at one level is a whole system at another level.

In summary, the CHAT model recognises and caters for the complexity of human life, and our interactions with tangible and intangible objects, as well as our interactions with other humans. It provides a framework to investigate the relationships within different elements of a system, and for investigating and explaining how systems change and evolve over time. Therefore, CHAT was seen as a good methodological fit for the research question.

Cultural Historical Activity Theory

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) is one of a group of theories that emphasise the socio-cultural and political nature of human existence. Instead of viewing human learning and development as biologically determined or mandated, CHAT recognises the significant influence of a person’s context and environment on what and how we learn, play and work (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004). CHAT also emphasises the importance of relationships between people, objects and their environment in understanding behaviour (Engeström, 1999). CHAT acknowledges that the individual only exists in relation to others, and therefore while privileging the point of view of the individual subject, the focus of CHAT is the system as a whole (Blunden, 2007).

CHAT is a powerful tool for investigating technology use in education as it can focus attention on the activity system at all levels from governmental strategy to individual teacher usage (Benson, Lawler, & Whitworth, 2008; Y. Lee, 2011; Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2008). With its focus on relationships within and between activity systems, CHAT can be helpful in exposing practice contradictions that may be constraining innovation or change (Feldman & Weiss, 2010; Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2008). CHAT enables researchers to contextualise the investigated phenomena, and provides an explanatory framework for data analysis (Bligh & Flood, 2017).
Chapter 3: Methodology

The CHAT framework provides a way to conceptualise and investigate the multiple factors, influences and relationships within a system. CHAT conceptualises a system as containing six key elements, which interact to achieve a seventh element: the intended outcome of the work (see Figure 3.2). Within the system there is a subject (or subjects) who are working towards an object (or goal). Successfully achieving that object will lead to the intended outcome. In order to achieve their object, the subject makes use of tools. These could be physical, cognitive or social tools. Recognising that the subject exists within a context which will have an influence on their behaviour, CHAT also includes three other elements for analysis: rules, community, and division of labour.

*Figure 3.2. Engeström's (2000) cultural historical activity system*
Chapter 3: Methodology

The rules element refers to the rules, both implicit and explicit, which have an impact on the activity. These may include laws, organisational policies and procedures, accepted practices and norms, and any other formal or informal systems that guide activity. Community refers to the social group for the activity system. This may be peers, colleagues, or a community of practice, and could include anyone who has an impact on the other elements of the activity system. The division of labour recognises the role of others in the group who are not the subject, on achieving the overarching system goal. For example, in a teaching system the division of labour might recognise the roles that educational designers, student advisors, librarians and learning specialists have within the activity of tertiary teaching.

Within an activity system, each element can interact with any of the other elements, as indicated in the figure above by the bi-directional arrows connecting each point. Sometimes, this interaction will result in tension or conflict between the elements in the system. Conflict or tension between elements will eventually result in evolution of the system, as the subject innovates to resolve the inner contradictions into more aligned functioning (Engeström, 1999, 2000).

**Transformation and evolution of activity systems**

Activity systems are dynamic, constantly in flux and routinely developing internal tensions and contradictions (Blackler, Crump, & McDonald, 1999). Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008) found a variety of terminology used by CHAT researchers to illustrate this concept, including “disturbances”, “conflicts”, “tensions”, “systemic tensions”, “contrast”, “denial”, “opposition”, “deviations”, “disruptions”, “problems”, “breakdowns”, “ruptures” and “clashes”. The common thread is the notion that within the system something is in conflict with something else, and this conflict is impacting upon the ability of the system to achieve its goal. This conflict can occur within an element, such as when two rules are in contradiction with each other, or between elements, such as when two actors in the activity system have roles with competing goals (Engeström, 2001).

The resolution of these conflicts within activity systems are what transform systems over time (Engeström, 2001). Activity systems develop and transform through a process of internalisation (adhering to system norms) and externalisation (responding to system contradictions) (Engeström, 1999). When a subject enters an activity system, they first internalise the behaviours required to reproduce the activity as it is currently carried out. Over time as they act within the system, the subject begins to encounter contradictions between and within components of the system. As the contradictions increase, the subject becomes more critically reflective of the system and search for
solutions, a process Engeström (1999) refers to as externalisation. The solutions implemented eventually result in a new system of activity, and the cycle begins again.

There are two important implications that are evident from the notion of contradictions and their effect on system change. The first is the importance of researching over time, and acknowledging the historical development of activities. If systems are dynamic and evolving through time, then time and historical context needs to be considered within the analysis of a system. Like any human endeavour, our actions are predicated upon our current state of knowledge and being. Understanding the historical events that have led to the current state allows for a more accurate prediction of the future trajectory of a system.

The second is the potential for CHAT to provide insight into a system and making visible the processes, relations and structures within an activity that would normally be invisible (Roth, Lee, & Hsu, 2009). Investigating a system at one point in time only is akin to trying to understand a machine when it has stopped, rather than viewing it in motion and seeing how the parts interact. A static view gives some understanding, but may miss the subtleties that only become obvious once the machine is seen operating. It is this latter point that provided a particular impetus for the use of CHAT in the current investigation.

Method

CHAT Influenced Research Design

There are several key implications of using the CHAT framework for research design (Nardi, 1996). First, the CHAT framework conceives of activities as dynamic, changing over time, so an ideal method allows sufficient research time to observe the historical changes in objects and the dynamics within the system. Second, CHAT emphasises the importance of paying attention to the larger system, rather than focusing narrowly on specific aspects or episodes which may not be useful for identifying the broad patterns of activity in the system. The third methodological implication follows logically from the second, that is, the need to collect data from a variety of sources using a variety of formats and collection techniques, and to avoid over-reliance on one source or type of data from the system. Ideally data collection would include longitudinal ethnographic observation, interviews, and discussions in real life settings (Vygotsky, 1978), although historical materials are also widely used in CHAT research (Nardi, 1996).

Central to CHAT research is the prioritisation of the subject’s point of view in understanding the system. Rather than attempting to understand a system objectively or
Chapter 3: Methodology

from the outside, the point of view of the subjects within the system is privileged and the researcher’s own involvement and subjectivity where it exists is acknowledged (Nardi, 1996). This aligns well with an investigation that is framed around a constructivist and interpretivist perspective, where the role of the researcher co-constructing reality in partnership with research participants is recognised (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

This research aimed to investigate the individual and environmental factors (and the relationships between them) that influence tertiary teachers’ practice in the New Zealand online & distance learning environment. The research design for this study was created through translating the key principles of Engeström (2001) and the methodological practice implications identified by Nardi (1996), onto the activity system to be focused on; in this case online and distance tertiary teaching in New Zealand. Within this system, teachers have been identified as the subject, and good teaching as the object or goal. Figure 3.4 illustrates the way that the CHAT framework was used to provide a conceptualisation of the activity system within the research context of this study.

![Figure 3.3. The activity system for this study shaped by the CHAT framework](image)
Chapter 3: Methodology

As each participant experiences the activity system from their own perspective, a case-based approach to investigating the data was taken, privileging individual understandings of the activity system initially. However, consistent with the need to avoid overreliance on discrete episodes or singular aspects of the system, the series of cases were evaluated as a whole to identify patterns within the larger activity system of online and distance tertiary teaching in New Zealand.

A number of different data collection methods and sources were utilised: interviews; observation; and review of documents. A longitudinal approach to data collection was undertaken, to allow time to observe the dynamism within the system. The collection of historical data also aided in understanding how elements in the activity system are transformed through time.

A useful way to guide the application of CHAT to a particular research question was developed by Mwanza (2001, 2011) who created the Activity Oriented Design Method. She proposed the use of an 8-step model (shown in Table 3.1) as a way of focusing investigation on each element of an activity system. This model was used initially to help clarify the focus of the data collection. The text in italics shows the way the model and its questions were used to frame the study.
### Chapter 3: Methodology

Table 3.1

*The Eight Step Model (reproduced from Mwanza-Simwami, 2011)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Question to ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Activity of interest</td>
<td>What sort of activity am I interested in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Course development in online and distance teaching</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Why is the activity taking place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(a.k.a. Objective)</em></td>
<td><em>To create effective teaching and learning environments</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Who is involved in carrying out this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Teachers and educational designers</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>By what means are the subjects performing this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Through the use of various technological tools</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rules &amp; Regulations</td>
<td>Are there any cultural norms, rules or regulations governing the performance of this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Rules of the department, institution and government, norms of the wider education system</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Division of Labour</td>
<td>Who is responsible for what, when carrying out this activity and how are the roles organised?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Teachers and educational designers have various roles depending on the institution, others such as IT staff, librarians and learning support staff may be involved as well</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>What is the environment in which activity is carried out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Higher education, distance and online education</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>What is the desired Outcome from carrying out this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Effective course design leading to successful student learning</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expanding from this, Mwanza-Simwami (2011) also recommended the use of key questions to generate research specific questions in the data collection process, for example:

- What Tools do the Subjects use to achieve their Objective and how?
- What Rules affect the way the Subjects achieve the Objective and how?
- How does the Division of Labour influence the way the Subjects satisfy their Objective?
- How do the Tools in use affect the way the Community achieves the Objective?
- What Rules affect the way the Community satisfies their Objective and how?
- How does the Division of Labour affect the way the Community achieves the Objective?

These questions focus on both the individual and community approach to achieving the desired outcome, however they privilege a focus on the object. While this is understandable, given that the activity system does not exist without its object (Kaptelinin, 1996; Nardi, 1996) this focus does obscure some of the other influences and forces within an activity System. To illuminate the remainder of the system the following questions were added to the list:

- What influence does the Community have on the way the Subjects work to achieve their Objective?
- What influence does the Community have on the Tools used by a Subject to achieve their Objective?
- What influence do the Rules have on the Tools used by a Subject to achieve their Objective?

Together these questions formed a guide for identifying data sources, and areas to investigate in the data collection process. For example, the question, “How does the division of labour influence the way the subjects achieve their objective?” translated into a series of questions that I then sought data to answer, including:

- What is the official division of labour in this activity?
- What is the actual division of labour in this activity?
- Where are the contradictions or tensions?
- Who determines the division of labour and how flexible or open to change is it?
- How has the division of labour changed over time, and what have been the key factors influencing the change?
In order to answer each question, data was collected from a variety of sources including interviews with participants, observation, and review of policy and process documentation, as further described in the data collection section below.

**Grounded Theory identification of key components**

CHAT provides a useful way of conceptualising and organising the elements within a system, and supports investigation of the relationships between these elements. However, consideration of these relationships requires that you have first clearly captured the actions and operations involved in the system. To identify these components of the activity system, the data was analysed using a Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). Together these approaches are complementary. Activity theory guards against the potential for a grounded theory approach to become acontextual and overly focused on participants’ individual concerns, whilst grounded theory provides a set of methods for filtering the data and illuminating key themes (Seaman, 2008).

Grounded theory is a set of principles and practices that can be used to learn about social processes and actions, and as a method for developing theory to help us understand them (Charmaz, 2006). A grounded theory study is characterized by purposive sampling and using an inductive approach to build theory (Seaman, 2008). Another key aspect is the fluidity of analysis and sampling where, as codes emerge, the researcher will go back to find other sources of data that might relate to those codes. Through comparison of like and unlike cases, combining codes into categories, use of memo-writing, and ongoing theoretical sampling, a theory is developed (Charmaz, 2006; Sbaraini, Carter, Evans, & Blinkhorn, 2011).

Typically, a grounded theory approach would involve avoiding engagement with the literature until after data have been collected, coded and analysed in order to avoid overlaying researcher preconceptions on the data. However, as Charmaz (2006) and Thornberg (2012) argue, there are several reasons why this can be problematic, including the impossibility of the researcher being able to remove all prior knowledge about the field that had previously been obtained, as well as the risk of studying something that has already been thoroughly covered in the literature. For this reason a preferred approach is to have a broad view of the field of interest to start with, and then take a theoretical sampling approach to working with the literature during the coding process, which was the approach taken with this research (Thornberg, 2012; Urquhart & Fernández, 2013).
Chapter 3: Methodology

**Study Design**

The area of interest was the individual and environmental factors influencing online distance course creation at tertiary institutions in New Zealand, and how this might change over time or between institutions. The research design needed to be manageable within the scope of the project while still providing sufficient data from which to draw useful conclusions. Therefore, consideration had to be given to the length of time over which the research could occur, and the number of institutions which could be compared. One advantage of the part time nature of the research project time was that up to three years would be available during which data could be collected. Therefore, a longitudinal design of 2 to 3 years would be achievable. Consideration also needed to be given to the amount of data that could realistically be analysed in the remaining time left to complete the research project. Balancing the available time against the desired number of perspectives from each institution, and the time that would be required to thoroughly analyse each set of data, led to an identification that the ideal number of institutions would be three, and the ideal number of participants from each institution would be five or six. These pragmatic constraints influenced the final decision to collect data from three institutions, at three points in time, over a period of approximately two and a half years.

**Institutional cases**

Three institutions that currently engage in online and distance education were chosen for the investigation. They were selected for their varying perspectives on the New Zealand online and distance learning system, and included institutions that were at different points in a continuum of experience in online distance education.

The first institution, the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, is a member of the ITP sector. They fill a role as a specialist national provider of open and distance learning at tertiary level and have been operating in the distance learning environment since 1946. The Open Polytechnic provides distance and online courses in a variety of subjects from Level 1-7 on the NZQA framework. The majority of courses offered are fully distance and online, however some courses or programmes include block courses or access to regionally based lecturers. They have approximately 35,000 enrolled students per year, usually part time. Approximately 70% of their student base is in full or part time employment (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2015).

The second institution also has a strong history of providing distance education at tertiary level for over 50 years. Massey University is primarily a contact University, however they also support approximately 17,000 students a year extramurally. Massey
University has three campuses throughout New Zealand with several programmes and courses offered across multiple campuses. Some of the Massey University distance courses contain block course requirements, and all have an online presence.

Victoria University of Wellington was the third institution chosen. Victoria University operates primarily as a contact University, with approximately 21,000 students annually enrolled. It has pockets of distance learning occurring, however there is no institutional level strategy driving or supporting these individual efforts, which are clustered within particular departments. Online or distance courses tend to be offered here and there within a larger programme, rather than being structured so that students could complete a full programme by distance. In comparison with the other two institutions, teaching in the online and distance space is a relatively new endeavour at Victoria University.

**Participant recruitment**

Within each institution, five participants were sought as research participants. Participants were required to have at least one year’s experience teaching by distance, and to be currently teaching in the online and distance environment. Courses and programmes that were offered by distance and online were identified from the institution’s course enrolment information available on their websites. An email request was sent to individuals identified as being teachers in an online distance programme describing the intended research and asking for people who may be interested in being involved. The email suggested that if the recipient was not personally available, they could pass the request on to any of their colleagues who they thought might be interested.

Participants were approached to participate voluntarily in the study through email rather than phone call, as it was felt that an email approach would put less pressure on participants to respond favourably than a persuasive phone call. Due to the longitudinal nature of the research, it was also important that participants were interested in participating without needing persuasion in order to minimise the risk of attrition during the course of the study. When potential participants expressed an interest in the research, they were advised of the steps that would be taken to preserve participant confidentiality and anonymity (see Appendix A: Consent form). From this method and from following up recommendations from colleagues, 15 participants were recruited for the initial interviews in 2014.

Upon recruitment, participants were made aware of the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. As expected with longitudinal research there was some participant attrition. Between the first interview in 2014 and the second
Chapter 3: Methodology

Interview in 2015, one participant expressed concerns about their involvement and withdrew. This participant was concerned that some of the frank comments they had made in the first interview could result in negative repercussions for them if published, and preferred to cease their involvement in the study. All information collected to that point from the participant was destroyed. No attempt was made to replace this participant’s contribution to the study, as it was felt that the role they represented was sufficiently covered by other participants, therefore the final number of participants in the study was fourteen.

**Participant demographics**

There were nine female and five male participants, with ages ranging from late-twenties, to mid-sixties, although the majority were aged between 35-50 years old at the time of recruitment. Four of the participants were employed in educational design or technology roles, and ten were teaching staff. Teachers ranged from early career academics, less than a year into teaching, through to senior academics who had been teaching for more than 20 years. Similarly, the educational designers ranged from a new graduate to highly experienced designers.

All participants, including the educational designers, had experience teaching face to face in addition to the online and distance teaching they were currently involved with. Four participants also had previous experience in teaching at primary or secondary school education levels. All of the educational designers had a teaching qualification, and one had a qualification in e-learning as well. Six of the teachers held teaching qualifications, although only two of these were specifically in higher education or tertiary teaching. Two of the teachers had eLearning qualifications. Table 3.2 gives an overview of participants, along with their pseudonyms, roles and qualifications.
Table 3.2

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>eLearning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Polytechnic</td>
<td>Bellbird</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantail</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finch</td>
<td>Educational designer</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kereru</td>
<td>Educational designer</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wren</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massey University</td>
<td>Blackbird</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakapo</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kea</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starling</td>
<td>Educational designer</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria University</td>
<td>Heron</td>
<td>Educational designer</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukeko</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparrow</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takahe</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

In accordance with CHAT and grounded theory principles, data were collected from a variety of sources over a period of two and a half years between 2014 and 2016. These sources included individual participant interviews, researcher observation of course design, and review of rules as formalised through publicly available documents and policies.

Dataset 1 – Participant interviews

The starting point for data collection was with the participants. Each participant took part in the annual interview in which various factors that had impacted on their teaching over the past year were discussed. Participants were given a choice of interview time and location to suit their needs. Most chose to be interviewed in their personal office or workspace. Some interviewees chose a location elsewhere such as a café or park. All participants gave permission for the interviews to be recorded for transcription and analysis purposes.
Interviews were conducted each year between January and June of the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, and were between one and two hours in length. One interview in 2014 was conducted with two participants together (Robin and Starling), by their instigation. One interview in 2015 was conducted over skype as the participant was outside New Zealand at the time of the interview. One participant moved to a different city after the 2014 interview, and was unable to be contacted during 2015, however returned to the study for the 2016 interview. Two participants were present for the 2014 and 2015 interviews, but were not able to be interviewed in 2016 as they had left their employment with the institutions to pursue work elsewhere in New Zealand and overseas.

Participants were advised before the first interview that the interviews would involve open-questioning. They were advised that the general line of questioning would include their teaching or educational design experience, their current working environment, any challenges they had been experiencing related to their practice, and their teaching or design goals. Participants were informed that the precise nature of the questions would not be determined in advance, but would depend on the way in which the interview developed. A guiding set of questions was developed for each interview, which are available in Appendix B.

Prior to the interview each year participants were contacted to confirm a convenient time and place for the interviews to occur. At the time of the interview, participants were provided with food and beverages in recognition of the provision of their time and energy to the project. Participants were reminded of the purpose of the research, and confirmation was sought again of their interest in participating.

The first interview began by asking participants to talk about themselves, their background, and how they came to be working where they were. The purpose of this question was not just to put them at ease, but also to help position them in their socio-cultural context (Forsey, 2012). The interview then proceeded to discuss their teaching practice, including their goals, their current working environment, and any challenges they had been experiencing that impacted on them achieving their teaching goals. The purpose of the first interview was to get a broad view of the individual’s practice within their context, and the factors that may have been impacting on their work.

The second interview occurred approximately one year after the first interview. Participants were emailed a request to meet for the second interview which included the prompts that would be used to guide the discussion (see Appendix B), and were reminded that although the prompts were there to guide discussion, the interview could cover any
issues that the participant felt were related to their teaching. Participants were reminded of the option to withdraw.

The second interview focused on delving more deeply into the participant’s role, and the achievement of their teaching goals. Questions were asked about any changes in their role or goals in the previous year, and what tools and technologies they used to achieve their goals. Participants were asked about the role of others in their teaching practice, and the impact of any rules or processes on their work. Finally, participants were asked to identify imminent issues and pressures on their work, and the thing(s) that they felt had the biggest influence on their work at the time.

The third interview occurred approximately two years after the first interview. Again, participants were contacted by email to confirm interview arrangements, and were provided with the intended interview questions. Participants were also provided with the transcripts of the previous two interviews prior to the third interview for checking. The third and final interview focused on what had changed and what had stayed the same for the participant in the preceding two years from a work perspective. Participants were asked about what, if anything, they saw as having changed over the preceding two years in relation to their goals, use of tools, relationships with peers and others involved in the teaching process, and the rules influencing their practice. To conclude, participants were asked about their thoughts on the wider educational environment outside of their immediate discipline or department, and their impressions of what the biggest constraints faced by online distance teachers were today, compared to the time of the first interview in 2014.

Note that although it was signalled as a potential source of data in the Consent Form (see Appendix A), participants were not required to complete a personal reflection journal (this was abandoned due to lack of interest from participants), and no data from this source were obtained or analysed.

*Dataset 2 – Observation of participants online course*

As part of the research process, participants consented to their online course being observed at various intervals. This generally occurred at the time of the interview and was primarily used as confirmation of the course design and technology discussed in the interviews. Examples were provided by the participants of how interactive aspects of the design would work through demonstrating parts of their course to the researcher. Student interaction and work was not observed during this process, as the focus was on the activities of the teachers and designers in the design and maintenance of the course, not on student engagement or activity within the course.
Chapter 3: Methodology

**Dataset 3 – Review of documents**

During the interviews, participants were asked to identify any policies, procedures, guidelines or formal documents that they referred to in their work, or that they thought had an impact on their teaching practice. Internal documents were not viewed by the researcher, but their general contents were discussed if participants chose to raise them as issues relating to their teaching practice. Only publicly available documents were scrutinised during the research process.

Publicly available institutional documents from each of the three institutions were identified and reviewed. These documents included documents produced by the institution such as strategic plans, financial plans, and research and teaching strategies. The institutional websites were also reviewed, with a focus on content that described institutional history and development, and current goals and market positioning. Formal planning, reporting and strategy documents were gathered from the websites of each of the institutions. In some cases, the institution held only the current version of the report or plan. In those instances, earlier versions were collected through the Wayback Machine (https://archive.org/web/) – an archival website which stores versions of websites from the past. Institutions are required to prepare investment plans to provide TEC with in order to secure funding. These plans were sourced from the TEC website where they were not available directly from the provider.

In addition, review documents from quality assurance bodies such as TEC and NZQA were sought and included for analysis. These documents included external quality reviews, measures against performance indicators, and documents commissioned by government bodies such as the Ministry of Education, that included commentary specifically about any of the three case institutions. Finally, the document review included governance documents such as legislation, governance and funding information pertaining to the New Zealand tertiary education sector as a whole. Documents related to government strategy and funding for tertiary education were sourced from TEC and Ministry of Education websites. Some relevant governmental and institutional documents were also discovered during the review of literature.

**Dataset 4 – Literature review**

In accordance with the grounded theory approach used (Charmaz, 2006), a general wide-ranging literature scan was undertaken initially to ensure familiarity with the field and recent research areas. Following the data collection, a more specific, purposive sampling approach (Randolph, 2009) was taken to focus specifically on topics.
and issues that had been raised or become evident through participant interviews and institutional document review.

**Data Analysis**

**Dataset 1 – Participant interviews**

A portion of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, while the remainder were transcribed by a contractor. In both cases, the initial transcripts were checked against the interview recordings and amendments were made as necessary to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, in accordance with good transcription practice (Hammersley, 2012). The transcripts were also sent to participants for checking.

Where there were instances where the participant said something and did not wish that statement to be included in the analysis, it was excluded during the transcription process. For example, a minority of interviewees wished to make “off the record” remarks, whilst some made personal comments followed immediately by statements like “you won’t include that will you?”. In all cases, the participants’ wishes were followed, and participants had the opportunity to check this was the case upon reviewing the transcripts.

Participants were assured that any identifying information would be kept in a secure location, and that all efforts would be made to preserve anonymity in the event of publications emerging from the research. The contracted transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement and all copies of interview recordings and transcriptions held by the contracted transcriber were destroyed once the transcriptions were completed. Audio and transcription copies of the interviews held by the researcher will remain in secure storage for five years following completion of the project.

During the analysis process participants were assigned pseudonyms to preserve anonymity in the published works arising from the research, including this thesis. Bird species were used as pseudonym names to avoid any connotations associated with the use of traditional names, or any implications or associations of the use of names from particular culture, gender or ethnicity.

In concurrence with the constructive grounded theory coding process described by Charmaz (2006), sections of the interview text were coded to highlight the activity occurring in that instance. NVivo 11 software was used as a tool to organise the data initially and capture the link between the transcripts and the initial codes. During the coding process the transcripts were read and the audio file was listened to simultaneously to ensure the coding captured the sense or emotional intent of particular words or
Chapter 3: Methodology

phrases. Later in the process, where coding was reviewed against memos and other data, a manual process was engaged.

Coding occurred incident by incident in the data, so a code might be assigned to a few words, or to several sentences’ worth of text, as long it was the same incident. Initial coding used gerunds, as recommended by (Charmaz, 2006) to identify implicit meanings and processes. Following constant comparison, focused coding occurred, where identification of codes that had greater explanatory or conceptual power occurred.

Coding occurs within a subjective point of view or paradigmatical perspective (Saldana, 2009), and in this instance the lens of CHAT was used as a framework to organise the codes. This resulted in a two-level coding procedure. Each section of text was first considered in terms of which element of the CHAT system it referred to, for example whether it related to the subject’s beliefs or experiences, the goal to be achieved, the tools used, the rules applying to the situation, the community or the division of labour. Then, once the element of the activity system was identified, a code was created to reflect the meaning of the piece of text as it sat within that contextual element. Simultaneous coding (Saldana, 2009) was employed where more than one concept was embodied in the text, which also helped to identify where relationships were occurring between elements in the CHAT system. This approach then allowed for consideration of the patterns within each element of the system, and supported the notion that similar codes appearing in different parts of the system could have different impacts on the system.

The data were reviewed and recoded several times through the analysis period, until it was felt that the concepts had been comprehensively identified. There was fluidity between the analysis, coding and writing activities, and data was recoded as necessary to shape a clearer picture of the patterns emerging, in accordance with grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006). Memos were written throughout the data collection and analysis phases to capture ideas about the properties of the codes, and their relationships to one another (Holton, 2010), which fed back into the coding process.

Where quotes were used in writing about the data, they were tidied to remove hedges and fillers that did not add to the meaning of the quote. In some cases quotes were tidied to improve clarity, this occasionally included removing tangential comments that appeared mid-quote. Quotations were provided as evidence and to illustrate findings from the data, as well as to give the participants a voice in the research (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006).
Dataset 2 – Observation of participants’ online courses

Notes made by the researcher on observing the course design were captured either in the interview transcript, or in the researcher’s Journal. Where verbal comments from the observation were captured within the recorded interview, they were analysed along with the interview transcript. Additional notes from the Journal were used primarily as a further point of data to identify any discrepancies or commonalities in the interview data and are referred to occasionally in the results chapters.

Datasets 3 and 4 – Review of documents and literature

Relevant documents were identified at the time of the interviews, and also during the coding process, as key issues and wider environmental policy impact became evident. Documents were purposively sought, and reviewed to provide a comparison to the perspective provided in the participant interviews. In the results chapters of this thesis (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), the documents related to each institution are used to provide initial contextualisation, as well as to support points from the interview data made throughout the chapter. Relevant items from the literature review were presented in Chapter 2.

Quality Assurance

The aim of the research was to seek understanding of the topic, while acknowledging that perspectives on reality are tempered by our physical, temporal, historical and social place in the world (Patton, 2002). In carrying out the research there was an understanding that the researcher brought her own lived experience to the interaction, which influenced all aspects of the research inquiry from research aim and design, through data collection, and into analysis and final interpretation (Lincoln et al., 2011). In this research the researcher shared a co-constructive role with the research participants, where dialogue illuminated the various perspectives held of the area of interest, and interpretation of the commonalities led to a shared understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Lincoln et al., 2011). From this perspective, the quality of research is determined by how well it represents a shared understanding of the object of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This can be assessed through consideration of aspects such as trustworthiness or authenticity (the degree to which the research is a true representation of the data), transferability (the degree to which the findings make sense or can be applied to other settings), dependability (the degree to which the process is auditable) and confirmability (the degree to which the findings are grounded in the data) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In constructivist research, the concepts of triangulation (capturing and respecting multiple perspectives), reflexivity (the researcher’s awareness
of their own biases), and contribution to dialogue (the researcher’s contribution to the co- 
construction occurring) are also considered important (Yilmaz, 2013).

**Authenticity**

During the data collection process, it was clear that saturation of data had 
occurred when the information gleaned from the third interviews was substantially the 
same as the second, and participants had repeated key points a number of times across 
the three interviews. Therefore, the researcher was confident that a well-developed 
picture of the context and activity for the participant had been obtained. Transcripts were 
checked by participants for accuracy, and participants were also provided a copy of a 
published journal article based on the research data (Lawrence, 2018b) and given the 
opportunity to provide feedback. There were no incidences of participants asking for 
changes to any of the data, or querying interpretations.

**Transferability**

During the research parts of the data were presented at conferences, to explore 
how transferable the concepts being unearthed in the research were to other settings 
(Lawrence, 2016b, 2016a, 2017, 2018a). In each of these instances, feedback received 
from the wider online distance learning community was that the issues and quotes 
discussed and presented could have been from their own workplace. There was 
consensus that the phenomenon being investigated existed in similar form across a 
number of institutions. The document review process also highlighted the commonalities 
between the research conducted, and previously published research in the area.

**Dependability & Confirmability**

The method section has outlined the process undertaken to develop the research 
aim and design, as well as the processes involved in collecting, analysing and interpreting 
the data. The grounded theory process, alongside the CHAT framework, kept the 
researcher in close contact with the data throughout the process of analysis and 
interpretation.

**Triangulation**

Multiple sources of data were collected during the research, within and across 
institutions. Observations were used in addition to participant interviews, and 
participant interviews within institutions provided triangulation of the issues internal to 
each institution. Care was taken not to privilege particular perspectives during the 
analysis, interpretation and writing phases.
**Chapter 3: Methodology**

**Reflexivity**

The researcher was acutely aware of her own beliefs and experiences and how these were impacting on the research process. A balance was sought between acknowledging and recognising the researcher's contribution to the co-construction of the phenomenon, and working to ensure that her internal biases did not overly affect participants’ responses during data collection, or the coding, analysis and writing processes. It was recognised that the situated understanding and assumptions held by the researcher could be beneficial in identifying the ‘common knowledge’ held by those inhabiting the area of research, and that conscious consideration of those accepted norms would be useful in working with the data (Mcintyre, 1998).

**Participant Voice & Researcher contribution to dialogue**

Care was taken during the interviews, particularly at the beginning, to build rapport and provide an open and supportive space where participants could speak freely. Part of the development of a safe and secure environment for participants was provided through allowing participants to choose the spaces and times they wanted to meet. Provision of food and beverage was also used to increase comradery and develop trust. As exploration of the topic was a co-constructed affair, personal anecdotes from the interviewer were shared where appropriate in support of participant comments, for example when participants were seeking reassurance that their point of view was valid. Researcher-reflected descriptions were also used as a form of feedback and checking to clarify shared understandings. For example, to clarify what a participant had said the researcher might say “do you mean something like [example]?”, or “I think I understand what you mean, I once had a situation where [example]... is that a bit like what you are describing?”.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter has detailed and justified the choice of method for the research, which seeks to investigate the individual, institutional and environmental factors influencing online distance teaching in New Zealand. A longitudinal case-based approach was undertaken, using interview, observational and documental data from three tertiary institutions with varying levels of experience in ODL. Grounded theory was used to identify elements of the ODL systems which were then analysed through a CHAT lens. The results are provided in the following three chapters. Each chapter explores one of the three institutional cases, focusing on the experiences of the participants within each institution.
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

This chapter contains the first of the three cases investigated in the research project. Data are presented through summarisation of relevant documents from the document review, and through participant quotes and interpretation of key issues emerging from the data. Where quotes are used to provide evidence, the source of the quote is noted in parentheses, along with the year of the quote and the role of the participant (T for teacher, ED for educational designer). The attribution (Journal) refers to the researcher’s journal notes. The CHAT framework is used to organise the topics explored.

History of the OP

Early History and Purpose

The Open Polytechnic began its life post World War II as the Technical Correspondence School. Opening in 1946, its original purpose was to provide correspondence education and retraining opportunities to returning servicemen and women (Barret, 2011). In 1963, the organisation was renamed the Technical Correspondence Institute (TCI), offering trades subject training by correspondence throughout New Zealand. Later, as part of wider educational reforms in the late 1980s / early 1990s, the organisation became The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and expanded into offering degree qualifications as well as the trade qualifications previously available. Throughout its history, the Open Polytechnic has filled a unique niche as the only specialist open and distance learning provider at tertiary education level in the country (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2017).

Distance Education provision

The Open Polytechnic transitioned from a print based correspondence model to an Internet supported or enhanced model, and then further to a web-based model between 2000-2010. During this period, and in the years immediately preceding the research project there were a number of restructuring exercises as the organisation adjusted to the affordances of the new technologies being used, and the subsequent impact on the roles and responsibilities of staff. For example, as materials moved from printed production to online provision there was less need for graphic design staff, and greater need for IT staff. Reduction in printing and posting of material also had an impact on administration processes and staff. Throughout the transition, the Open Polytechnic retained its
industrial model of creation of educational materials, with staff fulfilling specific and discrete roles in the creation and provision of courses, which is discussed in further detail in the division of labour section of this chapter.

Open Polytechnic 2014-2016

Vision, Mission and Goals

During the research period of 2014-2016, the Open Polytechnic reframed its vision several times. At the beginning of 2014 the Open Polytechnic had an organisational vision of "A New Zealand that's continually learning to succeed", with a corresponding purpose "To inspire success through the most flexible, accessible and motivational learning experience in the world" (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2014b, p. 3). At this time the focus appeared to be on accessibility and support for students.

By 2015, there was a focus on the impact of the 'digital revolution' on education, and on how other tertiary organisations could benefit from collaborating with the Open Polytechnic, given its experience as "the only single-mode open and distance learning organisation in New Zealand's tertiary education sector" (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2015, p. 3):

> Our 'disaggregated value chain' approach allows other tertiary education providers to choose parts of our services – be it course materials, learning support, online technology, or quality-assured assessment – so they can meet their learner’s and regions upskilling needs without having to double up on financial investment.

The clear goal at this stage was on targeting other institutions to partner with, rather than trying to increase revenue through student numbers (which had been slightly decreasing each year). By 2016, the purpose had been reframed to “re-skilling the workforce to meet the demands of new jobs” due to changes in modern technology (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2015, p. 1).

Keeping up with technological change

The annual report for the year ending 2013 (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2014a) noted that changing technology had dramatically impacted on the learner-education provider relationship with increasing use of websites and apps rather than person to person interaction. As a consequence, the Open Polytechnic had an increasing focus on technological innovation, "so that our students and the organisations we collaborate with benefit from the advances digital technology bring to open and distance learning" (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2015, p. 5).
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

During 2015, the Open Polytechnic launched a new bespoke digital platform - iQualify. It was anticipated that the new platform would "deliver significant diversified revenue for the organisation" (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2016b, p. 5)(The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2016b). The Open Polytechnic saw the combination of circumstances occurring during the research period as “an exciting opportunity for digital disruption in the New Zealand tertiary sector” (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2016a). It was clear from the annual reports between 2012 – 2016 (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2013, 2014b, 2015, 2016b) that the Open Polytechnic saw strategic use of technological innovation as the key to achievement of their organisational goals.

Meeting TEC funding targets

As an ITP, the Open Polytechnic was highly sensitive to fluctuations in government funding, and therefore a significant amount of attention was paid to ensuring the organisation met the TEC funding requirements for the level of successful completions and retentions. The expected completion rates rose during the research period, and the Open Polytechnic was therefore highly motivated to make changes to administration and course delivery in order to maximise the likelihood of achieving the targets. Distance courses typically have lower completion rates than face to face courses, however despite the fact that the Open Polytechnic was a wholly distance institution, TEC set the same expectation for the Open Polytechnic as it did for face to face ITPs.

Goals

Institutional goals

The Open Polytechnic publicly stated goals were dynamic during the period of research, resulting in staff expressing confusion about the overall direction of the organisation. The changes to the vision and direction were accompanied by changes to internal processes and strategic priorities that were observed by the participants to have an impact on their teaching and educational design practices. In particular, participants commented on economic and industry drivers prompting organisational processes, which are further described in the sections below.

Unclear organisational vision

The frequent change of organisational goal led to staff confusion and frustration at the lack of a clearly expressed vision for the organisation. "If you sat down and asked 10 people working here what the vision of the institution was, I think you might possibly get
10 different answers”, said Bellbird (T, 2016). Kereru (ED, 2014) agreed. ”It’s those confusing messages that get out there and you just get the feeling that they're not really clear about what they want”.

Kereru (ED, 2014) suspected that the issue was that the organisation was in the process of deciding between two quite different visions, “it’s like they're not sure what their vision is now... they say they want that interactive online teaching model but actually they are acting as if its just online correspondence”. Finch (ED, 2014) concurred, suggesting that there needed to be stronger leadership in this area, “there is an absence at a critical layer of the organisation for someone who has a strong positive forward vision for how we can actually take what we've got and move it forward”.

**Diversified revenue**

In addition to the expected focus on meeting TEC funding requirements, Finch (ED, 2014) noted “there is a huge drive there towards investment and diversified revenue”. A number of projects and processes emerged during the research period that staff traced back to this goal of increasing non-governmental income. With the economic imperative as the main driving force behind these projects, rather than pedagogical drivers, the participants tended to have negative opinions on the projects’ values for students or teaching and learning generally. These projects included white-labelling, the focus on the disaggregated value chain, and reference to a ‘media-rich curriculum’.

**Disaggregated value chain**

The term "disaggregated value chain" was used by the organisation to refer to its industrial model of education design, where staff hold specific roles, and in theory any section of the chain could be replaced with another source. For example, educational design of materials could be handled by a section within the organisation or outsourced to another organisation. This principle held for all aspects of the chain, including the phone support service for students, library support, IT support, and teaching staff. The phrase held negative connotations for participants because of a presentation made by the executive explaining how the new value chain would service students, where it was noticed (by faculty) that teachers were missing entirely from the value chain diagram (Journal).

**White labelling**

The term ‘white-labelling’ referred to the process where courses were stripped of all identifiable content that could lead the student to know the course had been created by staff at the Open Polytechnic. This was done for the purposes of onselling materials to
other providers. The process of white-labelling involved removing any personal reference to the course writer (the lecturer) from the course, as well as the removal of culturally specific references in cases where the course was to be on sold overseas. Participants were unhappy about the process and the removal of teacher voice from the materials. “They want it [the course] to be personality free. In other words, it doesn’t really matter who’s teaching it and what their preferences are. This is how it is” (Kereru, ED, 2015).

There was also concern about the appropriateness of removing reference to culture from courses, particularly for courses in the Social Sciences where consideration of culture was a key embedded part of the learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

*Media-rich curriculum*

Participants were concerned that a focus on media in the curriculum was driven by a desire by the organisation to be seen as current and trendy, rather than having curriculum changes informed by pedagogical concerns. Fantail (T, 2014) commented that “some of the multimedia stuff, it feels almost a bit gimmicky rather than this is a new and innovative way of helping to teach people information so it can transform their lives”. Alongside the media-rich rhetoric was an emphasis on innovation, which was seen by some staff as ironic. As Bellbird (T, 2015) noted, “none of us could sit there and say that multiple choice online questions are even vaguely innovative”.

*Industry driven curriculum*

Another key organisational driver was to work closely with industry in curriculum development. As an ITP, the Open Polytechnic’s mandate was to provide vocationally relevant qualifications, so close linkages to industry were both expected and appropriate. However, staff did question whether industry needs should be driving overall curriculum portfolio planning. Bellbird (T, 2014) pointed out that “there are jobs now that didn’t exist five years ago, a year ago, six months ago”, and that with technology changing so quickly it was unwise to follow what industry said they wanted in a qualification:

*If you allow industry to drive, industry is going to ask for what they want right in this millisecond or worse, the ones that are struggling to keep up with current technologies are going to want what they wanted last year. So decisions aren’t being made in a forward thinking manner.*

*Implicit goals*

An interesting feature of the Open Polytechnic environment was the number of implicit organisational goals that weren’t formally stated, yet had a significant impact on the immediate environment for teachers and educational designers. As Kereru (ED, 2014)
noted when discussing the implicit goals "these things are always tacit and verbal and stuff ... you won't see a lot written down". Throughout the interviews there were many instances where a participant would say "they don't explicitly say it, but..." and then proceed to describe the impression they had accumulated through staff meetings, announcements, rules, policies and resourcing. Key ideas that participants identified as organisational goals, but that were not explicitly stated in any official strategy or documentation included ‘courses teach themselves’, ‘cost over pedagogy’, and the notion that ‘courses need to be reusable modules’, which seemed to go hand in hand with the ‘cookie-cutter approach’.

**Courses teach themselves**

The course design process seemed to include the teacher in a peripheral rather than central way, according to the participants. Kereru (ED, 2014) observed "it's almost like a teacher didn't matter, just shove the content out and they are there for the student to establish a relationship with them if necessary, but in terms of content they didn't really matter". Teaching staff felt that policies and processes for course design were minimalising the role of the teacher in the process of teaching and that this would have negative effects on student outcomes.

*The policy is designed to almost cut the teacher out. They say the courses can teach themselves, and that’s simply not the case. If it was, theoretically everybody would get 100% and complete the course and it wouldn't be an issue. It's got a massive negative impact.* (Bellbird, T, 2014)

*We are developing these almost autonomous course material packages which 'should be able to deliver themselves' which of course they can't, or they could but you don't get as good results if you don't have some kind of human in there mediating and facilitating.* (Fantail, T, 2014)

**Cost over pedagogy**

Participants commented on the structures and policies within the organisation as being driven by financial incentives, sometimes at the cost of compromising the pedagogy or academic integrity of a course. For example, Bellbird (T, 2015) perceived that an institutional drive to remove textbooks and exams from courses was financially motivated, “the decisions seemed to be made based on saving money... if it's something where there's an exam embedded or a textbook embedded, then that becomes more difficult to sell”. The concern with this was that it would "have the effect of undermining the integrity of our courses". Cost factors also had an effect on the pedagogical design of a course, as Kereru (ED, 2014) notes here:
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

This is one of these implicit tacit things that are never quite said but I get the impression they wouldn’t be happy here if we designed the courses in such a way that there was lots and lots of interaction between the student and the tutor because it’s not really efficient from a budget point of view so yeah they want it more automated.

The budget point of view seemed to refer primarily to the ongoing staffing costs of delivering a course, "because how is the teacher going to handle that high level of interaction when she's got 150 people or whatever in the group" (Kereru, ED, 2014). The distance education industrial model itself was also felt to implicitly be driving design decisions:

What they would really like I think but has never been said outright is large class sizes ...it’s like that sort of design model where they want to sink the money into developing the product and then once the product is out there that they want to have support or 'helpdesky' type group of people i.e., the teachers, but really you know they are counting on enough people using the product that the cost of making the product is recouped immediately and then everything else is profit" (Kereru, ED, 2014)

Reusable modules and the Cookie cutter approach

Participants had noticed a trend toward encouraging "educational material that’s kind of generic and modularised because you can pick it up and put it anywhere" (Kereru, ED, 2015). A consequence of this approach was that “there’s very little sort interweaving. It’s a different approach, you know. It’s just slot things on and put them back together. You don’t have themes woven really throughout” (Kereru, ED, 2015). Kereru noted that this changed how she thought about programme design, as unlike previous qualifications where the focus would be on how to have threads throughout a programme that linked together, "It's much more like, this is a template, boof, boof, boof. This piece fits in here, this piece fits in there and that's how it's done " (Kereru, ED, 2015).

Related to the modularised course concept was the concept of the ‘one size fits all’ course, also referred to by staff as “the cookie cutter approach”. "My guess of how it worked is that [the Executive Director] had a sense that what will fix this place up is solid and easy to use design ... sort of one size fits all or as close to one size that fits all that can be rolled out", said Finch (ED, 2014). While acknowledging that a standardised approach was potentially beneficial for improving consistency of quality across courses, there was concern that such an approach meant that “you’re not necessarily going to get the best teaching because it will be a cookie cutter model" (Kereru, ED, 2014).
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

Technology replacing teachers

The sense that the organisation was attempting to use technology to minimise the need for teaching staff was strongly felt by both educational design and faculty staff. Although the idea was dismissed as having little basis in reality by the staff interviewed, there was still a lingering sense of unease among faculty in particular with the idea that they were working in an organisation that potentially saw them as obsolete or replaceable.

*I was at this ASCILITE conference last year and one of the keynote speeches was that we’ve moved into a point of designing out the teacher. I don’t think that’s totally true but I certainly think that’s been in the wind within design circles for a number of years. I think it’s just a variant of the computers can teach the people theme and my sense was that was what was underpinning [a recent Open Polytechnic project] (Finch, ED, 2014)*

Individual goals

There was a distinction in the data between some of the organisational goals and the goals expressed by teachers and educational designers. While the organisation was focused on financial outcomes such as meeting TEC EPIs in order to retain funding and seeking diversified revenue, the interview participants were focused on good teaching and supporting students to succeed. Occasionally there was overlap between the stated organisational goal of student success and teacher’s goals, for example when Bellbird (2014) talks about "working with individuals to help them succeed", or when Kereuru (ED, 2016) says "you’re trying to make the stuff understandable and accessible for the person that has to learn, so actually, that never changes".

Educational as societal service

Faculty and educational designers at the Open Polytechnic spoke of education both in terms of individual student achievement and as a societal service. Many of the participants also talked about the social justice element of their work, where students may be second (or third or fourth) chance learners, coming into courses without necessarily having the skills required to succeed at tertiary study. "For me what makes my job more meaningful is the idea of education being transformative, and people having access to it" shared (Fantail, T, 2014). Similarly, Bellbird (T, 2014), suggested that teaching was about "social justice and providing the students that haven’t had a chance a real chance and being able to help those people who may not come with the skills they need".
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

**Supporting the organisational model**

The educational designers also described goals that were not directly about the teaching process. Kereru (ED, 2014) saw her role mainly as involving managing the tension between the correspondence educational model practised by the institution, and the contrasting rhetoric which positioned teachers as involved in course creation and teaching “it’s a kind of dichotomy that pulls against each other, it doesn’t work, so my experience of course creation is really handling that tension”. Finch (ED, 2014) saw their role primarily as providing support to individual lecturers and helping to promote efficiency through building up staff capability.

*I think the contribution that I can make best given the constraints of the external environment is to work within individual schools and within the programmes in the school with the support of the head of school to improve business as usual and efficiencies within the programme.*

**Collaborative co-constructive teaching**

In both instances the educational designers took a pragmatic approach to their work, where trying to provide support for the institutional model, systems and processes to function was a key aspect of their individual goals. This differed from the teaching staff, who tended to see their individual teaching goals as being superior to the organisational goals, and who therefore focused their efforts on attaining their personal teaching goal rather than working to the institutional goal. This difference became more apparent for teachers as they were faced with organisational rules that sometimes ran counter to their own personal beliefs and approaches to teaching. Some teachers were very clear that good teaching was not only constructive, but collaborative and interactive, as Fantail (T, 2014) explained:

*I've always looked at teaching as being facilitation and I've very much resisted the expert model of you stand there at the front and you deliver your wisdom and everyone is supposed to accept that. It’s more about having critical conversations with people, presenting a range of different perspectives and tools and information to people and then enabling them to synthesise it.*

Bellbird (T, 2014) agreed, claiming that this style of teaching was more likely to result in students remaining engaged and succeeding with their studies.

*The more interactive you are, the more you create a culture in your online classroom that is welcoming and responsive and follows what the students’ interests are and tries to bring real world situations in, the more students stay engaged, the more they enjoy it, the better they succeed, the more of them stick with it.*
By contrast, the Open Polytechnic course model was designed to provide relatively static pre-created resources with little scope for change. Therefore, teachers did not have the flexibility to follow students’ interests or make changes to the course as it was being taught. As Kereru (ED, 2014) identified, "there’s that tension between the way that our systems are set up and the teachers or faculty or some of them in terms of the way they’d like to do things". This tension will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, under the exploration of the Rules component of the CHAT diagram.

**Conflicting Goals**

A large number of the tensions seen between staff and the organisational revolved around conflicting views of what comprised good teaching and learning. The Open Polytechnic model of teaching as provision of curated resources with some tutor support was in conflict with faculty perceptions of teaching being a collaborative, co-constructed effort. The design principle that courses should teach themselves was seen by teachers to be both offensive and incorrect. This principle however, informed course design templates, institutional choice of supported technologies for online teaching, policies and resourcing for course development, policies and resourcing for workload management, and professional development strategy and resourcing.

**Tools and Technology Use**

This section briefly outlines the tools utilised by the Open Polytechnic as a means to achieve their intended goals, and discusses the relationship between the tool choice and the achievement of the goals. The main tools that the Open Polytechnic used to achieve their goal were technological - specifically, the use of the Moodle LMS, and latterly the iQualify CMS to provide students with course material and tutor support.

**The LMS: Moodle (The Online Campus)**

The Open Polytechnic online learning management system of choice was Moodle. When the LMS was initially introduced, all courses were still provided as printed materials in binders that were sent out to students upon enrolment (Tertiary Education Commission, 2014a), and the LMS, known as the Online Campus, was seen primarily as an alternative way for students to talk with their fellow students and teachers. Online forums and newsletters sent by email replaced the previously printed and mailed newsletters. The printed class contact list historically sent to students so they could make contact with other students was discontinued, as students could now connect through the online course.
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

Use of the LMS gradually increased, and by the time of the research all courses were expected to have an online course page, which contained the bulk of the learning material. Many courses were still posted out in the mail, to service students who had limited Internet access, but there was a stated expectation that students would access and use the online course page, and that all course materials (where feasible) would be available online.

The correspondence model of course development meant that courses would typically be created initially with a print reader in mind. All course learning guides were prepared in PDF format, and this would then be printed and sent to students, and made available on the course page. A typical online course would contain the course PDF learning materials, a news forum for announcements, links to readings, formative activities such as quizzes, polls, wikis and reflections, and forums for students to talk to their teacher and other students. The course pages also included summative activities and upload links for summative assignments.

**Moodle lockdown**

Initially there was little organisational strategy or oversight for the LMS, and staff had used Moodle in the ways they felt was most appropriate for their teaching (Lawrence & Lentle-Keenan, 2013). Consequently, after several years of Moodle use within the organisation there was increasing diversity and decreasing consistency among courses. In response to this, during 2012-2013 the Open Polytechnic made a significant change to the use of Moodle, removing teachers’ rights to edit a course once it had been created. This effectively meant that where teachers had once had the freedom to create and amend sections of a course as it was being taught, they no longer had this freedom. Critically, some staff felt that because of this restriction, teaching and learning was impaired. “You cannot provide things to students as and when they need them”, observed Bellbird (T, 2014).

**Minimum guidelines templates**

To further support the organisational goal of consistency, a templated approach had recently been applied to Online courses. All courses that existed online were modified so that the content was presented using a consistent template. To supplement this, a set of “minimum guidelines” (Finch, ED, 2014) were created which specified what information each course must have on the online course page and where it must sit. The intent behind this was perceived by staff as a way to "railroad whoever was teaching that course so they wouldn’t be able to help delivering a pedagogically sound course because the design would make it happen for them" (Finch, ED, 2014).
At a high level replacing courses that varied wildly in the level and quality of content with a "one size fits all" template so that all courses would look the same seemed sensible. However, Finch (ED, 2014) noted that because of the lowest common denominator approach, it wasn't appreciated by the people "who were having their stuff replaced with something that didn't look that great". For the most part, Finch explained, these were experienced teachers who had gone to significant effort to make their course in such a way that it met the pedagogical needs of their subject, discipline and level. Many of these staff were not pleased to have their courses replaced with what they considered to be an inferior version that was not based in evidence or theory, and was considered ugly and unwieldy as well. Finch (ED, 2014) explained:

> Even at a purely aesthetic level, what was presented with the core template was not by and large better than what people were doing already, so its only virtue (if anything) was consistency and that's not enough of an incentive for people, especially people who pride themselves on their individualism, to want to change.

Finch (ED, 2014) saw this as a failure at the management level "nobody had gone deeper to say what is it that we actually want to fix?". As a consequence, they considered that the change did not have a significant positive gain for the organisation "let's say you had 30% terrible courses and 70% ranging from ok to fantastic, to replace them with 100% of courses that are at a 50% I’m not sure that’s a great gain". This view was shared by the other participants.

**Staff desire to keep up with technology**

Interestingly, despite the locked down LMS environment, and limited scope for teaching staff to make use of other technology options in their teaching, staff still spoke of their desire to stay abreast of new technologies and the challenges involved in doing so. For example, Wren (T, 2016) observed that "technologies for communicating, for socialising, that we can use for online learning, are changing". Because of this, Wren (T, 2016) felt that "the teacher or the online education professional needs to be abreast with technology. You can't relax. You can't say that I have this down. You need to keep looking ahead all the time".

**iQualify**

During 2015 the Open Polytechnic began trialling a new online platform to contain courses. A key feature of the platform was its responsiveness to different devices and Internet browsers. However because of the intention to make the platform as accessible
as possible, the software was significantly restricted in terms of extended functionality. Kereru (ED, 2015) explained that:

"It's something that has to be accessible to everybody in terms of browsers and devices, it's kind of like the lowest common denominator. So you can't do anything too fancy. You can only have like a video and the quiz is very limited. That might change later. I don't know, because it's pretty new but it's just, it's pared down.

As a content management system rather than a learning management system, participants found iQualify at its inception to be a lot more basic in structure than Moodle. This had an immediate impact on the design approach to developing courses using the new technology. "Things that used to be possible in the previous environment... you can't currently do that in iQualify" commented Kereru (ED, 2016). Kereru was conscious of the implicit pedagogical philosophy behind the new system, which was information transmission based. Consequently, Kereru (ED, 2015) expected the role of the educational designer to change to involve more resource development and communication of static resources, which they thought would be comparatively boring.

"It'll definitely affect how I approach things, how I design things ... In one way, I'm quite relieved that they've got a clear message because before, it was very ambiguous, but at the other point, it's pretty boring. I don't just want to do resource development. It's not really what I'm interested in.

A focus on content provision, along the lines of the curation of digital objects that became popular through the OER movement, also meant a paring back of the expected student-teacher relationship since the course was designed to not need interaction with the teacher. "There will be student/teacher interaction to a degree but it can only happen certain ways" noted Kereru (ED, 2015). Moving to this platform was seen by Kereru (ED, 2015) as a return to the organisation's correspondence roots:

"I actually think they're just going back to what they know...when they introduced Moodle there was no plan and nobody knew what the hell they were doing and they were trying to be everything to everybody and I just see this as going back to their print model which was sort of boring but predictable.

*iQualify vision unclear*

A challenge for faculty when creating courses in the iQualify platform was a lack of shared vision about how the new platform was intended to work, and how staff were expected to work with it. As Wren (T, 2016) explained, "for me, it is like the top
management has seen something with iQualify and they have seen how it will help the institution but there are a lot of people who are lower level, who don’t see that vision.” Wren was about to revise a course to go into the new platform, and was struggling with a lack of information about the limitations and affordances they could expect from the new technology. Wren (T, 2016) commented that, “I have also talked with other lecturers working on iQualify and everybody seems not to be clear exactly what they are doing”.

In this discussion the researcher shared her own experiences when she said, "I'm supposed to be writing a course that will go into iQualify next year and I don't actually know what iQualify is, what it can do, what it looks like. I need to know what its limitations are". Lecturers were familiar with the functionalities of Moodle, but with iQualify staff were told that they just needed to provide content, and that the technical teams would take care of putting content on the platform. However, for faculty who were accustomed to developing formative activities and summative tasks alongside course content, not knowing the affordances of the technology placed significant constraints on their ability to design a course.

**Using Role to Achieve Technology Changes**

Educational design staff who worked with the platform were also aware of the limitations of the new LMS compared with the previous LMS, and found themselves negotiating between the ideal pedagogy for a course, and the current limitations of the new tool. On occasion, Kereru would use her role as high level designer of a course and draw on external stakeholder requirements and accreditation requirements to push for changes in the new LMS. Kereru (ED, 2016) said, "I can tie it to the academic necessities, the credentials requirements, I can go okay, look, we have to do this. It’s an academic requirement. It’s not negotiable". By positioning the lack of functionality in the system as an organisational risk, she found some success in expanding the platform functionality.

**Technology affecting course design**

Within the organisation, course design was heavily constrained by the limitations and affordances of the technologies available. As Bellbird (T, 2016) commented, "what I do is within the constraints of what’s available to me timewise and resource wise.” Bellbird (T, 2016) recognised that if it weren’t for organisational constraints, their course design could be quite different:
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

There’s technology there. I just don’t have access to it. If I had the ability to create a course from whatever I wanted, I would certainly do it differently. I would use more podcasts. I would use more videos and demonstrations of some sort, video scenario or a case study, that sort of thing. I just don’t have those tools available to me so I don’t use them.

However, Kereru (ED, 2016) noted, "It’s not that different to the print environment where you were very restrained by the medium... in a way, it encourages you to focus more on the content". Kereru (ED, 2016) did prefer the current environment in some ways to the "wild west" of the original Moodle environment, where people could do whatever they wanted and there was "lots of bling and it was like, ooh look at this and that’s all fun but actually, there was no substance and in fact, it could be really bad, the content”.

**Tools restraining academic freedom in course design**

The system was seen by staff as being driven by senior management, and some faculty also had a perception that educational design staff were complicit in its rollout and enforcement. The tools that the organisation used to achieve its goals included explicit and implicit communication, and the approved LMS platforms. Explicitly, the organisation spoke of using technological innovation and a media rich curriculum to meet industry specific needs. Business language such as ‘diversified revenue’ and ‘value chain’ was also frequently seen in official documents. Implicitly, staff picked up on a number of messages the emphasised profit, encouraged creation of reusable or modular units, and expressed a goal of creating courses of sufficiently high quality that they could ‘teach themselves’. Technology was used as a tool to serve the explicitly and implicitly communicated goals, and where required, procedural or system-based limits were placed on the particular technology used so that its use would continue to conform to the organisational plans.

**Rules**

In a changing system, the rules put in place have a significant impact on how the people within the system work towards a goal, regardless of how effective rule enforcement is. In this section staff responses to the rules within the Open Polytechnic organisational system are presented, as well as how these rules are perceived to be affecting staff functioning within the organisation.
Policies and Regulations

**Industrial model**

From its inception as a correspondence school the Open Polytechnic has followed the standard distance education industrial model (Moore & Kearsley, 2005) of arranging its workforce. The roles involved in the creation of courses are clearly delineated, resembling a factory assembly line. At each stage of the development and delivery of the course materials are groups of experts who specialise in the particular task that their role requires. These include course writers, educational designers, and graphic designers, as well as printing, mailroom, administration, and customer service staff. In order to facilitate effective transmission of courses from one section to the next, a clear set of policies and procedures are required outlining the roles and responsibilities of each group, the timeframes in which work is expected to occur, and the way in which costs and benefits will be incurred and distributed across the groups. Rules in a fully distance education organisation therefore fulfil a much larger part of teacher experiences than is typically the case in an institution offering face to face or blended learning.

**Quality processes for Online Courses**

The move to implement quality assurance across all of its online courses became a significant challenge for the Open Polytechnic once it had been decided to use the LMS as the main teaching platform. Whilst printed materials had long had a clear process for development, such a process was not in place for online courses. This was because teaching in the online platform had evolved more naturally over time. In the early 2000s the institution had invested in Moodle and had decreed that every course should have a supplementary webpage presence. To support this the organisation created a generic template for courses and employed specialists who staff could access to find out more about the affordances of the platform. As this support was available to those who asked, rather than being proactively provided, there was differential uptake. Correspondingly, online courses began to vary widely in content and pedagogical design, depending on the individual course leader responsible. Some courses were skeletal, containing only the standard template, with a news forum that could email announcements out to students. Others contained basic information such as tutor contact details, due dates and student social forums. A few at the other end of the spectrum contained almost a complete set of course resources and activities (Journal).

There were no oversights on online courses initially; the level to which teachers developed this space was limited only by the plug-ins available within the LMS, and the
creativity of the teacher. The LMS was a responsive tool for teaching, for example, where an error was found in materials, it could be corrected straight away. Where students had queries, a teacher could add an additional resource simply by uploading it. This contrasted with the process for making changes to printed materials, where changes to course materials had to go through a process involving several layers of sign off, and factors such as current stock levels of printed course materials had to be considered.

In order to address this discrepancy, a new set of business processes were set up shortly before this research commenced with the intention of standardising course quality (Journal). The process removed teacher ability to amend course pages directly, and put in place an approval process where change requests from teachers had to be approved by staff from the Educational Design and IT sections, as well as by a Programme or Discipline Leader. This process was in place at the time of the initial participant interviews, and was not popular with academic staff. As Fantail (T, 2014) commented, "I'm just not sure we've got the balance right between where the openness and creativity and autonomy can be and the control and the lockdown. I don't feel like that balance is right."

Between the first and second interviews, a change was made by the organisation to relax the procedure around requesting changes somewhat, so that staff regained the ability to make changes to a course in between trimesters (when students were not accessing the course). Staff remained unable to make changes during a trimester while a course was live without going through the multi-level sign off procedure. Staff were discouraged from making anything other than urgent changes due to incorrect information, for example, when an external link no longer worked, or external documents referred to in the course had changed and the change was important enough that it could not wait until the next offering of the course (Journal). The changes were felt by some staff to be a token response to placate faculty, as Bellbird (T, 2015) argued:

There's some action towards giving us a bit more, well, I think they would call it autonomy back by letting us have access to our live courses but then the autonomy seems to be restricted to fixing typos. ... it's at the higher level, trying to go, there, there academic staff. We value you. Here's some autonomy, without actually giving autonomy. We can't add a question to a test bank on our live page, you know. Heaven forbid.

**Tension between fixed courses and responsive teaching**

There was an identifiable tension within the system between the development of discrete courses (capitalised assets) and having a responsive approach to teaching. Fantail (T, 2014) noted that "one of the downsides to the way we do things here I think is
the rigidity and the fact that it becomes very difficult to amend things". Bellbird (T, 2014), agreed, claiming "the ability to be flexible and respond to student needs and to create the resources or to experiment ... to trial and error things based on your experience with the cohort has been gradually eroded". Fantail (T, 2014) suggested that the processes where staff had to specifically request permission to make changes to courses, as well as the "dysfunctional process" involved in actually making course changes, undermined the responsiveness of the product, directly contradicting the flexible and supportive teaching practice that staff were encouraged to provide. "I just think some people don't actually realise that the system or the processes and the procedures really are a hindrance to us achieving that responsiveness that they'd like to see us have" said Fantail (T, 2014).

Kereru (ED, 2014) saw this tension as occurring because the organisation was operating two contradictory models of teaching and learning:

You have correspondence models and you have online teaching and learning models which are different. So it's like the system is set up to support an online correspondence model where the teacher is not particularly involved in the creation [of the course] but the talk is all about online teaching and learning and teacher involvement so it's kind of a dichotomy that pulls against each other. It doesn't work.

Because of the internal conflict between the two models, rules and processes were created that may have been intended to bridge the gap between the approaches, but instead ended up not meeting the needs of either model. For example, the revised rules in effect from 2015 onwards meant that course content would be locked down and untouchable by teachers during the trimester, but that they could make whatever changes they liked to the course before it was made live for the next trimester. Fantail (T, 2015) observed that in effect this meant there was less oversight for online course changes than printed course changes, "you can make bigger changes quicker and get away with lots of stuff".

Not only did this undermine organisational oversight because of limited ways of tracking changes made in this way "it's undeclared work...people just self-report and you actually don't know exactly how much time people are spending on their courses or their amendments or whatever" (Kereru, ED, 2014); in Kereru's eyes the process also created large administration overheads while contradicting the intended goal:
All this does is create an administrative burden for us. Which you can live with if you know that you are doing it because the end result is you have a product that is untouchable ... but if you are doing all that admin, and then you are still doing the changes, what's the point? Because you are not achieving the goal.

The majority of the rules affecting course development seemed to emerge from the correspondence model rather than the online teaching model. As Kereru (ED, 2014) observed, "the whole project management system and the charging of the hours and all of that sort of thing lends itself to a system that is pretty much a correspondence model". However, because of the differing histories of emergence of print and online courses, the processes for making changes to printed material and for making changes to online materials did not match, so the organisation was effectively running two different systems for revising courses.

Lying about hours spent revising courses

Within the organisation, courses were regarded as capitalised assets, and as such they were updated or replaced at regular intervals just the same as another company might update their stock of laptops or software. Set timetables for making changes to a course asset mean that teachers "can't just change the course because it has to go through a whole lot of process... they have times for course revisions and you can't change [it] when the three-year period of revision is not due" (Wren, T, 2016).

When a course did become due for updating, organisational policy dictated that a course revision be kept within the hours originally scoped and budgeted for in the business planning process, so that the organisation could clearly measure the cost of development of these assets, and be able to apportion resourcing appropriately. Hours put in by course writers (teachers) and educational designers were charged to the course revision project, and projects had a set budget to spend so once approved there was little room for renegotiation. However, this research found that both teaching and educational design staff frequently underreported the time actually spent revising courses. According to Kereru (ED, 2014), lying about time spent on course creation was widespread through the organisation: "I think that everybody cheats on that, everybody. Including us at educational solutions, everybody fudges their hours. It's like an open secret". Bellbird (T, 2014) concurred, "In order to get the revisions through you essentially lie because you have a general idea of the number of hours that might get permission to be done if you are lucky".
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

When asked why teaching staff would go beyond the hours allowed when working on a course, Bellbird (T, 2014), replied that from their perspective it was an ethical issue as well as an issue of professional pride.

*I want the students to succeed, I want the best course I can give them ... on the most basic level they have paid money for a service, ethically I am bound to provide them that service not some slapped together booklet which they could curate themselves on the Internet if they felt like it.*

Educational design staff were similarly motivated by wanting to create something that was of good quality. Having a sense of pride and ownership in their work made it difficult for staff to just stick to the hours budgeted, Kereru (ED, 2014) explained:

*I think for a lot of the EDs they actually feel a sense of ownership when they are creating something and they are not happy with what they can do in ten hours they want to produce a quality thing and so they will put in the extra hours.*

Kereru (ED, 2014) suggested that “the message that is coming is that actually we don’t want you to do a good job, we just want you to do an ok job and I think that is hard for people to take on board”. She concluded “nobody wants to be told just do your job but not very well thanks, just do an average job”.

The organisation was not unaware of the practice of fudging hours, with one manager in the education design team reportedly telling their staff, "I know you are all lying about your hours, because there is no way all these projects will always come in exactly on budget ... that is just not how the real-world works" (Kereru, ED, 2014). One obvious alternative to stop the mismatch between budgeted hours and actual hours spent on developing courses could be to increase the budget estimates when projects were scoped, but as Kereru noted, attempts to do that in the past had led to comments about the sustainability of the educational design section, effectively threatening their jobs.

*There’s murmurs about oh well is it really worth it then maybe we should just outsource everything, maybe we should outsource our design, our teachers, you know you get these little threats sometimes ... hidden implied threats, not too often I mean I wouldn’t say there is bullying or anything like that but that comes through very subtly, well if you keep doing these massive hours you know it’s just untenable isn’t it. (Kereru, ED, 2014).*

Kereru (ED, 2014) also noted "a lot of peer pressure" to look good within the team by appearing to need less time to do the work. Even though "the hours given are not realistic" (Kereru, ED, 2014), staff were caught in a bind where:
If everybody is lying about their hours you can’t not because then you will look bad compared to the others ... that’s really what happens ... like I know it took me 110 hours and it took that person 120 hours but I can’t be honest if they just put in 100 hours because then I just look like an idiot. (Kereru, ED, 2014)

The end result of the under-reporting of the actual time needed to do the work is that the actual course cost from Kereru’s experience could be "20-30% more than we actually put down" because staff were working at home during nights and weekends to complete the job. Educational design staff were not the only ones fudging their hours, as the researcher noted in the discussion with Kereru (ED, 2014):

A similar thing happens with faculty too... there have been certain cases where people have said there's no way I can only do this in 100 hours and I know we scoped it at 100 hours but I've been keeping a record and my hours are closer to 180 and that's just the way it is... but again like you say, they don't want to stop at the just adequate stage, they want the materials, the course to be useful and have longevity. (Researcher, 2014)

Another potential driving force behind faculty and education design propensity to go over the budgeted hours was a lack of certainty over when the next course revision would be approved and significant changes could be made. It is possible that a more flexible system where course amendments could be made more regularly would reduce the chronic under-reporting of hours worked. However, ongoing minor amendments to courses of the nature that faculty would potentially like to be able to do have the downside of being much harder to gather cost data on. They could also potentially conflict with other organisational goals such as the creation of a finite product within a discrete timeframe where costs of development can be easily quantified for the purpose of capitalising assets.

**Staff resistance to policies**

In some cases, staff desire to meet their own personal teaching goals overrode the desire to work within agreed system limits, even when staff knew that they could be disciplined if caught. "I'm finding the loopholes in the system to be able to do as much as I can as quickly as I can and hoping they don't catch on to it" says Bellbird (T, 2014), "I try and change them as surreptitiously as possible ... I feel lucky that to this point I haven’t been caught so to speak because I don't know what the repercussion for that would be". This sense of resistance to the system occurred in several groups across the organisation (Journal). Bellbird (T, 2014) described the actions of their similarly minded colleagues as almost an underground resistance approach to the perceived problem:
Keep looking for the loopholes, back doors, alleyways. Contraband. Do you want to buy this bit of code? This bit of code, it'll get around that problem you've got over there (laughs) Shh, you can put it in here and they won't even know. They won't even notice.

It seemed that the desire to work around the system was related to a teacher’s identity and the degree to which the rules compromised their sense of efficacy as a teacher. For example, Bellbird (T, 2015) commented that "if they tried to degrade the teaching that I’m able to do to that level across everything, it will seriously compromise my enjoyment of my job or my feeling that I’m a valid teacher”. This indicates that the staff who are most likely to find conflict in organisational rules are those that are most invested in the role of teacher. There is often a high correlation between being highly invested in a role, and being good at that role, so it was not surprising that many of the 'resistance' staff were known within the organisation as being best practice leaders of teaching.

Teachers were not the only staff to find the rules and policies in conflict with their beliefs. Educational design staff also referred to differences between their own ideas of good course design and what the organisational rules supported "I think definitely for some designers that makes them feel disillusioned... it’s quite draining" (Kereru, ED, 2014). Educational design staff also had sympathy for the teaching staff affected by the system. Kereru (ED, 2016) noted that "if I was teaching I don’t want somebody to come and tell me, here’s your lesson plan. Just do it. You know, that's going to annoy the hell out of me".

Workload

Concern about workload was mentioned by all participants, although the area of most pressure varied between participants. Wren, Bellbird, and Fantail all referred to the administrative workload which they felt was a burden that was not sufficiently considered when teaching workloads were allocated. There was a perception that report writing, maintaining course information online, providing pre-enrolment advice, collaborating with other support and enrolment staff and working with course administration staff was either "not factored into the teaching time that you're expected to do" (Wren, T, 2016) or was grossly underestimated if it was considered. Fantail (T, 2014) commented "I'm not sure that the ratios and everything take into consideration the administrative layer of work that goes into managing courses", while lamenting the "lack of time I feel I am able to devote to teaching". Bellbird (T, 2014) described a similar
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

experience, observing that "the proportion of teaching that is involved in my role is becoming less and less".

Part of the challenge for academic staff was the three trimesters that courses were offered over, which meant that some staff were teaching continuously all year round. As Wren (T, 2015) noted "you don't have a break. You are always with students. As soon as this trimester ends, another trimester is beginning." A continuous teaching workload often left little downtime for reflection or design of new courses.

Despite the organisation providing backfill for staff to work on course development, and measures to reduce workload such as lowering marking expectations for faculty working on course development, some staff still felt their workload to be unachievable in the time available. For example, staff sometimes found themselves in the position of reducing their teaching time for their current cohort so they could revise a course to make it better for a future cohort. Bellbird (T, 2014) commented:

*In the next year I’m going to have to teach really poorly in order to create something that will be better for the students in the long run. A couple of cohorts this year will be punished so that those in the future can have a better education.*

In addition, Fantail (T, 2014) noted that "the systems themselves are quite time consuming I think". Several policies were identified as having an effect on workload, including the student teacher ratio policy (one teacher to 44 FTE students), course amendment policies, revision policies and processes, and general administrative policies. From Bellbird’s (T, 2014) perspective, once all these policies were adhered to "the time for teaching becomes negligible, the time to keep up with the literature becomes negligible, the time to create a revision, to develop new ideas, to create resources is barely there".

**Research**

*Forget research (laugh) or even staying up to date. I mean I am doing some research as well but that's the cherry on top if you are lucky to get that sort of time. I think that for most of us we are just trying to get the job done. (Fantail, T, 2014)*

Many participants discussed the challenges of having an effective teaching practice while also meeting research requirements, although there seemed to be little institutional imperative for the pressure. Unlike other tertiary institutions, where PBRF funding can comprise a significant portion of income for the organisation, at the Open Polytechnic "the
amount of money that comes in to our budget is just a drop a tiny tiny drop in the hat of our income" (Bellbird, T, 2014). Despite the relatively low impact of research funding on the institution, staff were conscious that "there's this pressure to work on research" (Wren, T, 2015). Staff were also very conscious of the ongoing rhetoric that seemed to prioritise teaching as the core activity of faculty, which contrasted with the promotional system that rewarded research outputs over teaching achievements. Fantail (T, 2014) was not alone observing that "valuing one set of skills but rewarding another... it raises a question of conflict for me". Bellbird (T, 2015) felt caught in a bind by the system, where "basically I teach and I don't do research which means I won't get any raises because raises are dependent on getting publications and I won't get publications because I'm teaching".

Resourcing to carry out research was noted as an issue, in particular because workloads were not perceived to sufficiently support the teacher taking time out to do research "there's always something to do about teaching and yet you need to find time to do research" (Wren, T, 2015). Staff asking for additional support to free up time to do research were often told that other staff members would cover their teaching load in the meantime, however some felt that was an unfair burden to place on their colleagues. "It's like that other person is worked to the bone. So if I go take time to do my writing, then that's a colleague who basically has a mental breakdown because they can't handle the workload" (Bellbird, T, 2015). In contrast to the University system of dedicating 40% of working time to research, the Polytechnic policy at the time of the research allowed staff 30 days research leave per year, with additional time available upon application to senior management.

Internal funding to attend conferences and present research was also limited, with Wren (T, 2016) noting that even a multi-institution collaborative project to be presented at a key international conference required self-funding because the internal budget was not sufficient. Because of the small number of academic staff, and the limited amount of revenue available from PBRF funding, the organisation had opted to spend research income on funding a research manager position, while providing a small contestable pool of funding which staff could apply for to fund projects. Conferences were funded from internal development budgets, where priority was given to conference attendance that would involve some stakeholder engagement. This was in line with the organisational role as a vocationally focused institution, where linkages with industry stakeholders are vital to ensuring courses and programmes meet industry needs. This close alignment with industry and focus on vocational needs is one key area where the Open Polytechnic
differs from the other organisations studied, which are Universities, and operate under a slightly different mandate to the ITP sector requirements.

**Impact of TEC funding**

Some participants saw a clear link between the way that the tertiary education funding system had been set up, and follow through policies at organisational level which were perceived as having a negative effect on teaching practice. In particular, Bellbird (T, 2014) voiced concern that the increased focus on measuring the educational success of an organisation through KPIs of course retention and completion would lead to a lowering of educational standards.

> The pressure is being put on to complete and I get concerned that at some point in time because people want their jobs and to not be reprimanded constantly, teaching and assessment requirements will lessen in order to get the students through rather than to make sure the students have learnt what they are meant to learn or what they need to learn, things will be eased up.

Another clear link between TEC funding and organisational policy identified by staff was the organisational policies and standards that had developed to ensure courses fit within a certain set of parameters, regardless of the course discipline, subject or level. Kereru (ED, 2014) explained that the current templated approach to developing courses (also known within the organisation as the ‘cookie cutter approach’) was effectively a logical consequence of the way the organisation was funded:

> [it] is to do with how we are funded ... we have this system where our courses are capitalised assets basically and we have to show from what I understand that it’s viable for us to develop our own courses ... we can’t show that if we don’t have cookie cutter to an extent.

Following the templated approach to course development theoretically required less time, less money and resulted in a more consistent product. Knowing the costs of course development in advance means that the organisation has the power to decide what courses (assets) to develop or invest in, based on the perceived rate of return, or sales potential for the course. Staff therefore saw this templated approach as being a response to the organisational need to lower running costs and increase profit, which in turn they perceived as being driven by government underfunding.

Staff at the Open Polytechnic were particularly critical of the perceived prioritisation of financial gain over educational need or pedagogical design in the development of courses. The organisational drive to meet diversified revenue targets and show sufficient profit to government seemed to lead to internal prioritisation of courses
and programmes based on potential profit in the first instance. "In the dealings I have had with executive I think there is a strong drive to find ways of turning a dollar quickly" noted Finch (ED, 2014). Teachers and educational designers equally disliked feeling that "we have to make a marketing benefit before we can have an educational benefit" (Fantail, T, 2014), and seeing the financial prerogative as being "fundamentally at odds with education" (Fantail, T, 2014). There was also frustration that ideas touted by marketing or strategic planning teams were often supported by management without discussion with academic or educational design staff who could see immediate limitations to the proposed ideas, as Kereru (T, 2014) describes here:

*New courses come in or new programmes for developments that reflect the flavour of the day ... I think the issue is that it’s pursued by marketing who don’t really have an educational understanding and so they’ll often come with a completely ridiculous proposal that’s actually not gonna work ... the ideas were just so lacking in common sense.*

Bellbird (T, 2014) had a similar perspective:

*A lot of those projects are dreamed up by exec and the decisions are made without proper investigation and research. Sometimes it’s good to get in on the ground floor on something but sometimes it’s good to wait back and see if it’s a fad before you sink all your resources into it and I think they chase fads.*

Overall, both faculty and educational design staff indicated feeling a strong level of tension in the course development process resulting from the disjuncture between government and organisational goals which appeared to be monetary in focus, and the goals of the individuals, which were focused on quality of teaching, and supporting students to successfully learn.

**Key problems within the rules**

When considering the system from the perspective of its purpose to support the organisation to achieve its goals, a number of internal tensions and conflicts were identified by participants that were preventing the system from functioning smoothly. In this section I will explore some of the contradictions and tensions within the rules system itself.

**System unknown or unknowable?**

Systems are complex with interwoven threads of activity. As a comparatively new staff member, Wren found it difficult to understand the rules and expectations within the system which was not helped by the mixed messages he received from colleagues when
asking for help, "somebody would tell you something, then another person will tell you another thing which is completely different" (Wren, T, 2015). This confusion about policies and processes did not diminish much through the data collection period. At the final interview, Wren (T, 2016) noted, "as I sit here now, I still don't understand the process ... and that tells me there are people here who don't know the process themselves but they are doing what will make things work".

The educational design section within the Open Polytechnic had seen a significant amount of change during the data collection period, including restructuring of staff and review of policies and processes to fit with new staff roles and responsibilities. After three years of working in the educational design section, Finch (ED, 2015) observed, "I don't know the system any more. Nobody knows the system. So we're really just filling in bits of paper at this point". Finch (ED, 2015) saw the lack of understanding of the system as extending beyond individuals, and described a "systemic lack of self-awareness". According to Finch (ED, 2015), "the organisation doesn't know what it knows and it doesn't know what it doesn't know. That's probably even more dangerous". As evidence for this viewpoint, Finch (ED, 2015) described an observation made at a recent EER review exercise, "they [the EER reviewers] were after a high level of reflexivity in people's answers to questions and it was just more and more apparent that whole quite critical groups were deluding themselves about what they did and didn't know".

A lack of clarity around the workings of the system as a whole could be one reason why changes had not been made to simplify or streamline processes. The system was seen as being potentially beyond the reach of management to fix. Kereru (ED, 2014) suggested, "I don't think they [management] have no interest in changing it. I think they just don't know how to change it". However, it was unclear whether not knowing how to change the system was perceived as a sign of incompetence by management, or as being due to the overwhelming complexity of the system.

**Rules are unclear**

Regardless of their location in the organisational system, all participants commented on the lack of clarity of the rules and processes they needed to work with. "it's very nebulous out there, you know, it isn't very well formed, the idea of systems and who does what and how it happens" commented Finch (ED, 2015). Seeking clarification on processes and policies was frequently unenlightening, as Wren noted when discussing which process teachers needed to use to make changes to their course. "I still don't get a straightforward answer on some of the processes" Wren (T, 2016) found, even after
contacting the various other parties who were theoretically involved in the process, such as educational designers and the IT team.

Lack of rule clarity had an effect on the efficiency with which staff could complete tasks because not all parties in the process understood the steps necessary "I just think that the actual steps you have to go through aren't clearly understood by everyone so you get different people giving you different messages on what you need to do to get something changed" said Fantail (T, 2014). Similarly, Wren (T, 2014) found it frustrating that "different people tell you different things so you end up making mistakes and always having to correct those mistakes". However, lack of rule clarity, and in particular lack of written rules was seen as potentially advantageous from Kereru's (ED, 2014) perspective:

*I like the fact that whenever anybody tells me to do something, you have to do this I say show me where that's written because it won't be, there are no policies here really, you know there's nothing tied down which can be hugely advantageous at times and frustrating at others, it depends whether it works to my favour or not.*

**Rules are time consuming and bureaucratic**

Another problem with the lack of rule clarity was the time it could take to complete a necessary process. There was a sense that management did not necessarily understand the time involved in following policies and procedures. Fantail (T, 2014) noted "I just think they don't really understand sometimes like how much time it can take to get something small changed... it can be hours of work for a really small change". In some instances, processes were so long or convoluted that staff just ignored them. "We had a checklist which was given to faculty to fill in in advance but that is not in use anymore... nobody ever filled it in because it was unwieldy for what it needed to do" (Finch, ED, 2014). Unfortunately, as Finch (ED, 2014) noted, tight schedules and limited time for creativity meant that "it is quicker just for someone to create something that works for them right now than to systematically work through and fix stuff".

In many instances, the time involved in carrying out tasks was amplified by the way that the process involved multiple staff members from separate teams, leading to processes that were considered to be unnecessarily bureaucratic. Bellbird describes an instance where they needed a technical task taken care of for a course. One team had the power to do the task immediately. However, they weren’t allowed to because of the rules. "I had to go through about three other people and processes. That’s just an example of how the rules and policies and the procedures that are in place are continuing to be unnecessarily bureaucratic" (Bellbird, T, 2016). From their point of view, the processes
involved in making changes to a course involved "a ridiculous amount of time", as well as the potential for the process to become completely stalled if one person is away. "It took a day to sort out something that I could have done in 30 seconds, and if someone hadn't been there, if one person in the chain had been on leave where would we be sitting?" asked Bellbird (T, 2016).

The effect of this co-responsibility on achieving tasks will be discussed in more detail later in the Division of Labour section of this chapter.

**Micro-management constraining staff effectiveness**

The level of detail that some rules went into in terms of managing staff activity was seen as over-engineered and unnecessarily micro-managed, as Fantail (T, 2014) described:

*Its micromanaging to the extreme. One person screws up once and the response is we're gonna lock everybody down ... I often see this kinda sledgehammer approach where a different approach might have been better and I prefer to operate on higher trust, assume people are smart and that they'll make the right decisions if you give them the right information and I don’t think our systems convey that same trust in people.*

Rules were described as "under-researched, over-prescriptive" (Bellbird, T, 2014) and in some cases, conflicting with effective pedagogy. Bellbird (T, 2016) described a situation where they had taught a course for 10 years, and through trial and error had identified what didn't work, and then found ways to improve the course so that "it works really, really well". They were frustrated at their perception of being asked to return to old techniques that had not worked for their course "why would I possibly want to go back to the bit that was broken? Because someone who doesn't know what they're talking about has decided that's what we should do" (Bellbird, T, 2016). There was a perception that those setting the rules were not familiar with effective teaching or with the potential impact of the rules on staff teaching practice. Staff found the systems outside of teaching to be bureaucratic and cumbersome, making teaching online a more difficult experience than teaching face to face, as Wren (T, 2016) noted:

*The restrictive processes, the kinds of things you do outside the teaching are more than the teaching itself here and sometimes it makes me think that it is very cumbersome, teaching online compared to teaching face to face, it's more difficult.*
Rule setting excluding front line staff

Teaching staff in particular felt separated or excluded from the process of rule development. A key frustration was the perception that "when policies are developed they appear to come to staff when all the decisions have been made" (Bellbird, T, 2014) resulting in staff feeling that they were being asked to participate in a hollow consultation "sort of a tick the box we will ask you exercise and feedback is brushed aside unless it's something like 'you should put a comma here' " (Bellbird, T, 2014).

Of particular concern was that the exclusion of front line staff from the conversation about new policies frequently resulted in policies that had the net effect of increasing workload. Several policies were felt to have increased workload, including the student teacher ratio, which specified the number of EFTs a full-time teacher should be managing, without apparent regard to administration overhead of managing several small courses rather than one or two large courses. Bellbird (T, 2014) perceived a direct link between the policies affecting workload, and some of the values expressed implicitly within the organisation.

The workload is driven by a policy which is driven by the misunderstanding that courses teach themselves and that academics aren't teachers and that [teaching] is not an active role it is a sit back and watch things happen role.

The implication from Bellbird was that if the organisation had a different view of teaching, the creation of rules and policies would be handled differently (for example including teachers in rule development), and the rules themselves would be more closely aligned to teacher’s perspectives of effective teaching.

Rules and finances

The way that courses were budgeted for in the organisation had a significant impact on rules, policies and processes for course development. Having set budgets for creating the course 'product' entailed a set of processes to ensure that the resources spent on course development were accounted for. There was a preference for development of a one off completed product, which then would not be touched until it had depreciated enough to warrant refreshing. This approach is simpler to manage financially because you can quantify time spent on course development much more easily if it only happens once when the product is developed. By further implication, if you want to continue to track spending on the product, you need to have procedures that capture the time spent, which requires reporting processes and time keeping processes, something that faculty may not naturally gravitate toward.
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

Finch identified a number of potential pitfalls in the scoping and budgeting of courses. In several instances project scoping was based on previous budgets that were not relevant to the current project, and factors that were likely to have a large influence on the time and effort required to update the course were not considered. These included things like the subject or discipline of the course, the level, the programme context, the proportion of the course to be changed, and the number of faculty staff that need to be involved in the course development. In many cases Finch (ED, 2015) noted, the result was "hugely inflated timelines" because budget estimates for one course were done using information from another previous course and "it wasn't really transferable". A proposed procedure to clarify and improve course budgeting was initiated, but before it could be implemented, the organisational structure and staff roles had changed, making it obsolete before it could be applied.

Limited budgets meant that scoping documents for developing or revising courses often got caught up in lengthy back and forth processes between levels of organisational management, until an agreed figure or cost was arrived at that the faculty and educational staff could live with, and that upper management were prepared to sign off on. Finch (T, 2015) saw this process as "a bit of a waste of time" and wondered whether they couldn't just decide a number that would be signed off in the first place, given that "what I know of EDs and I'm fairly sure of faculty staff as well is that they more or less look at what numbers they were given and then fill in those numbers".

Prioritising the budget also had problematic effects on smaller projects too. Bellbird (T, 2016) described an instance where course material was translated from one format to another and faculty were not advised of the change or given an opportunity to proof for potential errors before courses were sent to students. This occurred ostensibly because of an impression that involving faculty would cause time delays and cost blowouts. Bellbird (T, 2016) observed "I think that the people who thought that you would save money, possibly saved money and time in the short term but we now have this long-term thing which goes beyond money". Bellbird (T, 2016) cited student feedback on the errors which Bellbird felt had damaged the Open Polytechnic's reputation with students, and "trust issues between staff and the institution because of not being informed of the change". In other words, prioritisation of financial concerns may have had a positive impact on the organisational balance sheet, but had resulted in a negative impact on important relationships with students and staff.
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

The disconnected marionette

Finch (ED, 2015) described the systems within the Open Polytechnic as being like a marionette with some of the strings cut, so that the ability to move some parts of the body was lost "it’s almost like if you imagine your marionette as an ostrich or something with an articulated neck, there’s some cuts at some critical points". In this description, Finch (ED, 2015) saw the senior management, or Executive Directors, as being unaware of these broken strings, suggesting that they "didn't really have any understanding of what was happening with the marionette further down", consequently, "there was an attempt at the top there to move the puppet with, without strings to the places where the actual work had to be done and I think that happens quite a lot".

The mismatch between how the system should have worked in theory, and how it worked in practice caught out many who were new or unfamiliar with the system. For example, Finch (ED, 2015) describes the experience of educational designers who were externally contracted to work on course development "those external EDs were told, this is the system, this is how it works and they dutifully began to follow that system and the system was completely breaking down at all steps". Consequently, in some cases project timeframes overran or could not be completed, and work had to be brought back in house to complete by someone who was more familiar with the actual system.

Relationships and personalities keeping the system together

From Kereru’s (ED, 2016) perspective, the reason that the system continued to function was due to the relationships and personalities within it.

*This place is very personality driven, I think and sometimes it works well and sometimes it doesn’t at all and right now it’s working well for us but that’s not through planning. That’s just through pure luck and relationships that people have already forged.*

The reliance on personal relationships to keep things moving became more evident when changes were made to the system through the restructuring of roles and responsibilities in course development. For example, where previously team A might have been responsible for creating widgets, and they would collaborate with team B in the process, the restructuring combined team A and B, but moved some of the widget creating responsibility to newly created team C. Then relationships had to be created all over again to support the system to run smoothly.
**Working the system**

Finch (ED, 2016) identified an apparent lack of interest from the organisation in fixing the systems at the ground level while being apparently more comfortable with widescale review and restructure:

> It's almost like at the nuts and bolts area where you could truly improve efficiencies, no one involved in those decisions really cares enough but they're comfortable at the other side of things, at an executive level with making these broad, sweeping slashes. You know, let's lose a whole department. Let's lose a whole function. They'll do that sort of thing but they won't actually dig down to fix up the actual systems.

Whatever the reasoning or intent, the preference for not making changes to current systems and processes did in some instances result in staff being encouraged by their manager to work around the systems in order to complete projects. Kereru (ED, 2014) described the impression they were given by their manager as "we want you to do this because we don't know how to sort out this situation". So they, as course designer, were given free rein to "fly under the radar or work out a system or sort of like lie, steal, beg, do what you need to do". However at the same time Kereru (ED, 2014) perceived that the rest of the message was "don't come to us if it goes wrong we'll just like pretend we have no idea what's going on", which unsurprisingly they considered was a "very bizarre sort of set up".

Feeling like the system was there to be suffered and worked around was a concept that was expressed in all interviews, and discussion about the challenges of working with/ in / around the systems took up a large part of the conversations.

**Silos**

Part of the difficulty in understanding the system as a whole from any individual standpoint may lie in the numerous separated sections and roles within the organisation. Despite an organisational rhetoric around 'breaking down silos' and working together to achieve organisational goals (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, 2014b), several participants commented on internal silos and a lack of communication across group boundaries.

It seemed that management were in some instances unaware of the lack of interconnectedness between sections, possibly assuming that their own view from the higher level that could see across various sections would be shared by those below them. Finch (ED, 2015) recalled a meeting with the Executive Director for their section where "he was quite surprised" at the lack of understanding of other sections roles, where staff
within the subgroups of academic services (including enrolments, logistics, marketing and academic registry) didn't know what the other groups did, or what services students could expect from the other areas. As Finch (ED, 2015) noted, "that sort of sideways connection is not really in play".

Rather than seeing senior management as being oblivious to the silos existing in the organisation, Bellbird (T, 2016) was of the opinion that silos were “quite encouraged by higher management”. One outcome of pushing through the silos to communicate with other people in different positions within the organisation was the realisation that those people were equally challenged by the organisational systems and processes. However, if the implicit rules about non-contact between silos was followed, this led to poorer relationships and assumptions that other groups were being deliberately obfuscating. Bellbird (T, 2016) noted:

_That dynamic, that’s encouraged by management, can sometimes I think create poor relationships on those parallel levels with the people you have to work with every day because you don’t realise until you talk to someone that actually, they’re dealing with the same issues you are. They’re frustrated by the same processes you are, it’s not that they think they’re magically better than you._

**Summary of rules problems**

Some staff felt very frustrated by the impact of organisational rules and policies on their teaching practice. All of the participants expressed a desire for rules to be clearer, less contradictory and to enable rather than obstruct their daily work. A common view among participants was that the rules did not work because the people setting the rules (senior management) did not understand how staff actually worked in their jobs. There was a blurring of lines between official (explicit) rules, and unofficial (implicit) rules, and staff felt pressured to respond to both kinds of rules due to ongoing reviews and restructuring. Disconnection between the rules and staff was most strongly expressed by participants when it was felt that the rules went against their personal teaching beliefs or pedagogy.

**Community**

In this section the community aspect of the system is discussed. As noted in Chapter 3, community in an activity system refers to those people who the subject interacts with on a regular basis, but not those people with whom they have a shared responsibility for achieving the goal of the activity. Where responsibilities are divided to
achieve the system goal, this is explored in the division of labour section later in this chapter.

**Teachers’ community**

**Community influencing practice**

Within the interviews, faculty participants spoke about their peers, colleagues and professional community as having "a massive positive influence" (Bellbird, T, 2014) on their teaching practice. For example, Wren, Bellbird and Fantail all talked about discussing course design with their colleagues, considering the merits of using different technologies and tools in their courses, and debating assessment philosophy and general educational practice.

*We talk a lot about what we’re teaching and ideas about how to teach or how to assess. We’ll always sit and talk about those. We’ll have just random debates about teaching and what’s a good way to teach? Is it good to have a textbook? Isn’t it? Is an exam good? Isn’t an exam good? They are quite passionate discussions.” (Bellbird, T, 2015)*

**Value of differing perspectives**

The participants also talked about the value of having people with different backgrounds and interests within teams bringing different perspectives to the group, for example Fantail appreciated the academic rigour that a new colleague was bringing to their team. Prior to the new person’s arrival the team were primarily practitioners, and because of that hadn't focused on the academic elements that the new staff member was prioritising in the programme.

**Learning from peers**

Teaching staff described a learning community where staff would share new ideas or techniques with each other freely. For example, Wren (T, 2015) came across a solution to a common teaching issue related to linking resources on the course page, and soon after was "showing other colleagues how to do it in other courses". Teachers also reported being very open to sharing works in progress, or teaching ideas with others to get feedback:

*If I have an idea or someone else has an idea, we tend to wander over to someone’s office, sit down, have a chat about where we’re going, say I was thinking of doing such and such this way. What do you think? So there’s a lot of that sort of working together, getting people to read drafts of assignments or just sketch out ideas which is really helpful. (Bellbird, T, 2016)*
Teaching staff talked about self-evaluation and measuring their teaching practice against others. Wren (T, 2016), who was comparatively new to online teaching, used comparison with peers to see if what they were doing was "consistent with what others are doing". They found measuring what they were doing against what others were doing gave them confidence that they were going in the right direction with their teaching practice. Similarly, Fantail (T, 2014) commented that "feedback and honest conversation with peers is really valuable in terms of recognising what one wants to do differently next time". Bellbird (T, 2014) noted "we spend a lot of time encouraging one another to go ahead, to try things ... this has worked for me, that hasn't worked for me, do you really want to do that I don't think that's a good idea".

The participants in the study talked regularly of collaboration with others. "We have a very collaborative team... it's a really good, cohesive team" shared Bellbird (T, 2015), while Wren (T, 2016) noted that the shared teaching approach that was there when he started had continued, "in my team, we still collaborate.". Wren (T, 2014) observed that it was often convenient to ask colleagues how to approach a problem "you'll ask somebody how do I do this cos it is easier to just turn to your colleague on the other desk" although the cost of the convenience was sometimes conflicting advice "they'll say you do it this way and someone else will say no you do it that way...so you end up having to go to [the manager] who says "there's the policy over there" (Wren, T, 2014). So peer relationships, while positive and convenient, were not infallible.

Fantail (T, 2014) felt that being able to draw on the knowledge of colleagues was a good thing to be able to do, however they noted that the lack of time and opportunities to develop relationships acted as a barrier:

The knowledgeable peers I think is an asset but there are barriers there I think in terms of lack of opportunity to have those conversations, and I include the relationships that need to develop for that as well. You need to feel safe that you can go up to someone and say I've got a really dumb question but I really need to ask someone.

Organisational environment increasing community

There was a sense from some participants that the high level of regulation in the course design environment may have increased the impetus for staff to work together in response to increased limitations on possible teaching activities. Bellbird’s (T, 2014) description here evokes images of an underground resistance, where staff have mobilised secretly against a common enemy - in this instance, the institutional regulations preventing teachers from making changes to their courses during the trimester:
There is a heck of lot of here’s a workaround, here’s a way to do this without them finding out and then a loophole will close and it’s like here’s another way we can do that or here’s a different way or ah crap, that’s actually taken away entirely there is no way to do that anymore ... so we’ve become underground conspirators really so that I suppose really would be what facilitates the job would be my peers.

Teaching staff all saw themselves as part of a wider team that they could collaborate with, or seek advice from to improve their teaching practice. Peers were described as having a positive influence on teaching practice, and teaching participants actively sought out opportunities to discuss ideas with other teachers about their teaching practice.

**Educational design community**

The education design community was more directly competitive and individualised than the faculty participants. This can be seen in the peer pressure to record fewer hours than peers on similar tasks described earlier by Kereru (T, 2014). A significant component of the pressure seemed to be about wanting to manage impressions and reputation in their immediate working team.

It was also noticeable that there was a distinct lack of commentary about collegial or peer support from the educational designers, compared to faculty staff. While the educational designers did describe themselves as part of a team, their team membership didn't affect their own particular practice, and there were no references to discussing ideas with team members or collaborating with other educational designers on issues. When educational design participants spoke about relationships with others they spoke almost exclusively about their relationships with people from the other organisational teams they had to work with - faculty, IT, administrators, and so on. The impression given by the educational designers was that their role was very much an individually focused role, where they had almost a lone wolf existence.

There are several factors that may account for this difference between faculty and education design in peer relationships. Firstly, the training and experience required to be appointed to an educational design role is quite different than a faculty role. Educational designers come from a myriad of backgrounds, and it is unlikely you would find two designers in the team with similar backgrounds or qualifications, especially because there is no particular qualification associated with the role of educational or instructional designer in New Zealand. This contrasts markedly with the required experience and qualifications for faculty staff, who are expected to have subject expertise, and some teaching experience. A teaching related qualification is an added bonus.
experiences and qualifications, faculty staff are much more like one another than educational design staff, who may vary greatly in experience, strengths, and interests.

Finch (T, 2014) noted:

[a faculty manager] rants on periodically about how you get a different input depending on who your educational designer is and that’s just part of the reality of where you are having to pull people from, people don’t have a shared background, its not like they’ve done the same degree or they all have the same background you know.

Secondly, educational design staff were regarded in the organisation as being professional specialists, and were employed on individual employment contracts. This differed from the faculty staff interviewed, all of whom were on a collective agreement and members of a union. Faulty staff considered themselves to be a group with common interests, while regular restructuring and reviewing of roles in educational design and educational technology sections, along with high staff turnover meant that the educational design staff interviewed were regularly having to reconsider what team they were part of. For these reasons it is not surprising that educational design staff may not necessarily see themselves as belonging to the same peer group as those sharing their role, and therefore did not engage in the same kinds of peer support activities that faculty staff did with their immediate colleagues.

**Division of labour**

In most systems there is some sharing of roles or responsibilities, and this is discussed in this section on division of labour. In the Open Polytechnic teaching system there were clear divisions of labour related to the design and development of online courses that were cemented through job descriptions and departmental responsibilities (Nichols, 2011).

**Changing roles**

Moving the main teaching platform from print to online had affected staff jobs, roles and responsibilities, requiring a number of reviews and restructures during this period of change. Fewer resources were needed to manage printed correspondence and assignments, and greater resources were needed in areas like student support and IT helpdesk areas to help students with using the Online courses. Specialist roles in course design and course production also changed as online systems were more user friendly and less expertise was required to create an aesthetically pleasing course. Although the majority of these changes had occurred prior to the research period, there were still some
aspects of the division of roles and responsibilities that were being fine-tuned, and participants were aware of the imminent possibility of further restructuring (Journal). (Of note, a further significant restructure did occur in 2017, post data collection, which resulted in changes to the faculty and educational design role again).

Roles and responsibilities

Faculty role

The faculty role at the Open Polytechnic comprised a number of tasks including course design and development, website design and development, resource and teaching activity development, pastoral care, peer review, assessing work, research and maintaining currency with literature (both specialist field knowledge, and teaching practice). Or, as described by Bellbird (T, 2014), the faculty role involved:

_Basically the whole gamut from creating things, using them, trialling them, making sure you are making a decision based on something reasonable, using my own experience, making changes when you can, trying to facilitate students to complete, continuing professional development, continually working in a team, and appeasing management._

Fantail (T, 2014), who along with teaching responsibilities also held programme development responsibilities, identified a need to manage multiple relationships internal to the organisation, with groups like quality assurance, administration support, student advisors and academic registry, as well as external relationships with industry. "It is particularly complex here because getting anything done is really complex, you don’t only need to be aware of all those external stakeholders but all those internal ones as well", commented Fantail (T, 2014). Fantail (T, 2014) spoke of managing multiple tensions in their role, balancing external accreditation requirements with individual student learning needs, and of managing relationships to achieve goals.

_I see my job as to hold multiple tensions ... I need to understand what our accreditation commitments are, our recognition requirements with the external bodies (NZQA or TEC) but then at the same time I need to be able to think about what does the student need in the learning environment from the content perspective and all the myriad of relationships and people that are involved along the way._

Educational design role

The educational designer role at the time of the research differed depending a little on seniority. Senior educational designers scoped projects, set up parameters and budgets for course developments, and tended to get projects started rather than work on
the course design and development itself. Non-senior educational designers worked with faculty in designing and developing courses, and also liaised with educational technology staff (e.g., LMS specialists, graphic designers etc), logistics staff, and other internal stakeholders who needed to be involved in the design or development of a course. A key part of the educational design role was "enabling things to move through the system" (Finch, ED, 2015). The senior educational designers in particular needed to have flexible boundaries to their area of responsibility in order to solve course development problems, as Finch (ED, 2015) describes:

A lot of the other areas, if you go to IT, they’ll say, that’s not our problem. We just do IT. If you go to logistics, we just do posting off the parcels. If you go to QAD [Quality and Academic Development], we just do what we do here, but the senior ED team ended up being just whatever, wherever something was just getting hooked, having to step in and wangle it through the system.

**Blurred role boundaries**

There were some differences among faculty staff in their perceptions of the role and responsibilities of the educational designers, and in their own desires for involvement in educational design. Kereru (ED, 2014) found that the type of interaction an educational designer could expect from faculty differed between schools, or between individual faculty staff. They found that some staff weren’t at all interested in shaping content into a course "they just want to give you the content and you go away and do whatever the heck you want with it, they don’t really care" (Kereru, ED, 2014) whereas other staff wanted to be heavily involved in the overall design of the course. Kereru’s (ED, 2014) experience was that "depending on which school you're dealing with it's just a very different experience, so you have to change your approach". Therefore, having a flexible approach to working with faculty was one requirement of the educational design role as Finch and Kereru perceived it.

Blurred role boundaries also sometimes resulted in conflict between groups, as happened when Wren (T, 2015) attempted to make a change to a course and found that the educational technologist "was angry that I tried to do something that she was supposed to do". Similarly, Fantail (T, 2014) experienced "what I think is an extraordinary amount of headbutting with ed solutions around what my role is and isn't and how involved I should actually be in the course development process".

In Fantail and Wren’s experience, there were two types of educational technology and IT support people within the organisation - those that were very clear about ‘this is my job, that is your job’, and those that were primarily interested in working together to
achieve a common teaching goal. The latter were less concerned about whose 'job' it might be to do one particular part of the process, and more interested in sharing knowledge and developing skills within faculty. For example, "one guy was always trying to show me... if I sent a question, then he would write a whole lot of guidelines or procedures... so I felt like he was teaching me" (Wren, T, 2015). As a result, Wren (T, 2015) found "that gave me the confidence ...to first try to see if I can do it on my own".

**Organisational system designed for clear role boundaries**

The organisational system and processes for course design were seen to be better suited to a clear delineation of responsibilities, where faculty provided subject expertise or content, and educational designers provided the course design. Working with staff who preferred a less compartmentalised approach to course design made things trickier for the educational design staff, Kereru (ED, 2014) observed:

> It’s more difficult where you’re dealing with anybody in the social sciences area you know because they have an expectation that they are gonna teach, that they are gonna do it, so they want to have a lot of say, they want to collaborate but the system at the Open Polytechnic does not support that at all.

Some faculty staff resented being given advice by educational design staff, particularly when their teaching design was questioned, which as Kereru (ED, 2015) noted, created "a lot of tension". A key sticking point was the faculty perception that subject matter expertise was the most important aspect of learning design. Kereru (ED, 2015) described an incident working with a faculty team to meet NZQA requirements where "we said, look actually, this outcome doesn’t make any sense. It’s got nothing to do with the assessment and they’ll say, well who the hell are you? You don’t know anything about [the subject] and they’ll get very upset".

**Lack of understanding of other’s roles**

A lack of understanding of the value of educational designers was expressed by some teacher participants. Bellbird was a teacher confident in their ability to effectively design courses, and they could not see the purpose of a separate educational design role. In an environment with limited budget where teachers frequently spent more than the prescribed number of hours on a course, having hours budgeted for someone else to work on the course when the teacher wanted more hours themselves caused resentment, as seen in this comment by Bellbird (T, 2015):
120 hours for me as a writer and 90 hours for the educational designer which, as I said before, as far as I can tell, is nothing but a glorified project manager. What the hell they’re doing in their 90 hours, I don’t know.

In this instance, Bellbird (T, 2015) also felt quite frustrated by what they perceived as a lack of understanding by educational solution staff of the time and effort required to create a course.

*I was quite talked down to and very derisively by the manager of design solutions because I said it would take me more than 200 hours to write a course from scratch. No textbook, no nothing, just sit there and you know, write a 16 week, 200 hours of study worth, course from scratch, coming up with everything from the module writing to which readings to use, to what activities, presumably to creating the course page.*

**People have to play their role regardless of personal belief**

At least part of the tensions occurring between groups could be attributed to the job descriptions for the roles, rather than the individuals themselves. Kereru (T, 2016) pointed out that in some instances, people expressed a particular point of view because they were in a particular role, not because they actually believed in that point of view "people have roles to play you know". This was especially evident when people had moved from one role to another, where Kereru (T, 2016) observed that "you’re in this position now, so you have to say that". Because of this, Kereru (T, 2016) was of the opinion that "there’s a lot of disconnect, not always but a lot of times, between what people have to do and what they really feel about it".

**Unnatural split between teaching and design**

The split in responsibilities between the teaching role and the educational design role led to ongoing tension between the two groups as they worked to negotiate their respective boundaries. The division between design and teaching was structurally supported by the different roles originating from the organisation's correspondence print history, and it seemed that the organisation had not considered the possibility of merging or combining the roles. Kereru (ED, 2014) observed "we put a big pool of money into paying teachers and markers and then we put another big pool of money into designers but they haven’t thought of meshing that into one, there is a clear split". From Kereru’s (ED, 2014) perspective, it was unclear whether this division remained because "they don’t think faculty can be both designers and teachers" or whether it was considered "more efficient to split it out because that is what’s worked well in the past".
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

The division of labour also extended into educational design territory, where the organisation had course design activities "split between the designers, the courseware developers and the multimedia people" (Kereru, ED, 2014). This division also contributed to differing priorities, as Kereru (ED, 2014) noted "the multimedia people have a very clear vision actually of how they would like things to be and how things should work which doesn't necessarily coincide with the people in educational solutions". Part of the difference in perspectives was a tendency for the multimedia and educational technology staff to be seemingly more interested in the technologies than in education itself, as Kereru (ED, 2014) observed "they're actually not interested in our core business which is bizarre, like they're not really interested in education".

**Tension between faculty and educational design**

Kereru (T, 2016) was of the opinion that there had always been tension in the faculty / educational design relationship "that's always been there though, I think that’s never changed. Just goes through peaks and troughs depending on how frustrated people are feeling by the latest restructure". Finch (ED, 2014) felt the tension even more strongly and spoke of animosity between the groups, acknowledged by faculty management, who "didn't even let me go to the first meeting ... he said there’s quite a bit of ill feeling". From Finch's (ED, 2014) perspective:

> The relationship between the faculty and the old LTS was so messed up when I arrived that my first year was all about just relationship building. I think there were bridges to repair there before we could make any forward progress.

Part of the ill-feeling may have been resentment on the part of faculty. For example, Bellbird (T, 2015) commented that it was "very frustrating to have someone there who, they're getting paid more than you, they're less qualified than you." Bellbird (T, 2015) felt that the benefit provided by the educational design team was limited. "They're getting given a rather large number of hours to work on the project and they're doing nothing but basically asking when things are done", Bellbird (T, 2015) claimed.

Kereru (T, 2016) expressed an opinion that the tension between faculty and educational design staff was a natural result of the division of labour "because you're separating out design from teaching and it's always going to be a natural tension". With projects to manage, timeframes to deliver courses within, and budgets to stay under, the educational designers recognised that their role contributed to the tension and frustration between faculty and education design staff. Kereru (ED, 2016) observed that "they're always going to have differing needs and we're always going to be frustrated by faculty
going we want this, we want that and it doesn't fit into our timelines and costs and we can't do it". The educational design team having to be gatekeepers of time and money for course development then resulted in "faculty getting frustrated because that's what they think is best and that's what they want to do" observed Kereru (ED, 2016). This assessment of the situation was echoed in various comments by all participants.

For their part, faculty appeared particularly unhappy with the power of veto given to educational design staff rather than faculty staff through the online course quality assurance policies "I feel almost excluded I suppose from the process and it probably comes back to the policies where final decisions seem to be made by the educational design people" shared Bellbird (T, 2014). This privileging of design staff over faculty rankled Bellbird (T, 2014), who felt relegated to the role of consultant rather than course owner "when you finally get permission the project gets handed over to the educational design team and it's their project which I suppose talks to my role as content expert and consultant".

Unclear course ownership causing tension between faculty and education design

Lack of clear course ownership also caused tension in roles and responsibilities of faculty and educational design staff. Views of who was ultimately responsible for course content were different depending on the role held. "If you are in faculty you'll be told that you are responsible for the content and if you sit in educational solutions you are told you are responsible for the content" noted Kereru (ED, 2014). The result of this lack of clarity was tension "because it's not clear who is ultimately responsible" (Kereru, ED, 2014). Educational design staff, as well as faculty, tended to feel possessive of the courses they were creating "I think for a lot of the EDs they actually are they do feel a sense of ownership when they are creating something" (Kereru, ED, 2014). By contrast, most faculty staff felt like they didn't own or control the courses they taught, as Wren (T, 2014) described:

You don't feel you've got real ownership of that course partly because there are so many people involved in that course, and so many hoops to jump through to make changes and partly because it was written before you came on the scene anyway.

Lack of overall process ownership

One problem in particular that Finch noticed, was a lack of clear ownership of the overall course design process, due to the large number of people involved from different departments. In this situation it was easy for things to "fall through the cracks" (Bellbird, T, 2016), or for people to argue "it's not my responsibility"(Fantail, T, 2016). Finch
described a problem that occurred with one course they had worked on, where a significant issue was overlooked by everyone involved in the course design process because it didn't specifically fall into their role, and then had to be rectified later on. From Finch's (ED, 2015) point of view, while this lapse was unfortunate, the bigger problem was that "once the individual issue was resolved, as far as I know, nobody went back and set up a process to make sure that that wouldn't happen again because nobody owned the big picture". Fantail (T, 2014) had a similar experience:

> We had all these problems that we just hadn't anticipated because again you need someone who knows the entire process, right from here's a course descriptor to here's the finished online course page and logistics and everything that goes with it. It's a massive amount of information if you don't have one person that knows it all, the chances are that something can go wrong.

**Multiple course teachers reducing course maintenance**

Within faculty, issues of ownership also occurred when courses had multiple staff teaching them. This usually occurred because the course was taught through every trimester, and workload required the teaching to be split among different staff. In these instances, and in cases where staff left and courses were picked up by others temporarily, issues within the course would tend to be ignored, in the hopes that someone else would fix them. As Bellbird (T, 2016) points out, with these types of courses "at no point does anyone actually really sit down, rip it apart, try and really fix it, not just put a band aid and new sentence in", because the course is seen as "someone else's problem". When the staff member knew they wouldn't be teaching that course again in the immediate future, there seemed to be a tendency to think "why should I?" when it came to anything that required time and effort above the standard teaching processes. Bellbird (T, 2016) was of the opinion that this occurred not because the staff member didn't care about the course or affected students, but because "we're all working within time constraints and I think there's a natural tendency to want to be able to see the result of your hard work and I think that might be one of the reasons."

**Educational design used to align faculty to organisational needs**

Kereru reported instances where managers tried to use educational designers as the messenger to effect change in courses rather than directing faculty staff to make the changes needed. Kereru (ED, 2014) noted this happening because "the head of school might have a particular vision which they want to try and push through which is not necessarily bad but I don't know if they ever talk to their staff about it" and so managers
would instigate "off the record" conversations with the educational design staff to explain how they wanted a course to look. In Kereru’s (ED, 2014) experience, this occurred because "nobody likes saying things here that are unpleasant", with the end result for educational designers feeling like "we get used a lot to be bad cops"; when managers want to see change "they're not going to be telling the tutors, they're going to be telling you and trying to get you to influence the tutor to make those changes".

Industrial model not supportive of collaboration

Kereru (ED, 2014) noted one challenge with the industrial model involving charging of time against the projects, was that the model didn't allow for creativity or collaboration in course design. As Kereru explained:

> You actually don’t have time to sit and collaborate and talk about things until you find a solution, the model doesn’t really allow for that. That model just assumes there are preset solutions and that is what will be followed.

However, in instances where collaboration managed to occur despite the constraints of the model, such as when teaching staff worked together on the subject matter for a course, teaching staff were positive about how it contributed to the course design. "It is good to collaborate and share ideas to make a course better, that's what we are all trying to achieve" pointed out Wren (T, 2014).

Wren's (T, 2015) most recent experience of course development went relatively smoothly, which they partially attributed to the educational designer they worked with being new to the organisation "it was her first time so that helped us to consult more". Wren (T, 2015) found that as a teacher they were able to contribute more "because there were many processes that she [the designer] didn't know herself within the polytechnic", and as a consequence Wren felt more like an equal partner in the course development.

Relationship driven organisational systems

Both education designers who participated commented on how the organisation was more relationship driven than rule driven. By that, they meant that although there were rules and processes, they were often insufficiently detailed, resulting in "tacit processes" where staff had "a sort of an idea it will be more or less like this, this is more or less how it's going to work" (Kereru, ED, 2014). This was effective until someone wanted to do things differently, and then because of the lack of clear explicit process, it became a "relationship driven" process, where the educational designer then had to go "go and speak to individuals and ask, is that ok, or can we do this or do that" (Kereru, ED, 2014).
A key challenge in this scenario was that the response given would differ depending on which individual was approached, as Kereru (ED, 2014) noted "you've just got to find the right individual and latch on to them and that's kind of the issue, it's not an across the team type of approach". Of course this style of working was open to exploitation, where "word would get around" (Journal) about who would do things outside the rules.

**Changing processes changed relationships**

One of the problems identified by participants was the frequency with which some of the departments, including the educational design department, were being reviewed or restructured alongside changes to course development policies and procedures. Restructuring of roles and responsibilities during 2014/2015 resulted in a change of processes and interactions between groups (Journal). Changes to processes had a flow on effect to relationships because, as Kereru (ED, 2015) noted, "if processes change, your interaction changes, there's no doubt about that". The level of clarity in the new processes affected the degree to which staff could easily assume their new roles. As Kereru (ED, 2014) described, a lack of clear process can mean that "every single time you do something it's a whole relationship management thing all over again because nobody is quite sure where their roles start and end and how much they can do and how much they can't do". Having to renegotiate relationships and role boundaries was time consuming and tension filled, as each group vied to establish their own value to the organisation.

Changes to the online course amendment processes seemed to add in more layers of relational interaction, which staff felt were unnecessarily complex. "I have to go to help desk and help desk will give it to the educational designers, why can’t I contact the educational designer direct? All this winding process makes things difficult for us and for the students" commented Wren (T, 2016). Kereru (ED, 2016) agreed, noting that changes in processes were frustrating for staff who had to find new solutions to issues they already had solutions to before the process (and those involved) changed:

*It's like groundhog day, you think you've resolved it one way and then they introduce a change and it's the same problem again in a new way and you've got to resolve it again. That can be a bit frustrating.*

It was also unclear to staff which relationships they needed to be engaged in when processes changed. Wren found that when there were multiple parties involved in a process, it became harder to find who to talk to when issues arose. "Previously there was one point that you would go to with your problem and wait for it to be solved but now, I'm
not sure whether I have to solve the problem myself, tell somebody to do it or what" (Wren, T, 2016).

Fantail (T, 2014) noted that the impact of organisational restructuring and changes to roles had an underestimated impact on staff effectiveness "they go and change something or they restructure something and the person you've been working with doesn't work there anymore and they're not replacing them. It's those sorts of things that I think are underestimated as well". As Finch (ED, 2015) noted, "I'm not quite sure how much value there is in building a great relationship with somebody who, you're not going to know how they connect to anyone in a few months' time". This perspective seems to have been adopted by several managers and teams and led to a lack of interest or motivation in developing effective inter-team connections to support the overall course design process. However where solid relationships had been built previously with individuals, Kereru (ED, 2016) found these stayed much the same as they had been previously "at that micro level things haven't really changed... like I had a good (or bad) relationship with somebody before and I could work well with that person ... that's stayed consistent, no matter what's been going on up there".

**Platform change affected relationships**

Changing the main platform for learning had an impact on what educational designers were able to do in course design, and on their relationships with the technology gatekeepers. Kereru (ED, 2016) explained that in the initially supported LMS platform (Moodle) "it was a very different relationship because we were much freer just to do what we want." Greater editing access to the platform meant that educational design staff were limited only by the affordances of the platform, not by any other restrictions. "There was not a lot of boundaries on what you couldn't do and could do, so if we could find out a way to do it, we'll just do it", noted Kereru (ED, 2016). That contrasted with the reduced accessibility of the current platform, iQualify, which had the effect of reducing educational designer ability to modify courses. "They have to actually build it for us and we can't really touch it whereas before, if we had the skills to do it ourselves, we could just do it and nobody was going to stop us" said Kereru (ED, 2016).

**Professional development**

The organisation seemed to be reliant on systems, processes and division of labour to avoid any need for professional development for teaching staff in course design. It was most participants experience that the organisation assumed they would be able to teach online, regardless of whether they had any online or distance teaching background.
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

"Nobody explained to me what online teaching should look like and it was assumed I would know how to take everything I had done from a classroom based context and just do that in an online distance context" commented Fantail (T, 2014). As Fantail (T, 2014) observed, previous teaching practice in a face to face environment didn’t necessarily translate to an understanding of online teaching, "even if they've been teaching, you can't just transfer that into an online teaching environment without some help and some guidance as to what the expectations are". Despite this, the induction process focused primarily on use of non-teaching related systems such as the HR kiosk and student management system and didn’t focus at all on the online teaching environment (Journal).

Most of the participants were critical of this approach. Finch (ED, 2014) was of the clear opinion that there was a need for faculty to have access to professional development, rather than just rely on strict guidelines for courses to create pedagogically sound products, and that "work had to go into building capacity in the staff". Finch was of the opinion that professional development for teaching staff would make the educational designer job more straightforward, as they would not then be in the position of either having to fight against faculty to improve the pedagogy of courses, or having to upskill faculty themselves to come to agreement about pedagogical approaches in course revisions.

Staff seeking their own professional development looked at other staff member’s online courses, experimented with the platform, talked with colleagues and enrolled as an online student in external courses to get a sense of what it was like to teach and learn online. However, as Bellbird (T, 2015) noted, "what you learn is dependent on the knowledge and willingness of the people in the team that you're working with". The informal approach to professional development, assuming staff would identify their own needs and seek their own solutions, was not seen as particularly effective. "I followed a couple of people’s courses but that didn’t give me enough of a sense of what it meant", shared Fantail (T, 2014). Fantail (T, 2014) noted that there were some in house short courses and training sessions available, but that there was "too much going on" and they "don't always have the time", therefore their perspective was that "it’s almost easier to set up your own little private session with a colleague and go can I just talk to you about this and get the information as and when I need it." (Fantail, T, 2014).

Of particular concern was that "there isn’t is a recognition that you are really as good as the staff you build up" (Finch, ED, 2014). Instead, the organisational approach was to focus on building high quality course materials, assuming they alone would be enough to ensure student learning. This was known within the participant group as the
"courses teach themselves" philosophy, or, as described by Finch (ED, 2014) "there just seems to be this persistent notion here that we can create a sausage factory that you can put any ning nong behind the course and it will work".

It seemed to the participants that professional development was just not an organisational priority. As Finch (ED, 2014) commented, "for whatever reason I’m not sure if its a budget issue or a confidence issue or whatever, that is not something that is being has a lot of traction at executive level right across the board". It was suggested that a more effective approach for the organisation to take would be to do a stocktake of staff competency, and design courses explicitly saying what skills were needed to teach that course, and then match the two (Finch, ED, 2014).

Faculty and educational design viewpoints

Educational design staff had a much wider view of the overall organisational system than faculty staff, although where their perspectives overlapped, there was a general consistency in what they saw and how they felt about it. Educational design staff had a mandate to work with educational technology staff, IT staff, and logistical staff as well as faculty. This gave them a wider range of relationships to manage, and a wider range of sources of information than faculty staff. The educational designers were also able to see teaching practices across the wider faculty, whereas the teaching participants tended to be familiar only with the activities in their discipline or school.

The group of faculty who participated in the data collection were all enthusiastic about teaching and learning, and regularly engaged with their own professional development as online teachers. However, the educational design participants worked with faculty with a much wider range of perspectives on online pedagogy, some of whom were far less interested in teaching design than the faculty represented in this research. Therefore, the perceptions of the educational designer participants were also influenced by the experience of working with faculty members whose voice may not be represented in these findings.

Tension in the division of labour

In the Open Polytechnic system, course design was split between teachers and educational designers and the nature of this division was the cause of significant tension between the groups. Faculty expressed resentment that educational designers without subject matter expertise were dictating how courses should be designed, while educational designers expressed frustration at working with (some) faculty who were pedagogically challenged. The system seemed to be set up to work with an industrial
model of course design, where there were clear delineations between roles and responsibilities. However, due to ongoing reviews and restructuring, lack of clarity of course and process ownership, and ongoing negotiation for overall power between faculty and educational designers, role boundaries were not as clearly demarcated as the system seemed to require or assume. Staff in both educational design and faculty noted that in many ways the system was highly reliant on relationships to function, and that changes to processes which then had the effect of changing required relationships and connections, had an impact on the effectiveness of the system. Both faculty and educational design staff were of the opinion that increased support for faculty professional development would improve the course design process.

The evolving system

So far in the chapter patterns have been discussed that were relatively consistent throughout the two-year period of data collection. However the system was not static during this time. During the 2014-2016 period of data collection there were changes and developments within the system, reflective of Engeström's (2000) theory that a system in tension will always seek to evolve in response to the contradictions that occur within the system.

Changes to editing of online courses

When data collection commenced in 2014, there were heavy restrictions in place for making changes to online courses that were unpopular with faculty and educational designers alike. The restrictive policies, as well as limiting staff responsiveness to student cohorts, also increased staff workload due to the additional steps and connections involved in each part of the restricted process compared to the previously unrestricted process. It seems this was systemically unsustainable, and by 2015, the restrictions had been partially lifted. While loosening course design restrictions was regarded favourably by staff, this did reduce the organisation's ability to meet their goal of 'consistency' in course design. By 2016, the organisational course design system had evolved again to include use of an LMS platform that had a non-editable course appearance and restricted functionality (iQualify), thereby more closely supporting the organisation's goal of consistent student learning experience.

Changes to roles, responsibilities and processes

Alongside the platform developments, the organisation also made several changes to staff roles and responsibilities during the 2014-2016 data collection period, referred to
in the description of results as restructures or reviews. The changes in roles and responsibilities were applied in concert with changes to processes, and accompanying changes to relationships. One example was the reallocation of responsibilities within the educational design and educational technology departments to improve the development process workflow, and linkages between educational design and information technology sections. Many of these changes occurred concurrently with a more clearly stated organisational vision, wherein messages that had been implicit at the beginning of the research began to become explicit.

**Vision clarification**

Between 2014 and 2016, the organisational vision appeared to become clearer to some of the participants "one vision has trumped the others for now...nobody was really clear before as it was all up in the air... so yes, that has changed. I don't know how long for but that's changed for now" (Kereru, ED, 2016). However not all participants agreed with where the clearer vision seemed to be taking teaching and learning within the organisation. "It's increasing commercialisation and dumbing down of what we offer" observed Bellbird (T, 2015), and there was no sense of certainty that the vision would stay as it was in 2016. "Based on my experience, that can change in a couple of years if it becomes too expensive or somebody leaves " commented Kereru (ED, 2016).

**Aspects that remained consistent**

Within the organisational system, there were also some aspects that remained relatively consistent during the period of data collection. For instance, there was no discernible change in participant reports of workload related stress, or of research pressure, both of which appeared stable throughout 2014-2016. Also consistent was a level of frustration towards, and resistance against, organisational processes and bureaucracy. There was an ongoing sense by several participants that senior management did not understand the work done by frontline staff (Journal).

Although there was a government election during the data collection period, there was no change of government, and the reporting requirements from TEC continued in the same direction throughout the data collection. Some participants saw a clear linkage between the organisational vision and goals and governmental funding policies. For example, organisational pushes for re-usable modules/courses, ‘white-labelling’ of courses for onselling, and a focus on profit rather than pedagogy were attributed to funding shortages. Organisational financial pressures were also seen as drivers for higher staff workload. Regular restructuring reminded staff that their jobs were not inviolable,
and that they were lucky to be employed. Awareness of the increasing casualisation of the academic workforce worldwide reinforced staff reluctance to resist changes to the course design process, despite the strongly held convictions many participants expressed against the organisational vision and new LMS platform which conflicted with individual beliefs that teaching should be a constructive and collaborative experience rather than a provision of curated materials.

The system illustrated

The evolving system is captured in the following CHAT diagrams, which illustrate the tensions and contradictions occurring within the Open Polytechnic system in 2014 (Figure 4.1), 2015 (Figure 4.2) and 2016 (Figure 4.3).

![Figure 4.1. Activity system for the Open Polytechnic (2014)](image-url)
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

Figure 4.2. Activity system for the Open Polytechnic (2015)

Figure 4.3. Activity system for the Open Polytechnic (2016)
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic

Chapter Summary

There were clear areas of conflict within the industrial model course design systems at the Open Polytechnic. A key tension lay between the organisational processes that supported a published material approach, and the desire of teachers to tailor courses to student cohorts in a more flexible way. There was a strong focus on consistency and quality assurance, leading to templated courses, restrictions to teacher’s making changes to courses, and a complex course design process which left some teachers feeling distanced from the teaching process. Staff perceived the rules, processes and procedures within the system as unclear, time consuming and too constraining for effective teaching. Concerns were expressed by both educational designers and teaching staff that the system required relationships and tacit understandings to remain functional. Faculty participants spoke highly of their peer community as a key resource supporting their teaching and informal professional development, while educational designers tended to take an individual approach. Splitting course design into subject matter expertise and educational design was an uneasy division which did not always match the way that faculty or educational designers wanted to work, resulting in tension and conflict between the groups. There was a desire by staff for greater institutionally provided professional development, although it was recognised that this potentially conflicted with the theoretical logic underlying the institution’s industrial model of course design.
Chapter 4: The Open Polytechnic
Chapter 5: Massey University

This chapter contains the second of the three cases investigated in the research project. Data are presented through summarisation of relevant documents from the document review, and through participant quotes and interpretation of key issues emerging from the data. Where quotes are used to provide evidence, the source of the quote is noted in parentheses, along with the year of the quote and the role of the participant (T for teacher, ED for educational designer). The attribution (Journal) refers to the researcher’s journal notes. The CHAT framework is used to organise the topics explored.

History of Massey University

Origins of Massey University

Massey University began life as the main agricultural training facility in the North Island of New Zealand. From its beginnings as a College that was one part of New Zealand’s only University, Massey became an autonomous University in 1964, following the dissolution of the University of New Zealand. The College taught only agriculture initially. Faculties of Technology, Veterinary Science and Science were added in the early 1960s, and by the early 1990s the Faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, Business and Information Sciences had been added. In 1993 Massey University added a campus in Albany, Auckland, and in 1999 Massey University merged with the existing Wellington Polytechnic to establish a College of Design, Fine Arts and Music, effectively giving the University a third campus based in Wellington. Recently, the University has begun to refer to the extramural students as existing in a fourth campus “all students who are distance enrolled are in constant virtual contact in the same way they would be if they were on a campus, where they’re in constant physical contact” (Kakapo, T, 2016).

Distance Education provision

Distance Education at Massey University began in the early 1960s. In 2017, Massey University stated that 17,000 of their approximately 35,000 students per year studied by distance (Massey University, 2017a), and that since the inception of distance learning at Massey University, over 250,000 students have successfully studied extramurally. Massey considers itself to be a 'veteran' of distance and blended education (Massey University, 2015). Their current distance education curriculum includes over 720 courses, occurring within more than 150 programmes. As a significant proportion of
the student cohort, the distance programme is frequently referred to by Massey University as the fourth campus.

Initially a print correspondence model, supplemented with on campus block courses, Massey's distance education programme has progressed through two different learning management systems. Massey progressed from using print as the main form of communication, with an online course page as an optional supplement, to online course pages being the central feature of a distance course, and printed material provided through a print on demand model rather than sent out automatically to students (Journal).

Massey 2014-2016

Vision, Mission and Goals

In 2014, Massey University's focus was on celebrating its 50th anniversary as an independent University, and on reviewing its vision and strategy in response to both national and global challenges (Massey University, 2014). In response to a perception of large scale change in economic, technological, environmental and societal arenas, the University positioned itself as innovative and embracing of change, a university that is “committed to defining our own future” (Massey University, 2014, p5). To align with this, the university's core stated values were “create”, “innovate” and “connect” (Massey University, 2015, p13).

Responding to environmental forces

In its 10-year plan 'Shaping the Nation: The Road to 2025' (Massey University, 2014) the university identified 9 'critical forces' that it perceived as shaping its environment and influencing its strategic direction:

- Globalisation
- Technology enabled learning
- Application of science and technology
- Mutually beneficial partnerships
- Diversity of learners
- Improving performance
- Solving 'big problems
- Government regulation / income
- Auckland growth
In response to these factors, the University identified that they would need to broaden their approach. The strategy promotes a change from a traditional academic approach to more proactive engagement with industry and community groups. This was seen as necessary in order to appear more relevant to society, and also to meet government expectations and funding requirements.

**Student cohort**

A particular challenge for Massey University was their typical student cohort. Over half of their student cohort is enrolled part time, which results in longer times to complete qualifications compared to full time students. Government funding is based on qualification completions within a time frame which could be considered reasonable for full time students but is challenging to achieve for part time students. This cohort issue has tended to place Massey University lower on NZ tertiary institution quality rankings than other Universities. For example, Massey University was the lowest ranked of New Zealand’s eight universities on the TEC Educational Performance Indicators report for completion of courses and qualifications in 2014-2016 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2014b, 2015a, 2016a).

**Goals**

**Institutional Goals**

In their interviews, participants identified a number of key forces that they saw as influencing institutional decision making, strategic goals, policies, priorities, internal resourcing and by implication, teaching. These included the focus on attracting international students (internationalisation), the trend toward 180 credit Masters programmes, and recent teaching technology trends in the use of video, MOOCs, and flipped classrooms.

**Internationalisation**

Internationalisation was mentioned by participants as a key influence in organisational decisions. "There are all sorts of strategies ... the university is moving towards internationalisation and so they are offering courses in Brunei and other places" commented Blackbird (T, 2014). This move was seen as being clearly linked to government funding of tertiary institutions, "the recruitment drive for international students at postgraduate level has pretty much been the directive from the government, the way that they're funding tertiary study" (Kea, T, 2016).
Teachers saw the move towards internationalisation as having a complex effect on courses and teaching "it complicates the pictures for universities and it will be interesting" (Blackbird, T, 2014) although there was uncertainty about how it would affect them personally when they were not yet teaching in subject areas specifically targeted. "We just don't know at the moment as a lot of those international strategies are based around particular courses some in business studies for example" noted Blackbird (T, 2014).

One of the main challenges of internationalisation was that it came "with a whole lot of problems in terms of English being a second language and academic English probably being a fourth or fifth language, quite frankly" (Kea, T, 2016). However, not all teachers saw that as an issue, arguing that there were support structures already in place to help ESOL students that they could access if they needed them. Robin (T, 2014) pointed out that "there are structures, there are procedures in place, to help with essay drafting. I mean these things exist and you can access them. It's on the front page of the Stream site".

Some participants saw internationalisation within education as exploitative, representing an assumption of superiority over the countries international students were sourced from. Starling's (T, 2014) description of the trend of internationalisation, "Spreading the word of the white man abroad again. We know best. Come and learn from us. You're just a resource for us to exploit", showed a strong disagreement with the concept. However, among the other interviewees there was a certain sense of fatalism expressed about marketing of their courses to international students. "It's big money for the university" observed Kea (T, 2016), noting that was an important factor in a competitive funding environment.

### 180 credit masters

In 2014 - 2015 the university began instigating 180 credit Masters programmes across the institution. These were designed for students to theoretically complete within one calendar year by doing 90-120 credits of papers, and 60-90 credits of thesis. The programmes were intended to increase postgraduate enrolments (and therefore income), by reducing the amount of time students needed to study for to complete the qualification.

This change required teachers to redesign their courses so that they could fit within the new programmes and still work for students. As Blackbird (T, 2015) describes "in my re-organisation of this [paper], I'm having to think about the other demands that are on my students' time and the kinds of assessment that I will do in this paper because it will be different than when it was a full year one in terms of expectations". Kea (T, 2014)
noted that having a shorter period of time for completing the research project was going to limit student's options for investigation, as the organisation needed to "modify the research so it either doesn't need ethical approval ... or you delegate that to the supervisors." There were logistical challenges for teachers in implementing the new programmes too, for example "everyone completing as new people are starting, and that's proving to be challenging" (Kea, T, 2016). The first students in one of the new programmes were due for completion around the time of the final interviews, and teachers noted at that stage that it was looking like many students were going to need extensions in order to complete the research projects, indicating that full completion in one calendar year might have been unrealistic.

**Changing use of media**

Massey's use of technological tools was influenced by a desire to effectively support their distance students, and to fulfil their commitment expressed through their 2015-2017 Investment strategy (Massey University, 2015) to support both digital literacy and the New Zealand ICT strategy. At the time of the 2014 interviews, Massey was in the midst of a shift from paper based to fully online courses. This shift was part of a larger move within the organisation towards teaching more in the online space and making greater use of multimedia tools that evolved significantly in the 2014-2016 period. These changes are detailed in the Tools and Technology section of the chapter.

**Teachers Goals**

Each of the teachers interviewed had different motivations for their teaching. Blackbird was very much driven by the idea of giving students the best possible learning experience, through creating interesting courses which engaged students' attention. Robin also had a strong focus on students, but in addition, Robin was driven by a desire to win a national teaching award and prove that they were an exemplary teacher.

Kea was motivated by a desire to help students towards non-academic vocations through development of generic transferable skills, and in creating a community of inquiry or a general desire for learning. Kakapo was interested in development of good teaching insofar as it contributed to the development of a good solid programme and qualification that in turn would develop good practitioners.

Starling, an educational designer, was primarily interested in creating standards for courses and having a consistent approach to course design across the various programmes and qualifications. Starling saw value in having a centralised production unit in order to make these goals happen.
Chapter 5: Massey University

There were no particularly noticeable areas of tension or conflict between teacher’s goals and the larger institutional goals at Massey University. The interviewees tended to see the organisational directions as happening in parallel to their own decision making about their courses and were not particularly concerned about them. There was a general lack of concern about the organisational goals, even when participants did not personally agree with the strategic direction. This may be because of the relatively low degree of regulation by the institution on course design and teaching practice (discussed later in the section on rules and regulations), and the subsequent loose connection that teaching staff felt with the organisational direction.

Tools and technology use

Technologies in use 2014-2016

During the interviews and observations of practice, participants mentioned a wide variety of technologies that they were currently using or had recently been experimenting with in their online courses, including:

- Access Grid
- Adobe Presenter
- Lecture capture
- Moodle calendar
- Online marking
- PowerPoint
- Scopia
- Website links
- Audacity
- Discussion forums
- Library links
- Moodle news posts
- PDF
- Prezi
- Skype
- Adobe Connect
- Email
- Moodle books
- Online audio
- Peerwise
- Quizzes
- Videos

Not all participants used all media, in fact most only used a small number of regular tools in their teaching, but this list provides an idea of the types of technologies in use at the time of the research.

The LMS: Moodle (Stream)

All courses at the university had a Moodle (Stream) course page, so teachers used technologies to complement or expand on what was provided in the basic course page. Teachers were aware that the default Moodle template could result in the ‘scroll of death’, where students would have to scroll down an extremely long page to find information. To remedy this, they made use of Moodle books, or navigation links (Blackbird, T, 2015). In the 2016 interviews, the Moodle interface was being changed and Blackbird (T, 2016)
commented "I've got to get used to a new interface because they've designed one specifically for this course which may be rolled out in the college if it's successful". This had the effect of adding to teacher mental load as they had to relearn where all the tools were in order to teach effectively. Blackbird (T, 2016) noted:

*It has a very different look to it, so a lot of the practices that you've taken for granted in terms of how do you set things up, how do you add people to groups, all of that has changed again. It's all in different places.*

This move towards "having a uniform platform across our [discipline] courses and maybe using a template" (Blackbird, T, 2015) came about at least in part as a response to the wide variation in Moodle course pages that had been observed by the teaching and learning consultants, who fulfilled the equivalent of the role of educational designer in the organisation (Starling, ED, 2015). The change also made Moodle more adaptive and responsive to the device being used; Starling (ED, 2016) described it as "much more mobile friendly, touch friendly, adaptive design".

**Media Site**

A significant project that was being rolled out during the 2014-2016 interviews was Media Site. This technology involved installing cameras and audio into teaching spaces so that lectures or workshops could be live streamed, or recorded for later uploading to the course, as Starling (ED, 2014) was enthusiastic about the project, suggesting that the new technology was "going to blur the lines a little bit more between what goes on in classes and online with distance students".

The Media Site technology was intended to address a variety of video related issues that staff and students had encountered when recording and watching video previously, such as situations where "there are all different codex and formats and only this format will play on these devices" (Starling, ED, 2014). Because of these challenges, video was something that only some staff were engaged in using. "Even from your desktop, it's been quite difficult. Video is a really sticky thing", observed Starling (ED, 2014). However, the new technology was expected to resolve these kinds of issues and make it easier for staff and students, as Starling (ED, 2014) explained:

*We've got a platform now where we can bash any sort of video content we want into it and it converts it on upload and it'll stream it out optimised to whatever devices it's being viewed on and that's big. Really simple to use for staff. Click a button. Drag it around the screen. Talk at it. Click upload and it goes straight into Media Site. And then that's going to be integrated into Stream or Moodle so the stuff will publish straight into the course as you record it.*
There was also potential for “students to use it for presentations and video assignments which would be awesome because that’s quite a difficult thing to do as well at the moment” noted Starling (ED, 2014). The technology would allow students to record from their computer desktop, and then upload to the course page drop box. Starling (ED, 2014) explained that was particularly useful for “subjects where they’re testing soft skills as well, presentation is quite a big part of some of those courses”.

The technology upgrade included a studio for lecturers to record in, a separate green screen studio, and a control room, as well as a desktop client that lecturers could use to create videos from their computers. Because the technology allowed for live webcasting of lectures, this had supported bringing distance students into the standard lecture environment. Additional tools such as Top Hat, the mobile based audience response system could then be used to gain feedback from the distance students. Starling (ED, 2015) gave the example of classes where “the students at home were using the response system and [the lecturer] was asking them questions, and distance students responded. Then she was responding in class, oh such and such up in Auckland said this.” Starling (ED, 2015) acknowledged that lecturing to multiple groups like that could be difficult to manage, but their perspective was that it was worth it for the students, “that’s monumental for distance students being part of a class like that.”

**Removal of print guides**

The university had recently moved away from providing printed learning materials to distance students, partly to reduce costs, “Cost shifting, it’s called” (Kakapo, T, 2015), and partly to encourage greater use of the Moodle teaching platform. The replacement of the purpose designed learning guides, which contained activities and reflection points with simply the printed readings was seen as somewhat ironic by Blackbird (T, 2015).

*They don’t have print guides any more. The university got rid of those effectively a couple of years ago...or encouraged us to get rid of them. So that’s been a source of much angst, particularly for distance students who are always used to having them. So the university went back and said, okay, we will produce books of readings now and there’s a certain irony in that because when I first arrived at Massey 21 years ago, that’s all study guides effectively were, books of readings... And then we created these marvellous things with thought provokers and all sorts of activities and tables to fill in and narratives around the readings and questions around the readings and then they said, no that’s all got to go on stream.*

However, the removal of print guides resulted in push back from students and led to a compromise where students could request printed readings on demand.
Initially it wasn’t successful for these students because a lot of them are really mobile and you know they are all doing it part time, their work takes from one end of the country to the other and they are not necessarily in an environment where they can access their computers easily so they like to be able to open the folder take out a bundle of readings take them with them. So the university has now developed a system where there is a single checklist page on stream where they can go through and tick any or all of the actual resources and they will be sent them in hard copy form as well (Kakapo, T, 2014)

Print on demand was free for students. However only certain types of resources from the online course were printable, "you have to put them in as a certain type of resource otherwise the students can’t request them" (Kakapo, T, 2016), so the students couldn’t work through a whole course offline anymore. There were also issues with it being difficult for students to discern what were core resources and what were supplementary, leading to large volumes of printed material for students to wade through, only some of which would be directly necessary for the course, Starling (ED, 2014) noted.

[Print on demand] caused some issues because people haven’t developed with it in mind. So they’ve put PDFs of all sorts of resources which aren’t necessarily core resources in there. They might be supplementary stuff. They might have a glossary of things and students are just going, request all and they’re getting a request for 1800, 2000 pages of print material.

The setup required for supporting print on demand for students also had an impact on teacher’s abilities to design the course as they desired, as Robin (T, 2016) found when redesigning their course.

To be honest, I didn’t want any of this drop-down stuff. I just wanted one screen and everything behind buttons but technically we can’t do it and make this stuff available to print, and if you don’t give people the print option, they complain about that.

Using technology to achieve teaching goals

Teachers at Massey used technological tools to achieve several teaching goals, including tracking engagement (Robin, Blackbird, Kea), communicating with students, presenting information, and assessing students. They also made use of the LMS ability to limit students access to certain sections of course work until after they had read other sections or completed quizzes. This was done both to keep cohorts together, for example when sections of the course were only made available to students at certain points during the course, and also as a way of ensuring students had mastered basic concepts before moving onto more complex ideas. Some teachers also used quizzes to ensure students
had read the basic course information as "it saves me getting asked questions that I’ve already answered" (Robin, T, 2016).

**Communication & engagement**

Teachers used technology to communicate with distance students. In addition to use of forums and emails, there was a lot of discussion from lecturers about their use of video to communicate with students. "I’ll do things like a weekly video file on my iPad uploading that to YouTube and making it private except for the students who’ve got URLs” (Blackbird, T, 2014).

Some lecturers had an aversion to being a talking head, "I don’t think anybody wants to watch 50 minutes of me, do they, online" (Robin, T, 2014), and indicated a mild resistance to putting themselves online, such as when Blackbird (T, 2014) commented "I don’t like to look at myself when I’m lecturing and I’m not sure the talking head thing would work well for me or students". However at the same time there was a recognition that creating video presentations didn’t have to be highly professional, and that students were accepting of amateur video due to the popularity of YouTube.

*I think there’s greater sort of acceptance amongst the younger students of it being slightly hokey, you sitting in your office and you umming and ahhing or scratching your nose (laughs) because they’re used to that, you know. You go online now and there’s so many video, music clips and people reciting poetry or you know, showing you how to put your make up on or, there’s this real hobbyist, amateurist aspect to, right through to the sort of slick production values and so I think their ethos is kind of accepting of all of it. (Kea, T, 2016)*

Videos were also used to capture live classes for distance students that were run through Adobe connect where "if you get 30 or 40 percent of the class to show up, you’re doing pretty well" (Starling, ED, 2015). Starling (ED, 2015) noted the recorded videos were well used, "if you go back to the viewing stats around recordings, it’s much, much higher engagement of people coming back to it afterwards, so they obviously still get value in the recordings as well".

**Information provision**

Massey teachers had been "encouraged to move away from printed study guides" (Blackbird, T, 2014), so staff who had relied on print study guides in the past had translated the activities and information into online formats. This might include having links to websites or videos provided in the online course page or having short lecturer prepared videos going over the material for the week. When Blackbird (T, 2014) was
interviewed, she explained “I’m busy doing audio Prezi’s for them that go through the key concepts that I would be covering in class”.

At a higher organisational level, some programmes were being completely redeveloped with media "at the core” (Starling, ED, 2015). Starling (ED, 2015) describes how they had "taken what were traditional print-based resources which were great and then we’ve built a whole load of video resources based out of those print-based resources". It helped that the university had recently invested in new video equipment to create the new courses. "They’ve bought us a 4K camera to film with, full mike setup, got a green screen set up in my office, full point lighting, an auto cue", enthused Starling (ED, 2015). The new technology significantly reduced the amount of time it took to record video, as Starling describes here:

You can have it done and dusted, recorded in sort of five or 10 minutes in one or two takes. The stuff I was doing previously before we had that setup, you were getting sort of an hour and a half for a five-minute bit and it was taking 20 or 30 hours to edit it together. I can record a five minute clip now in 10 minutes. I can have it edited in about two or three hours.

The videos made in this way for the renovated programmes were being used as a replacement for weekly emails from the lecturer, guiding students on where they should be this week, or giving feedback on assignments (at a class level). This was different to the weekly videos that lecturers may have been creating using their own webcam recorders, which Starling (ED, 2015) saw as "a very different type of content. It’s almost still a lecture about content.” Part of the drive to using more professionally filmed and edited video content for courses seemed to come from a perception that students would be more likely to watch and use videos with a higher production value, based on Starling’s (ED, 2015) comments:

There’s some research come out around some MOOCs which had used video predominantly and they were saying that the production values really altered the students’ perception and use of the content. The higher the production value, the more likely they are to view more of it and that seems to be the case.

**Identifying student needs**

From Starling’s (ED, 2015) point of view, a secondary goal of using video was to use video analytics to see which sections or content students were repeatedly accessing. By doing this, Starling (ED, 2015) argued "you can start to build a better picture of the students, at least the ones that are struggling". Through the video logs Starling (ED, 2015) pointed out “you can see the hot spots where students are viewing and all the critical stuff.
that they're going back to". However this logic could also be applied to resources provided through moodle, which also has extensive log data.

There was also discussion of using technological tools to aid in diagnostic testing of students, in order to better tailor teaching resources. Starling (ED, 2015) suggested that “one of the things we want to do is try and find the students who look as though they're going to struggle and then proactively go after them and see whether they need support”. He suggested that one effective way to do this would be to “slot in diagnostic testing” at the start of a course, although this was not an approach currently used.

**Lack of institutional technology restrictions**

Teachers at Massey were unaware of any institutional restrictions on the technologies they could use to teach with. From Blackbird’s (T, 2014) perspective, the only limitations were practical, around student accessibility.

*I don’t think there are any restrictions on what you can do but I think I mean surely if you were doing that you’d make sure that students would be able to access this, you know you’d have to think about those sort of considerations and if you didn’t you’d be inundated with emails and in my case that would soon make me adjust my practice.*

However, Starling (ED, 2014) identified the flexibility of online course development as a key challenge for the University's distance teaching programme. In comparison to the printed correspondence model earlier used for distance teaching, Starling argued that online teaching provided opportunity for teachers to quickly and responsively change course materials, which can lead to courses diverging away from their original design intent. Starling (ED, 2014) observed that even “with the best of intentions”, staff could add or remove content, moving the course further away from its original design intent.

*We designed it as being this course. It fulfils these objectives and the assignments do this, this and this and over a period of time, if they’re not careful, there can be real divergence away from what they’ve originally intended. (Starling, ED, 2014)*

It is worth noting that the ability to flexibly change materials has always been available in face to face teaching, as lecturers have had the freedom to change lectures or readings, activities or supplementary resources as they saw fit, providing they continued to adhere to the (often purposely vague) course description. For example, when describing their current approach to face-to-face teaching, Kea (T, 2016) says “I’ll just turn up and what’s inspiring me or what sort of dialogue has been fostered in the class,
that will determine the pitch and the way that the lecture unfolds”. In this regard, the concern stated here is equally valid for face to face teaching, and yet it is primarily in distance settings that it becomes voiced.

**Student drivers and expectations**

Teachers at Massey talked about an increased expectation by students that lectures would be recorded and made available "there is a lot more of recording of lectures going on now, and students are starting to expect it" (Blackbird, T, 2014). At times teachers found this frustrating. For example, Robin (T, 2016) described a situation where they had a well-designed course page, with information, activities, discussion forums, FAQs, quizzes, and had the course designed specifically for distance students. Despite this, they found the regularly "get somebody grumbling, but where's my one hour video lecture? so and so does one. Why do we not have lectures on video?" (Robin, T, 2016).

Kea (T, 2014) collected feedback from first year distance students attending a block course, and concluded that students wanted 'everything'.

_They're distance students and they come for a contact course for a day, they basically want both. They want lots of paper, so lots of their readings and everything in the paper form. They want it in PDF form, so they can just do it online. Then they also want recorded lectures. I said, really, would you sit there for 50 minutes and listen to me rant on and they said, yeah. We’d probably go away and have a cup of tea. We’d probably skip through bits but we still just want that capacity. And then they also seem to want the capacity to interact with each other but not in the stilted sort of textual way. They want that but they find that a little bit stilted. If they could all get together and Skype each other in some sort of multimedia sort of thing, they’d want that as well. It seems like they want everything._

Teachers were aware of the need to manage student expectations about teacher availability that were increasing due to the 24/7 nature of online courses. Student forum posts coming through to teacher email inboxes created a sense of the ever-present student, and teachers had to consciously be aware of managing the timing of their response so as not to create unrealistic expectations in the students.

_I get them all on my phone and so I often look at them at night but I don’t want to get into the habit of engaging with them at 11 o’clock at night because I tend to come to work at 7 o’clock in the morning and that sends all the wrong signals really (Kakapo, T, 2014)_

In addition to the expectations expressed by students, some teachers also felt an implicit expectation that the course would be current both in terms of content delivered,
and in terms of the technologies used to teach with. For example, Blackbird (T, 2014) felt a pressure to keep up with technologies that students could be using to study with, such as iPads and smart phones, and that drove her to try technologies or devices she would not otherwise have tried. In summary, teacher experiences of students’ expectations can be summed up in this quote:

Student expectations are rising all the time. I just think it’s absolute bullshit, that technology is saving us work. I just think the opposite’s the truth. (Robin, T, 2015)

Adoption of Technology

Technology needs to be manageable

For teachers to adopt a technology, it needed to be both manageable for them to use personally, and they also had to believe it would be easy for students to use. “I’m mindful that a lot of our distance students are older and some of them do struggle with the technology” commented Blackbird (T, 2014), going on to say:

For me any technology has to be manageable for me too. That’s why I like Prezi rather than presenter. It’s much more intuitive, I can see how it works, I can see what I can do with it. It allows you to import YouTube videos directly so the student just does another click and it starts playing automatically they don’t have to click the link and go to the website, it’s there. (Blackbird, T, 2014).

Teachers were conscious of the impact on both student and teacher time when considering the use of new technology, as Robin (T, 2016) describes here:

I try and keep everything on Stream and there’s different reasons for that. One, it gets complicated using new technology. You’ve got to learn how to do it and you’d need support. I think I get enough questions about how to use this [Stream], without trying to take them somewhere else as well.

Providing alternative options

There was also an awareness of the fickleness of technology, and the challenge of finding one tool that would work across multiple platforms or in all of the various study situations that students might inhabit. In an attempt to minimise the impact of technological failure on student learning, Blackbird (T, 2014) used several different types of technology to provide failover options.

We’ve put up several versions of the same thing, the URL a link, a link to the connect server, a PDF without audio and if the student still can’t manage to see any of those then you direct them to a stream helpline person.
Despite the multiple options given, Blackbird (T, 2014) found that there were still instances where "with the technology that we are using, some students can't access it", and that had prompted them to continue their experimentation with different technological tools and ways of teaching.

**Challenges of technology**

*Technology requiring fine tuning*

Like any other teaching innovation, making use of new technologies required a period of bedding in and fine tuning. It was recognised that technology had its issues, and that not everything would go smoothly. From Kea's (T, 2015) perspective, there was a level of acceptance required when working with technologies: "You know, it's not going to be perfect and you either work around it or you kind of accept that 90 percent of it's going to be good and 10 percent of it's going to be problematic".

*Landscape changes rapidly*

Blackbird (T, 2016) observed that "the landscape continues to move reasonably quickly" and there were flow on effects for teachers shifting from teaching using one technology, to teaching using another technology, in a comparatively short space of time. For example:

> We've gone from a situation where the university's supported Adobe Presenter as a plug-in to Powerpoint and we all started recording our lectures on that and then we had problems with students being able to view them but the university helped set up so that they could come to a central site within their website and view them off there. But now the university's no longer supporting that. I shifted to Prezi meanwhile because I found students could all view them. Now the university's supporting Media Site. So it's having to get used to new tools and technologies to deliver online presentations over the space of three years. (Blackbird, T, 2016)

A problem with this was the amount of rework a teacher had to do to recreate teaching materials in the new format. As Blackbird (T, 2016) noted, "it's quite challenging because it does demand your time, and it's not like what I've set up, you could continue to use".

*Using technology properly requires practice change*

In order to make effective use of technology, teachers sometimes needed to change their practice. There was an awareness that in some cases, technology provided affordances that the course or teaching design wasn't making full use of, as Robin (T, 2014) describes here:
The structure is there. The readings are there. I just need to populate it with a bit of narrative content and that’s just partly because we are using this, I’m using this Stream 2 technology the way it was meant to be used for the first time really, this year, rather than having that platform but just putting PDFs up.

**Using new technology takes more time**

Using new technology often meant creating new teaching materials, or preparing for teaching in a new way, which cost teachers time "I think there's this idea that technology was going to save us all time and energy. It's just nonsense" (Robin, T, 2016). The more unfamiliar a teacher was with a technology, the more time it took "it takes time, you know when you're recording it, if you get it wrong" (Robin, T, 2014). Setting reasonable targets that were achievable in the time available was a sensible option.

> I didn’t really want to set myself the task of recording 12 or 24 recordings, I haven't got the time. But what I could do was one for about five minutes for each of the four parts of the course. That's manageable. I can do that. At least by way of getting the ball rolling, I'll do that, then I'll do [the rest] next semester. (Robin, T, 2014)

For this reason, teachers were more likely to adopt a new technology if there was no additional time required to implement it. "I mean if it's no more work, if you just have the same lecture, you turn up and you talk here or talk there and someone just records it, yeah, fair enough" (Robin, T, 2014). In this regard, Lecture capture was seen to be a good option for creating material to be used by both internal and distance students; meeting student needs for a learning experience that included video, without adding additional time cost for the teacher.

A constant counter balance to using technology to improve teaching materials was the time required, especially given other competing workload demands (see later section in this chapter on workload).

> Let's be honest, it's time consuming. If I'm going to put in video or audio over each of my Powerpoint slides it's a big job and there's so many other pressures on me, so many other demands on my time (Robin, T, 2016)

> One of the real limitations I think of the online environment is that in order to produce what is often seen as good practice of testing people's content knowledge in an ongoing way [for example] having short tests all the way through, that sort of thing is very time consuming to produce and so I don't do that (Kakapo, T, 2014)
Usability issues leading to workarounds

In some instances new technologies introduced by the university failed to gain traction with teaching staff due to usability. Kea (T, 2016) described how the latest technology from the university was too difficult to use, and so lecturers stopped using it, and instead worked outside the recommended technology to achieve their goal.

_They introduced a new platform where we’re supposed to record things that we give the students online but it’s so clunky to use. It’s just really not user friendly so everyone just ignores it and they’ve gone off and done their own thing._

Students were also creative in their use of technology and working outside the supported or prescribed technologies. Kea (T, 2016) shared a story of a workshop that had participants in two physical locations, as well as a collection of disparate online participants. At one point there was a break for discussion, and the decision was made to mute all the microphones for the online participants as there was too much noise coming through the system. Despite the system limitation, Kea (T, 2016) shared that “they found a way of somehow talking to each other while we couldn't hear them and the guy, the technical guy running it didn't know how they did either but they were all chatting to each other”.

IT support for technology could be improved

While the University had provided access to a number of technologies, for example the Adobe suite of products, there wasn’t a corresponding set of resources on how to use them. That meant teachers needed to make their own appointments with the learning consultants to find out how to use a specific technology in their teaching practice. As Blackbird (T, 2014) described, the teaching staff wanted further guidance, “I said to [the ED] ok we are so we are allowed all these things now what can I do with them”.

Furthermore, connections were not always made between the direction of the university, its preferred technology, and the IT support department. At times this was quite advantageous to lecturing staff, especially when staff who had found one technology too difficult to work with wanted to revert back to using a previous technology.

_So they use Prezi or whatever, and then we found out Presenter which is that Powerpoint one, the IT’s still supporting it. Nobody had told them they’d stopped supporting it so they’re still supporting it. So everyone’s gone back to Presenter because that just so easy, slide by slide, you edit it immediately, you know delete it, do whatever you want with it and it’s all set and all done._ (Kea, T, 2016)
Benefits of Technology

There were some examples given of technology saving teachers time or supporting their work. One example was the integration of Turnitin within Moodle, which allowed tutors to glance at the Turnitin score to check for plagiarism, rather than be on alert all the way through marking an assignment. “That’s undoubtedly an example of technology working to our benefit, digital uploads and Turn It In check for plagiarism, undoubtedly.” (Robin, T, 2016)

Trying to keep up with current educational technologies and tools sometimes had unexpected bonuses for teachers’ personal practice. An example of this was when Blackbird (T, 2014) went looking for educational applications and found one that wasn’t of particular use to students but was very helpful for them personally in organising their work.

A key focus: The move toward video

A significant shift was happening at the organisation during the time of the research, where the University was investing heavily in the use of video for both internal and distance students. All participants discussed the use of video, and there was a wide range of views expressed relating to its benefits, challenges, and pedagogical usefulness.

Using video to increase accessibility of content

A key driver from an organisational perspective seemed to be improving engagement with distance students by leveraging a product already produced for internal students (lectures). Starling (ED, 2015) expressed an opinion that video was more accessible and attractive than text, and was therefore an easier way to engage students with ideas than expecting them to read text.

*If there’s video on the page, it’s the first thing people click. Video link in an email is the first thing people click. So video drives the way people use those webpages. They’re more likely to click on video than read a patch of text, I think. So it’s really fast route into content I think, like softening the blow of actually engaging with something.* (Starling, ED, 2015)

Using video to minimise deviation from original course design

Another advantage that Starling (ED, 2015) saw in replacing standard online material with video was the way it could be used to reduce deviation away from original course design.
We get mission drift here. You design a curriculum. It gets one year and then someone else gets given that paper and they change it. They change this, they change that. That paper ends up going over there. Doesn’t align with any of your objectives you had in place and any of the graduate attributes or outcomes you had in place and it ends up literally all over the place and we've got to get a handle on that. (Starling, ED, 2015)

From Starling’s (ED) perspective, having fixed course content would help to improve consistency and quality across a programme. "I tend to see the technology as something that can be used to do that." (Starling, ED, 2015). Because of the amount of time and energy invested in creating this kind of media, it was not something that would get done often. Therefore, Starling (ED, 2015) argued that "you can use it as these pillars that don’t move and other staff can come along, that content's not going to move. They can’t edit it. It’s there really."

**Technical issues of lecture capture**

By 2016 the technology for lecture capture was widely available. "We've got seven lecture theatres I think at Palmerston North and some at Albany that are set up where they'll automatically record your lectures by default" (Kea, T, 2015). There were a few technical challenges noted with using lecture capture, for example the setup of camera and microphones being unsuitable for lecturers who like to pace since they would end up outside of recording range "I move around the room a lot and it doesn't accommodate that very well" (Blackbird, T, 2016). There was also concern about the size of the video data files, and potential issues for students in downloading them. "It comes out as big data files and you then get the students complaining because they can't download it or it runs slowly, so you’re just opening up another can of worms", claimed Robin (T, 2016).

**Moral issues with lecture capture**

Blackbird and Kea expressed concerns about the permanence of lecture capture videos on the Internet, because as Blackbird (T, 2016) said "I don't know what happens in terms of ability to download these lectures.". This was an issue because it increased lecturer nerves and anxiety, and also because of the possibility of videos being edited later on which staff feared could result in information being presented out of context.

The awareness of the permanence of anything said or done in the recorded lectures as distinct from non-recorded lectures, led to lecturers second guessing the topics chosen and being concerned about their delivery of content "that's odd to think of myself being beamed out when sometimes I think, why did you say that? (Laughs). So yeah, it's the permanence of it that I'm less comfortable with" shred Blackbird (T, 2016). Likewise, Kea (T, 2014) felt that their standard lecture delivery style and content would...
not necessarily be appropriate for recorded situations "I often say really outrageous things that I'm not sure I'd want to in a context other than the lecture theatre, I'd definitely have to curtail what I say."

Kea (T, 2014) also noted that it was not only lecturers who could be affected by concerns about recording, but also students, which they believed was likely to lead to reduced student interaction and fewer questions during lectures. Generally, teachers expressed concerns that students might not feel safe speaking or asking questions or engaging in debate when being recorded, because of the awareness that "things can be edited and taken out of context" (Kea, T, 2014), and because once information has been put online, it effectively can't be retrieved. Even with the videoed lecture files being blocked from editing, it was acknowledged there are many other ways to share content online "someone else sitting there said, ohh, just take a screenshot of it and put it on You Tube, it's pretty easy" (Kea, T, 2014).

Two further issues identified were copyright, and the possible impact on the lecturer's job, as Kea (T, 2014) describes here:

*The other thing is does the university own that material, I mean who owns it? That's the key. And what uses it can be put to? For example, if I give a series of lectures, will the university next year just play my lectures? You know, we can get five years' use out of this before your clothing starts to date and then they can just CGI you in the future, just put different outfits on you.*

While on the surface this concern might seem rather extreme, the increasing use of non-permanent teaching staff, fixed term contracts, and seasonal work in academia indicate that faculty concerns about being replaced are not unreasonable.

**Pedagogical issues with lecture capture**

There were also concerns that simply videoing lectures and putting them online was not going to make for a good learning experience for online distance students. Teachers were aware of pressure to do lecture capture for their courses and were resistant to the idea of doing this without some further consideration of the pedagogical value.

*There's a bit of pressure, I'm starting to detect, to move over to media site in terms of having all your teaching resources somehow fed through these things. Pedagogically, I don't know that I think videoing my lectures is actually going to cut the mustard in terms of their learning. I wouldn't want to watch myself for 50 minutes or two hours (laughs). You know, I think it's much better in terms of their learning to have short, punchy pieces that get at the key concepts, still do a few face to face videos and postings rather than just be a talking head.* (Blackbird, T, 2015)
Robin (T, 2016) concurred with this, suggesting that if all the key information for the course is already written down, then videos become superfluous as best, and unnecessary time wastage for students at worst. Robin also expressed doubt that students would even stay engaged with longer videos, given the wide range of commitments distance students are known to have.

*The truth is, it becomes another thing to do. I actually already know what I've got to do but there's these videos to watch. You put it on. Okay, and you're watching this. One minute, I'm engaged. Two minutes. Three minutes. I could just feed the cat while this... fed the cat. Three and a half minutes. I could just do those few dishes. And I already actually know everything I need to know because you've written everything down for me and I'm engaged. I've done the task or I know what I need to do to do it. It's just, it's additional if you want it, but it's essentially superfluous. I can complete this without it.* (Robin, T, 2016)

After recording a 2-day orientation workshop for new students, Kea (T, 2016) took a more open view of the usefulness of videos for students, noting that the lecturer point of view was not always going to be the same as the student point of view, and taking a 'if we can do it, why not?' approach.

*I was really surprised the number of people that wanted just to watch the recording of the orientation. It went for two days. So I know some of my colleagues think that watching a lecture of that sort of thing is the most boring thing in the world but that's for them. I don't know if it's the same for all students, you know, and if you've got the ability to record it, why not record it and just put it up there?* (Kea, T, 2016)

Starling (ED, 2014) disagreed with the concerns expressed by lecturers about the pedagogy of lecture capture, arguing that it was not about recycling old pedagogies. Instead they proposed the technology had the potential to completely transform teaching practice. "I know the 'you're just recycling old pedagogies' argument. I personally have my own view on that. I don't think you are. I think there are ways to use it to completely transform teaching and learning potentially." For example, they suggested lecture capture could be used to support flipped classrooms, where "you watch that and then come to class and we'll do something different as in, I won't talk at you. You'll talk at me." (Starling, ED, 2014). They did concede that this flipped approach effectively turned lectures into tutorials, but from their perspective "we need more of it."

Starling (ED, 2015) also suggested that there was value to be had from the provision of recorded lectures that students could watch and rewatch, regardless of whether they were face to face or distance students.
Chapter 5: Massey University

There are pedagogical issues that people have with just recording the lecture and replicating traditional practice at vast expense but students really, really get value out of it. If you look at the stats between an internally recorded lecture to a class of 400 students that goes out to a distance paper with a similar amount of students in it you can see the percentage of each student watching and it’s massive. You’ve got almost all of the students watching almost all of the content. So they obviously find it useful and then the internal students get to go back and use it for revision purpose as well, so they find it useful.

Lecture capture project rolling out

Despite pedagogical and moral concerns, the lecture capture project continued to be rolled out, and by 2016 Blackbird (T, 2016) observed that "lectures are now recorded in many of our lecture theatres. There were only one or two in 2014 that had that capacity. Now a lot of them do". Along with this change came increased student demand, although whether this was due to perceived increased availability, or whether the demand had preceded the shift was unclear.

Students are asking for videos, both internal students and those extramural or distance students are asking for videos of you teaching and pedagogically, I don’t know how much value there is in that but that’s what does seem to be happening. (Blackbird, T, 2016)

Face to face vs online teaching

At Massey University, the teachers interviewed all had responsibility for a mixture of face to face and distance student cohorts. That meant that they tended to engage in more comparative thinking about their teaching practice than interviewees from the Open Polytechnic who engaged only with distance students. In the same course a lecturer might have both an internal cohort attending lectures and tutorials and an extramural cohort, although not every teacher of an internal class would have a matching external cohort. In cases where an internal class was taught on more than one campus, only one of the on-campus teachers would also teach the extramural class.

Distance and internal students are different cohorts

Teachers saw the circumstances of their face to face students and their online students as being different and having different needs, as Kea (T, 2014) explained "I’m very aware of those different dynamics and I really moderate the way that I teach". Consequently, they took different teaching approaches with the different cohorts. For example, Blackbird (T, 2016) tailored their communications to online students assuming that they had a greater number of responsibilities they were juggling compared to internal students:
You might be saying, look, I realise the pressure's coming on now. You've got lots of other things happening at the moment in terms of your lives or whatever. I think it just gives you a better connection rather than lumping everyone in together. *(Blackbird, T, 2016)*

Some teaching staff felt the extramural students got a better deal, as they were the ones courses were designed for.

*I designed this for distance students. I use it for internal students because it exists and they need the same content but the study guide and all that, I wouldn't have written a study guide for internal students. I wrote that for distance students.* *(Robin, T, 2016)*

By contrast, Kakapo and Kea felt that face to face students were "far more advantaged" *(Kea, T, 2014)* as they were able to engage directly in dialogue with the lecturer about the course material and weren't required to be as self-directed in their learning.

**Keeping distance and internal cohorts separate**

Some lecturers kept different Moodle course pages for their online and face to face cohorts, such as Blackbird *(T, 2015)* who explained, "I tend to keep them separate because I ask them to do different things". For example, "on my website for the internal students, I give them a little task for the tutorial, whereas the distance students don't have that. They'll have reflection tasks or different sorts of activities" *(Blackbird, T, 2015)*.

There were differences also in the resources provided to the two cohorts. In one of their courses, Blackbird *(T, 2015)* described how "the distance students will have Prezi presentations that have an audio attached to them as they click through them but the internal students don't have access to that because they've got me face to face".

Similarly, Robin *(T, 2014)* said "I do have Stream sites for all of them but for the internals, typically I've only really used it to load up the study guide and the reading materials. You know, this is the digital repository for your stuff". The logic behind the difference from Robin's perspective was that the internal class doesn't need the same level of opportunity to discuss ideas or assignments. They argued that "we don't need to be running enthusiastic, heavily posted discussion threads online for an internal class. We meet face to face".

However recent student feedback indicating internal students wanted greater interaction in the Stream environment was causing Robin *(T, 2014)* to rethink that approach. Robin realised that by combining the groups "the internals now have access to a site that is quite obviously lively because you've got something like three times as many
extramural students who are being assessed on the basis of what they contribute online". Consequently, face to face students benefited from a more in depth discussion than they previously had in their own Stream page, since the discussion was bolstered by the interactions from the distance students. Through this change, Robin (T, 2014) saw opportunities to teach differently that hadn’t previously occurred to them:

*I think by putting these two together into one site, I could see how the boundaries start to blur in a way that I hadn't necessarily given much thought to and that blurring opens up opportunities that I hadn’t necessarily considered previously. (Robin, T, 2014)*

**Blurring lines between distance and face-to-face**

Starling (ED, 2014) talked about "blurring the boundaries" between face to face and distance cohorts where "there's a real sort of merging of the two" (Starling, ED, 2015). This could take the form of staff being open to distance students choosing to attend face to face lectures, or of staff using synchronous technology for example "running hybrid internal classes using Connect and they’ll have distance students in the class as well." (Starling, ED, 2015). Blackbird (T, 2014) had noticed a pattern of students who were based on campus choosing to enrol in the distance paper rather than the internal paper:

*What I've found is the internal students seem to take the distance one and so they'll come along to tuts and to talk to me but they've got all the resources for the distance one so they get the best of both. (Blackbird, T, 2014)*

By 2016, this was starting to become commonplace, as Kakapo (T, 2016) describes:

*Increasingly, we don't make a distinction really between [face to face and distance students], so courses are run as courses and some of the students are distance and some of the students are face to face and that's what's been enabled through the Stream environment, so the internal students get the same materials as the distance students and if the distance students are in town in some courses, they can come into the internal courses when in that place.*

Kea (T, 2014) could see how being a distance student rather than a face to face student could be appealing. "I can kind of understand that because in a sense, if you're an online student, off campus, this capacity to graze would be, would be really alluring", particularly in instances where the student was time pressured, or wanted the flexibility to not have to be at a class at a specific time each week. Kea ran mixed face to face and distance sessions with students using Skopia, however they had noted some challenges in
Chapter 5: Massey University

the automatic privileging of students in the room over students connected via videoconferencing. "There is this tendency for people [at the face to face venue] just to talk and forget that there's people listening in" (Kea, T, 2015). This was an issue both for students, and for presenters:

"It's very hard to face both audiences at the same time, and I noticed the last one, one of the presenters was very good at just standing side on so both groups could see her but one of the other presenters kept turning his back to the Scopia people." (Kea, T, 2015).

Kea (T, 2015) noted that it was "just a matter of working out a series of protocols and guidelines for people to follow and then becoming habituated into it", however the need to learn and perform a new set of behaviours to make the sessions work did provide an extra challenge not present when teaching just face to face or just by distance.

**Block contact courses**

Distance courses involving block courses were an interesting case, as in these instances the lecturer could find a closer relationship developing with students than either courses with weekly internal lectures, or courses that were fully online/distance.

"I actually get to know my students quite well because I spend eight hours right at the beginning of the course with them. They're only small classes and I get them to talk about themselves and who they are as people and what's motivating them to study and all of that kind of thing. Then when I read their stuff online, I'm still kind of seeing them. (Kakapo, T, 2015)

Kea (T, 2016) observed that "the courses I've seen operating quite well and I've experienced them myself, is where you have a contact component where the whole cohort gets together for a weekend or whatever". Kea (T, 2016) argued that this experience built relationships between students as much as it did between lecturer and student, "it's not just teacher/student. It's student to student and that dynamism, even though it's so fleeting ... it establishes so much". However, adding a contact component to a distance course sometimes went against the drive to increase enrolments, as Robin (T, 2016) described:

"A contact course is a double-edged sword, isn't it? If you want everybody to turn up, you make it compulsory but if you make it compulsory to come and spend a weekend in Palmerston North, you halve your roll. When we're under pressure to increase in enrolments, as Robin (T, 2016) described:

What was interesting for Kakapo was that because they had only ever had either internal students, or distance students with a compulsory block course, they "don't know
what it’s like to have that distance interaction with students I never meet” (Kakapo, T, 2015). As a result her teaching approach relied on the face to face meetings with students to build rapport, and there was no particular drive to make greater use of the Stream environment above its convenience as an information repository. This was quite different to other teachers who didn't have block courses, who had an increased focus on how to use the Stream environment to support student engagement.

**Community building harder by distance**

One key aspect discussed by all participants was community building and engaging with students. Building effective relationships with distance or online students was seen as a challenge by all participants. Contemplating the issue, Kea (T, 2016) observed "I think that distance that you have with online students, that's always there and you can't, it's really hard to replicate that sort of intimacy that you have and that immediacy and the viscerality of face to face teaching”. Similarly, Kakapo (T, 2014) argued that "there is something different about the way we engage in a face to face dialogue than we do if we are talking to each other by typing”.

It seemed to be a commonly held assumption among the teachers that the goal with online teaching was to replicate the level of relationship or community that occurred in face to face classes. Here, for example, Kea (T, 2016) expressed the belief that online students are seeking live, synchronous interactions with their teachers. "I get a real strong sense that online students want that face to face or at least voice to voice, that live interaction at some point, and it may be every week or it may be just that pivotal moment when discussing an essay or something like that”. While Kakapo (T, 2014) had "thought quite a lot about how you could replicate the access grid distance environment because when we run the access grid seminars it is dialogically based", which they saw as much preferable over the "the text-based teacherly didactic kind of approach of something like stream".

The issue of developing this connection with students remained constant throughout the length of the study, as we can see from these two quotes from Kea, the first from the beginning of the research in 2014, and the second from the final interview in 2016.

*I think the best thing is if you can facilitate some sort of immediate, intimate dialogue, between students or between the teacher and the student, either by Skyping or talking to each other on a phone or whatever, I think if you can bring that in, I think that’s a really important component. (Kea, T, 2014)*
We have good technical abilities but collapsing that distance and making the interaction have some of the dynamism that face to face interaction does, I think that’s the biggest issue actually. Yeah, it hasn’t really changed. (Kea, T, 2016)

It is worth noting that the challenges of building relationships online do not just apply to the teacher student relationship; it was recognised that students in a distance setting need to connect with each other as well. Compared to on campus classes, distance students do not get the same kinds of opportunities to see that their fellow students are going through similar learning processes, and that can result in students feeling isolated and inadequate, factors that may contribute to declining motivation to complete their courses.

One of the big things, in the online thing, is that a lot of it kind of isolates the students ... they’re often experiencing similar constraints, opportunities, challenges and that sort of thing but they’ve got no one to discuss it with ... so it all becomes this highly reflexive thing. You think it’s you. You think, I’m the one who’s getting stressed out. I’m the one whose washing machine’s broken and I can’t find time to do [study], when other people are experiencing very similar processes. (Kea, T, 2014)

Preferences between face-to-face and online cohorts

Staff had clear preferences between their online and face to face cohorts - most preferred face to face. For some the preference for face to face cohorts related to the comparative ease with which they could teach innovatively face to face compared to online. Changes to an internal class could be implemented almost spontaneously, whereas changes to online classes required preparation, investigation of suitable technological tools, and advance warning to students of changes in topics or assessment.

For others this was because their preferred teaching method was dialogic, and they preferred the synchronicity and body language aspects of face to face teaching. For example, Kakapo (T, 2014) considered that "teaching is about the pedagogical moment and you miss that in the online environment". They explained:

When I am in classroom face to face with a group of students, I can see the aha moment or I can see the deep question and we can tease that out and you can deal with it and you can engage with it ... that little moment, that little question which is in fact a shift from being here to being there is something in my experience you can only do face to face.

Similarly, Kea (T, 2014) talked about their preferred teaching moment as the "almost throwaway conversations that you have after you’ve taught the fundamentals and then you can play around with the ideas a little bit". They found that teaching approach
didn’t translate particularly well to online teaching because ”it comes across as really ideological or dogmatic, because it doesn’t have that tone in your voice or your hand gestures or whatever else you’re doing that lets people know that you’re playing” (Kea, T, 2014). By extension, Kea (T, 2014) equated the lack of dialogic affordance in the online course as affecting his ability to teach critical thinking about the discipline to students:

For me, one of the ways to be a critical thinker is to play with ideas, really play with them. Throw them around. See what happens. Kick them a bit. Turn them inside out. See what happens when you do that ... You can’t do that online because that dialogic aspect’s gone.

Using technology to merge internal and distance student groups would seem to break down this barrier - as long as that technology is reliable. While Starling (ED, 2015) claimed that ”it works pretty well because the tech’s rock solid now actually”, some teachers (notably Kea and Kakapo) had a different experience, and found using technology to merge distance and face to face groups challenging due to technical difficulties that often arose, such as microphone issues, connection problems, or issues achieving visibility of the participants when multiple students were logged in simultaneously.

Teachers also noted the tension between using technology to provide synchronous interactions with online students, which would support their preferred mode of dialogic interaction, and the assumed desire of online students to have flexibility in their learning and not be tied into synchronous appointments. Kea (T, 2014) explained, ”if I did a Skype presentation to my 60 students online, it’s like all be there at six o’clock at night. Well for some of them, that takes away the flexibility of the online mode”. Increasingly, Kea (T, 2016) suspected that students do want synchronous catchups, but they want it at their discretion ”my sense is it’s shifting ... the younger people want the synchronous at their discretion... because they’re so used to doing it now, I mean they’re walking around with their cell phones, Skyping or Face timing and stuff like that”. This of course conflicts with traditional views of teacher availability to students as occurring within discrete pre-planned blocks of time, such as after lectures or in weekly office hours. If a lecturer did decide to provide synchronous activities for distance students, Starling (ED, 2014) argued they would end up with the same kinds of problems that traditional office hours have, of no-one being available to use them.
You’ve always got the issue with distance that the reason people are studying by distance is because they can’t be in a specific place at a specific time. When you start to introduce synchronicity into the design then it fragments anyway and you only get a small percentage of your distance students who can actually participate in that sort of format. It’s nice to offer them but not always necessarily a good idea really... I mean it almost ends up like office hours, doesn’t it? And you sit there with a room open, waiting for someone to drop in.

Judging the effectiveness of distance teaching

A challenge for teachers in the distance setting was evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching approach and knowing what was successful and what needed to change. As Blackbird (T, 2014) commented "you know when your teaching is going well in the classroom ... it’s a lot harder getting that feeling when it's not face to face”. Blackbird’s ability to observe the internal students meant that she could "see them actively discussing things and debating things amongst themselves and you can see in terms of what they are drawing on they are doing great learning” (Blackbird, T, 2014). She found the distance environment obscured her oversight of student engagement with materials, and as a consequence it was difficult to judge whether the conditions for learning were sufficient. This led to her "constantly trying different things“ to improve students’ engagement with the material.

Trying to bring distance closer to face-to-face

Some lecturers talked about online teaching in terms of how they tried to bring their online classes closer to the approaches they used in face to face teaching, such as where Blackbird (T, 2014) said "I think about what works for me face to face and how can I translate that for students". Some activities were harder for teaching staff to translate into an online environment than others, which meant that often there were differences between the content and assessment of the distance version of a course compared to the internally taught version. For example, Robin (T, 2014) ran a class debate for the internal cohort "whereas I don’t want a debate online. I don’t know how I’d do that or if I want to... it’s probably doable but the technology moves and you’ve already got things on the books”. In this comment Robin is alluding to the inconvenience of needing to change course descriptors to match changes to assessment, when there is no guarantee that an experiment in translating an in class debate to an online one will have the desired effect.

Direct translation from synchronous activities used internally to asynchronous activities appropriate for distance classes was not seen as realistic or easily done, although this did not prevent teachers from trying to bring their distance classes closer to their face to face teaching approach. Some activities were "easy to do in class but to try
and make it happen online, you can't just duplicate it” (Robin, T, 2015). Several teachers created weekly videos for online students to replace lectures (e.g. Blackbird, Robin, Kea), and provided additional resources online compared to what was provided for the face to face students.

There was a tendency toward using lecture capture or similar video capture devices to try and provide distance students with similar experiences to face to face cohorts, especially with teachers who couldn’t see how else to given students an equivalent learning experience, as in this example from Kakapo (T, 2015):

> It's hard to know where else to go with that kind of face to face teaching moment. So it really is just thinking about how to deliver lectures online so that students could access them if they wanted to.

In concert with this personal motivation from lecturers, there was also pressure from students to provide videos of lectures online, to provide perceived parity with internal students. Starling (ED, 2015) comments "all the student evaluations we get from distance students say, why have you not got lectures online?". Starling noted that distance students were aware that the internal cohort were receiving weekly lectures, and given current technology that supports video capture, seemed to be of the view that it should be relatively easy for the university to provide this service.

**Increased student expectations**

Some staff also found that having online course pages had created more demanding students with unrealistic expectations of lecturer responsiveness although this applied to both face to face and online cohorts. Robin (T, 2016) described the "ever-rising expectations and sometimes almost demands of students in terms of what they get in their online experience". Similarly, Kea (T, 2016), observed that students had increased expectations of accessibility, searchability and archiving of course related material, partly stemming from the ability to search within the applications they regularly use outside of study.

> That archiving aspect, being able to come back, dip in and dip out when you want to, that's something that these students expect because everything they do, apart from Snapchat that vanishes in 30 seconds, everything else you have the ability to archive and you can go back. So their ethos now is, I should be able to find it somewhere... they just expect all these kind of things to be accessible to them at their whim, you know, and why not?
Surprisingly, the increased student expectations of distance students were still insufficient to overtake the perceived voice of the internal students when it came to course design and delivery. Kakapo (T, 2014) described how the pressure to deliver good teaching in the face to face environment was more immediate and could lead to an out of sight out of mind mentality when it came to online teaching. They explained "if you've been teaching a course for a number of years online and it hasn't changed very much then you can push it out push it further away and kind of just hope that it rolls over". By comparison, "when you've got the face to face students you have to front up to them; every week they have to see that you are engaged". Kakapo (T, 2014) felt this was the case even if the lecture was reusing previous material in much the same way that an online course would do: 

*I mean you can have a lecture that you presented year after year after year and not spend a lot of time preparing for it but you do do have a kind of face to face credibility thing going on which you don't necessarily have in a distance environment*

Kakapo is describing a pressure commonly noted in the literature where face to face teaching takes precedence by default over distance teaching because of the comparative immediacy and need to physically appear for face to face students in a way that is not required for distance students. Kea (T, 2014) echoed these sentiments when they noted that with normal practice "you design the on campus stuff first and then the other stuff, so the online is an adjunct". This was likely to occur regardless of the comparative number of students in each domain, as Kea (T, 2015) went on to observe: 

*I think sometimes distance is almost like, especially on an on-campus environment, it's almost a secondary afterthought where, in fact we have more students at distance than we do on campus but the on campus ones can knock on your office door and they're there, you know*

Interestingly, Kea (T, 2014) had recently realised that the focus on face to face courses over online courses was actually out of alignment with the student numbers in each mode: 

*Up until this point, all my efforts have been generating the on campus course and I think that's partly because you stand up in front of these people, so there's an immediacy to it...now I've just seen what the numbers are, I've suddenly realised I should be putting at least as much effort into the online component. (Kea, T, 2014)*
Juggling between the two cohorts of students and their needs was a common thread in the participant interviews for all three years.

Rules

The rules that affected teachers and educational designers at Massey were for the most part externally driven. The issues that staff talked about most were meeting research requirements (driven by the PBRF process), meeting internal programme development requirements (driven by NZQA and Massey policies), and working toward TEC mandated student completion rates. Participants identified that there were some rules around course design, however these rules did not seem to impact on teaching practice for the participants.

Policies and regulation

There was some change in the regulatory landscape for staff at Massey University during the research period. The majority of policies and regulations remained consistent, including the expectation of a 2-day response period to student queries, a 3-week turnaround time for marking assignments, and the minimum requirements for online course pages. However, there were significant changes to other policies and regulations that had a noticeable impact on staff practice, such as changes to quality assurance processes for course and programme management, and the emergence of guidance for staff around expected student completion and pass rates.

Course design

There were relatively few rules affecting academic or educational design staff in their everyday activities. Starling (ED, 2015) felt relatively unrestricted in his role, "I've been given a lot of freedom actually to do pretty much what I want which is good". From Starling's (ED, 2015) perspective the rules around developing or updating courses were few, and the main focus was on ensuring the paper continued to meet its objectives. "The main thing is it's just being sensible about what we're developing, that it's got to have impact and it's got to meet the objectives of the paper".

Similarly, Kea (T, 2015) felt relatively unencumbered by rules in his role "what rules or policies do I have to consider? Well, not really any". From Kea's experience there was "No, paperwork. Nothing like that. We just do what we want to do". In
effect, Kea (T, 2015) felt like he had "free rein" to teach, as did Blackbird (T, 2014) "I could teach anything virtually that I wanted in those courses".

**Lack of rules breeds good and bad practice extremes**

Starling (ED, 2015) acknowledged that the lack of rules allowed for creative course design. "It's great in one respect. You know, it breeds creativity in teaching and you get some really outstanding examples of teaching, like really innovative stuff happening which is great ". However, he tempered that by noting that the lack of rules could also lead to some really bad teaching "you also get the opposite end of the spectrum as well. You probably get that everywhere but it seems to me to be more extreme".

Kea, (T, 2014) also saw the lack of rules as potentially being detrimental to good teaching. "There just seems to be some reticence about bringing in things that are going to restrict practice, sometimes to the detriment of actually enabling practice, I think". From Kea's (T, 2014) perspective the challenge lay in having policies that still allowed for creativity,"You do need some structure. But the structure's got to support a kind of creative fluid academic practice."

**Moodle page rules**

A small amount of structure was available in the form of minimum expectations for Moodle course pages that had been set by the University. All pages were expected to have at least "an administration guide, an assessment guide, assignment dropboxes, digital hand in of assignments" (Starling, ED, 2014). The level of content above that depended on whether the course was an internal or distance course, with distance courses containing the full set of teaching materials and content.

There were expectations around when an online course was expected to be available "from a policy perspective, all online environments are supposed to be up two weeks prior to the start of semester" (Starling, ED, 2014), although teachers were free to open courses earlier if they wished. "You can have them open as early as you like but they have to be open two weeks before" stated Kakapo (T, 2015). There was no specific institutional process to ensure courses were opened, although participants did make reference to the likelihood that students would complain if the course was not open, and that it would come to the attention of the university in that way. As Blackbird (T, 2015) explained, "the censure for not doing that, I think really starts to
come from the students because the university students are told that the courses will be open”.

Once the course page was up, there were no regulations or guidelines on when or how often lecturers should add content. While some lecturers chose to have all the content up at the beginning of the course, others might release it week by week, or in some cases “we get people putting it up day by day.” (Starling, ED, 2014). There were also no rules about design or where common course elements (e.g. forums, assessment upload links, course guides) should go. "Anything they want in the course, the paper co-ordinator can do. There are no policies or processes really around that sort of quality assurance”. (Starling, ED, 2014). This allowed for potential inconsistency between courses that was confusing to students and their feedback reflected that, as the following quote from Starling (ED, 2014) shows:

"I did a programme review about three or four months ago of one of our major programmes. I just went through the Stream courses that support those papers and you've got students doing four papers in a semester and they're all completely different designs. The material that you would expect to be in the same place across the whole of the programme to be there, that's where students just get used to finding that core essential information, is all over the place. Just shocking and the feedback from students obviously reflected that sort of scattergun approach.

With changes in management, and a new Academic Vice Chancellor starting, Starling (ED, 2014) was "hopeful that there will be some quality assurance processes put into place", especially since "policy and procedure around that sort of thing is a bit wanting at the moment". The main driver for Starling (ED, 2014) on this issue was reducing confusion for students and making sure that students were able to easily access the information they needed to successfully complete the course.

"They don’t have to be too cookie cutter but getting that sort of basic information in the right places is really important for students, I think, just so that they know where to find it and go and get it when they need it. Like deadlines for assignments and what they need to do for an assignment.

**Variation across schools**

There was variation across schools in terms of how well they followed the rules for online courses, as Starling (ED, 2015) noted, "in our school, they’re pretty good actually but as you know, there are people around the university that are a little bit slap-dash about that". This could be because academics were unaware of the
rules, or because of the lack of consequences if rules were not followed. Blackbird (T, 2015) commented that the majority of information about rules and policies "tend to be circulated by email. So again, it's trawling through the inbox to make sure you haven't missed something".

**Lack of enforcement**

Starling (ED, 2015) observed that although there was some policy around keeping courses the same within a programme, there was no follow through to ensure people were following the policy. "There is policy around it but we're not good at enforcing, we don't like enforcing in a word and that's effectively what it is, it would be enforcing it" (Starling, ED, 2015).

One example of lack of enforcement was the course checklist, which was a self-administered checklist that teachers should have completed prior to their online course being made available to students to ensure that the course contained all the necessary elements. In practice, some teachers did complete it, some completed it later in the semester, and some didn't complete it at all. As Robin (T, 2016) noted "you're not held accountable. There's no, there is no actual compliance procedure", so following the policy was dependant on the amenability of the individual teacher.

**Disregard for rules**

Both academic and educational design staff indicated a likelihood to disregard rules or policies which they felt could impact their effectiveness in their roles. Starling (ED, 2015) was fine with following rules relating to use of student content in course design, but "other than that, I don't care. I'm not letting those things interfere with what I do. I'll do it and I'll do it the best way I see fit." The implication was that the only rules that would get ignored would be the ones that were inconsequential, as Starling (ED, 2015) argued "I'm not doing anything wrong. Not really."

Teaching staff also talked about just not paying attention to rules "I never really take much notice of these things" (Kea, T, 2015), and about ignoring rules that seemed illogical. For example, Kea (T, 2016) disagreed with the examination committee's expectation of a normal curve for final results for a small cohort class. When their argument that "I'm the professional. I know what is expected at this level. I have learning outcomes. I have all those sort of things so I can easily assess them and I can justify every mark" failed to get the desired response, Kea (T, 2016) came to
the conclusion that "you can contest them or ignore them and I'm starting to learn that ignoring is a really good thing to do because everyone's just as busy as you."

**Regulations for course amendments**

Staff at Massey had a reasonable degree of freedom in making changes to their courses. The main rule affecting changes to courses was that they had to be within the scope of the current learning objectives of the paper. If there was a "potential impact on the learning objectives in the paper and the assignments that you're setting and then that's got to go through a QA process to change all that" (Starling, ED, 2014). Aside from that "there are no sort of hurdles to jump" (Starling, ED, 2014). However, this process was enough of a hurdle according to some participants, "That process is intended to form a quality control function but from my perspective on the shop floor, it discourages innovation" commented Robin (T, 2015).

Although regulations applied to changes made to learning objectives or assessment weightings and form, they did not apply to the finer details of course content, formative activities, or (in some cases) assessment topics. "The only restriction I've got is that the course is taught across Albany and Wellington and there's got to be an equivalency in terms of course objectives and the grades" noted Kea (T, 2014). When Blackbird first started, the course she took over had very little detail recorded. She had "the university course prescription but it was so broad you could drive a bus through it" (Blackbird, T, 2014). Course descriptions were kept purposely vague, to allow lecturers freedom to make changes within courses without having to go back through approval processes. Having vague course descriptions allowed lecturers to experiment and innovate with their courses.

*That's an example of an innovation I was able to make, didn't need an authority to do that. But I didn't need it because I got some good advice and set things up appropriately vaguely in the first place (Robin, T, 2015).*

This could lead to differences in courses across the campuses, where each lecturer had the freedom to set course content, readings and activities without consultation with others (although it was strongly encouraged), so in effect a student could have a different course experience, despite being enrolled in the same course, depending on which campus and lecturer they had.
Chapter 5: Massey University

I’ll be responsible for the Manawatu campus version and online version and there will be a version at Albany and it’ll be up to whoever teaches in Albany whether they want to replicate what I’m doing or do their own thing (Kea, T, 2014)

**Need for greater structure**

The answer to this potential issue as Starling (ED, 2015) saw it, was to have more structure around the process for making changes to courses to ensure people worked together and the course remained true to the programme and the original course goals. He suggested greater team collaboration, and having a staged approach to making changes rather than tweaking courses constantly.

I mean it’s not as if you’re saying to staff, you’ve got no input to how these papers are designed. They’re your papers. You design them how you want but once you’ve designed them, teach them like that until the next curriculum review. So make sure they’re designed well is the angle I would take on it, and if things need to be tweaked, it’s not set in stone but you don’t just do it off your own bat without any sort of input from anyone else. You do it as a team and you make sure it stays in line with the rest of the course.

**Cottage industry vs. centralisation of course design**

A topic of discussion among EDs at Massey was the potential value to the University of moving toward a centralised model for course development where there was greater involvement by experts in web design in the online course development process. Starling (ED, 2014) said “we have this conversation between ourselves constantly because some of the processes and procedures which we think would benefit the university would actually benefit academic staff as well”. Starling (ED, 2014) was firmly of the opinion that lecturers should be focused on their role as discipline expert and researcher, and not need to get caught up with design issues.

Their role is being disciplinarian experts and being researchers and doing teaching, as opposed to maintaining an online course and getting involved in aspects of web design. You know graphic design, formatting this, they are all really useful skills but possibly not where the university’s best advised to be spending money on getting academics to do that stuff when you could potentially centralise some of the development behind it and support academics in that way.

From Starling’s perspective, leaving the course design fully in the hands of lecturers, who could then choose to ask for support (or not) from the teaching and learning unit wasn’t the most sensible option from a commercial point of view:
[it is] almost like a cottage industry we’ve got at the moment where it’s all centred around an individual academic and wherever they can pick up support and we’ve not fully embraced that we deliver thousands of papers a year and that there’s a more commercially viable industrial model behind that of centralising some of the development. (Starling, ED, 2014)

Starling (ED, 2014) was also strongly in favour of the University moving to an industrial model as a way of improving consistency and quality of courses, arguing that "you can’t escape it and I think we need to start looking towards moving towards that sort of approach". Starling (ED, 2014) saw advantages in an industrial approach where each participant in the course creation process had a particular role, for example "[the teacher] uses his expertise to go, this is what I want and then these experts over here just go bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bash. Here it is and it’s all formatted". This seemed logical to Starling (ED, 2014), "I just don’t see why [academics] should be wasting time with HTML code". A move to an industrial model seemed like a win-win option for Starling (ED, 2014), given the competitive tertiary education funding environment:

> It goes out in nice neat corporatised [package]. We’re in that sort of environment. It’s good from a marketing perspective. It’s good from a quality assurance perspective. It goes through a certain amount of processes. It’s released out to the students and the students get a good experience and have they have another process where they evaluate it and that gets fed back in and we go all the way back round.

Starling (ED, 2015) acknowledged that his view was probably different to that of most academic staff and put that down to having a wider view of programmes and courses across the university. "It’s probably a different view being support staff working for central services and seeing so much different stuff happening everywhere" (Starling, ED, 2015).

**Burdensome bureaucracy**

Some participants felt that quality assurance processes were unnecessarily burdensome, for example Kakapo (T, 2015) said "there are good reasons for all of those processes but they are just too cumbersome". Kakapo (T, 2015) referred to "the nightmare of QAP", going on to explain further "I mean in some ways it's just such a complete nonsense that every time you want to initiate a new programme, it has to go through something like, I don't know, eight different committees. The most frustrating thing for Kakapo (T, 2015) was that "delays are possible at every stage".
noting that "eventually it either gets approved or not approved and that can take 18 months, two years". In particular they noted the potential for loss of investment because of the amount of design and preparation that needed to be done in order to satisfy the paperwork, which would then become a lost investment if the course or programme didn't get approved.

However, a year later, Kakapo (T, 2016) was enthused about potential changes to processes because “we're about to start to have some really exciting conversations about how to reduce the regulatory burden around course amendments”. Kakapo (T, 2016) was pleased to report “we've got fabulous staff in our college in the teaching and learning and regulation area who are really working actively to support that move”.

During this process, Kakapo (T, 2016) had become aware that their department “has actually got a much higher burden of course regulation” than most other departments in the University. Robin (T, 2016) suggested that “there is a certain work generating mechanism at the level of the college bureaucracy that has ideas and creates work for other people to do and then feedback up to them to re-process and send down again”, implying that the bureaucratic process existed almost just to serve itself.

The perception that the bureaucracy went far beyond what was necessary to ensure quality and consistency resulted in staff in the department deliberately ignoring what they saw as unnecessary paperwork “I just make changes and don’t notify people and wait for somebody to tell me off” (Kakapo, T, 2016). Kakapo (T, 2016) noted that taking this approach was "ridiculous, but it's pragmatic", because of the already limited constraints on lecturer time.

Retentions and completions

Between 2014 and 2016 the issue of student completions and pass rates began to emerge as an influence on teaching practice. In 2014, the University kept data on low performing courses, but the process for responding to courses with low retention rates or pass rates was not explicit. "Directors of learning and teaching in colleges get detailed analytics about all the papers that are run and things like retention rates and I believe the university has a red list which is papers with completely unacceptable statistics" Starling (ED, 2014) explained. In cases of particularly poor performers, Starling (ED, 2014) noted "people like myself and my colleagues are tasked to go and work with certain programmes but how explicit any of that is as a process at the moment is, well it’s not really". Although teachers were “mindful of the need to try and retain students” (Blackbird, T, 2014), teaching staff interviewed didn't have a clear idea
of what the institutional response would be for a course with low completions. For example, when asked what he thought the repercussions of poor completions would be, Robin (T, 2015) guessed "I suppose you get scowled at as a start, disapproved of. I don't know. Would the paper come under review? Probably."

Part of the lack of clarity may have been that in 2014 the University had not yet starting applying specific targets for retentions and completions, although Starling (ED, 2014) could see it was likely to happen soon "I think it’s getting to a point where that will be looked at for sure and the quality assurance process will be wrapped around." Between 2015 and 2016 teaching staff became aware of the need to pay closer attention to pass rates and completions "because TEC has changed the funding arrangements, it's now dependent or it is alleged to be dependent on enrolment to pass ratio" (Robin, T, 2016), therefore focusing on student engagement became more important.

Now the fact that the government will not give funding for a paper unless you receive a completion rate of over 60 percent, it does make you mindful of that and so I think in the university overall there is a lot more effort going on to contact students who don’t engage in the first couple of weeks, to check that they are actually still enrolled in the paper and do they need any help and assistance in any way. (Blackbird, T, 2016)

There was a disconnect between the withdrawal dates that students had the option to take, and the dates from when students were counted as being enrolled for TEC purposes. In some cases teachers encouraged students who were clearly struggling or not engaged to withdraw by the internal withdrawal date, not realising that it would have no effect on the TEC reporting data, as Robin (T, 2016) describes here:

There's a second date to withdraw by without academic penalty and I spent time getting people to withdraw by that date. What I didn’t realise was it was completely fucking pointless because by the time they’ve got to that point, they’re on my stats anyway so it was a complete waste of time. But I didn’t know and I hadn’t been told. (Robin, T, 2016)
Chapter 5: Massey University

Workload

High workload

All staff interviewed talked about high workload pressures, and there were frequent references to high teaching loads. Workload was calculated at a departmental level, so there could be quite different workloads or teaching expectations for academics depending on which school they were in (Kakapo, T, 2014). Some schools had a workload model, others didn’t, and the workload models varied across schools, but usually took into account teaching, research, supervision of research students, and administrative roles such as university committees or programme leadership (Blackbird, T, 2014).

Some of the schools have already had a workload model that they’ve been working with for a while, some of them have never had a workload model, some of them have got a workload model that everyone is so unhappy with they want to throw it out but we want a consistent model now across the college so that’s going to throw up a whole lot of really anomalous things that are going on (Kakapo, T, 2014)

There were examples given of inequities in workload. At one end of the spectrum were people who had workloads that were considered far too low, at the other end workloads that were considered far too high. For example Blackbird (T, 2014) shared her experience of being above what the workload model would suggest was appropriate, noting that "for many years I’ve been well over it". The inequalities were also noticeable across different campuses.

You have people who are not teaching at all, but who aren’t full time researchers, they just quietly over time dropped the courses that they used to teach and nobody has picked up the fact that they are now no longer really teaching at all and then you’ve got people who are teaching 5 papers in a semester which is madness. (Kakapo, T, 2014)

Juggling to fit everything in

Participants wrestled with how to fit everything in, and as a result felt like nothing was being done well. "At the moment, I’m just spread too thinly to be doing anything very well. It doesn’t feel very good. You never feel like you’ve actually made a tremendous difference to what you’re focusing on at the moment" confessed Kakapo (T, 2016). Likewise, Robin (T, 2014) was very conscious of the limitations of what could be achieved under current workload conditions: "I've got three courses running
and I've got research to do and there's just a limit to how much you can do at any one moment”.

Participants talked about juggling their responsibilities. "My priority is just to juggle them on a day to day basis so that nothing actually falls too catastrophically to the floor” commented Kakapo (T, 2014). Having multiple projects on the go meant that "there's no blocks of time to do concentrated work" (Kakapo, T, 2015). As a result, Kakapo (T, 2015) noted "I do sometimes go home and say, oh you know, I'd really like it if I was just doing some research or I'd really like it if I was just focusing on teaching." Similarly, Blackbird (T, 2016) shared that "I often still feel like I'm chasing my tail", while Robin (T, 2016) said with some frustration, "there's only so much of me to go around ... teacher, administrator, co-ordinator, committee member, researcher. I'm also Dad, and son and husband.”

Prioritising was a challenge at times, particularly when everything was billed as important. Teachers talked about trying to push back and not take on tasks that were not directly related to teaching or research and were "just compliance" (Robin, T, 2016).

The email comes through. You've got to do this. And you look at it and you read it and think, actually, okay, you're telling me I've got to do this but have I actually got to do it? If I wait long enough, does it just go away? ... It's overload. (Robin, T, 2016)

**Research and service commitments take up teaching time**

All of the participants talked about the plethora of other commitments that took up time and impacted on their teaching. Many of these commitments were significant contributions to academic administration, or the research environment, such as being senior leaders in multidisciplinary or national research groups, or working in departmental administration or managerial committees. Robin (T, 2015) noted "I've got these other programme level responsibilities that I wouldn't have chosen personally, however you've got to step up and do your bit. It's only reasonable."

**Teaching is time consuming**

There was a commonly held view that “if you do it [online teaching] properly, it consumes time” (Robin, T, 2014). Kakapo (T, 2014) agreed:
Chapter 5: Massey University

I think that is one of the real issues in terms of increasing the quality of teaching in an increasingly online environment is actually people having time to teach because you don’t do good teaching if you are really strapped for time because it is an extremely time-consuming activity.

Kakapo (T, 2014) described a situation in which she had a cohort of students who wanted to be assessed differently for a task. She worked with them to develop new assessment criteria and rework the assessment task. Her responsive teaching approach had large benefits for the students, but she noted that "it was a complete pain in the neck to mark because it was three times as much work". Blackbird (T, 2014) talked about wanting to be more engaged with and responsive to student needs, for example contacting students individually, as she noted that had helped with completion rates in the past. However her current workload wouldn't allow that level of interaction, "I have not got the time to individually ring each student" (Blackbird, T, 2014). Robin (T, 2015) found that they had to put limits on the amount of time they spent teaching, in order to fit other things in:

I just love this paper and I love the way the stream site works and the interaction and, it’s not difficult for me to talk about [the specialist topic], for that matter. I mean I enjoy it. But I've got to keep it in a box. I’ve got to because there’s only so much of it to go around and I’ve got research to write and other shit to do. (Robin, T, 2015)

Personal life and work balance

Teachers were conscious of needing to manage a balance between work and personal life. "I think one of the biggest challenges continues to be managing your home life and your family" (Blackbird, T, 2016) observed. There were examples of teachers working long hours in an attempt to fit everything in, while still trying to maintain some level of balance between work and home life.

I’m trying really hard not to take work home. I was getting to work at seven o’clock in the morning. I tend to get in at 7.30 now so there’s a bit of creep at that end... I prefer not to work more than 12 hours a day. Neither my partner nor I work on Saturdays. We do sometimes work on Sunday afternoons. (Kakapo, T, 2015)

I tend to answer a lot of my emails at home at night because I can do that in front of TV and it means first thing in the morning I’m not wasting good thinking time, I’d rather spend that on writing or getting something organised for teaching rather than answering emails. (Blackbird, T, 2015)
Even with working long hours regularly, some participants found they needed more time to complete research, and it was not uncommon to hear academics talk about working whilst on leave. "I still spend a lot of my time working on the days that I’m not supposed to be working because that’s when I do my research" (Blackbird, T, 2016).

Robin (T, 2015) was quite clear that he would not work in the evenings or weekends, because time outside work and with family was important. "I don’t do evenings. Once I’ve knocked off, once I go, that’s it, I’m done. I don’t do weekends either." However, he was also clear that not working overtime was probably a direct contributor to not being promoted "that’s part of the reason I’m not associate professor yet" (Robin, T, 2015). "Do I want to be associate professor so much that I’m going to work all day Sunday? (Laughs) No. I don’t, I apparently don’t".

**New workload review processes**

With changes at management level came changes to internal processes, including a “more transparent” performance review process (Kakapo, T, 2015) that highlighted workload inequality and responded to it with re-allocation of resourcing. As a result, Kakapo (T, 2015) was now able to "put a case up to employ someone to contribute to the work...so there’s less of an expectation that I do all of this stuff myself which is fantastic." These changes had come about in the space between the 2014 and 2015 interviews "directly as a result of the workload planning documents" (Kakapo, T, 2015), showing a clear link between institutional regulation, and teaching practice.

**Research**

At the time of the 2015 interviews, PBRF preparation was a key focus for Academic staff, despite the fact that they were still three years away from end of the assessment cycle for PBRF research outputs. "The university's going through another PBRF round so we’re all having to do portfolios at the moment and make sure that all our outputs are up to date" commented Blackbird (T, 2015). During the research period the staff interviewed were all engaged in variety of research projects including journal articles, books, book chapters, collaborative projects, and community projects.

**PBRF always in the background**

For many teaching staff at Massey, PBRF was "always in the background" (Kea, T, 2015; Kakapo. T, 2015; Blackbird, T, 2015). For some, this meant constantly thinking about how the activities they did in the context of work might fit into the
structure of the PBRF system. Kea (T, 2015), laughingly described a situation where a colleague held a research seminar, and where following the talk "then you've got to send him an email saying how much you enjoyed it so he can put that down as evidence of, what is it, peer esteem and support on the PBRF". Having a continual awareness of the need to create a good PBRF portfolio was a source of pressure for staff. Blackbird (T, 2016), noted "that's always a constant tension for me, getting the research done as well as the teaching, particularly now when I've got a new course, new material, having to write new lectures from scratch".

**PBRF portfolio pressure**

Research pressures were particularly noticeable during the 2015 interviews as staff were required to produce mid-PBRF round portfolios. "It's hard given the pressures of PBRF, not to be conscientious around feeling the need to produce research outputs" observed Blackbird (T, 2015). This comment was interesting given the Blackbird already had several PBRF outputs completed, and a number of current projects underway. There was a sense that what they had might not be enough to gain the desired PBRF score, and with the already existing time pressures of the job, having to produce a mid-PBRF round portfolio was diverting resources that could impact their final score:

*I just object to all the time taken to do draft ones halfway through a time period when I think, actually if you just let me work, I could produce another article possibly in the time that it takes to pull all this together. (Blackbird, T, 2015)*

The pressure meant that staff were working in their own time to complete portfolios. "I'm supposed to be on annual leave, I was supposed to be on holiday and what am I actually doing while I'm on annual leave? I'm doing the portfolio" shared Robin (T, 2015).

**Playing the PBRF game**

Seeing the predictable nature of the funding model, some talked about playing the PBRF game and holding back some completed works in order to publish them once the next round had started in order to reduce publication pressure in future. "I've got enough with the PBRF coming out. I've got more than enough for a B rating. So you start holding stuff back" shared Kea (T, 2016). Working strategically in this
way to meet PBRF requirements has implications for the dissemination of research and the accumulation of knowledge in a field, however as Kea (T, 2016) noted:

*What’s the point in doing it now? I want to time it so I get it just finished as the PBRF round starts, because if you had a book publication in 2018 you’d be set up. You’d get your B rating. You wouldn’t have to do anything for the next four years if you didn’t want to.*

However, Kea (T, 2016) was quick to point out that "it's not that you don't want to. It's just that it's pragmatic. If you've got something right at the beginning, you've got contingency, you know if things don't fall into place later on, you're still covered". From their perspective, it was very clear that "these sort of regimes start disciplining your practice" (Kea, T, 2016), and that their approach to doing and publishing research would be different without the timeframe set by the PBRF process.

**Criticism of PBRF**

The timeframes set as part of the PBRF process were not the only critique that interviewees had of the funding process. Kakapo (T, 2015) felt particularly frustrated by the measures used within PBRF that encouraged researchers to publish internationally rather than locally where the information could do more good. From Kakapo's (T, 2015) perspective, the funding model was actually undermining the development of quality local research:

*[For PBRF] the goal is to publish in high value international journals which means that all of the fantastic research that New Zealand researchers do about New Zealand and publish in things like Ko Tui or the New Zealand Geographer or whatever, it just doesn’t cut it in terms of PBRF rankings.*

Another issue with PBRF ratings mentioned by Blackbird was that the process did not take into account teaching workload, so no matter how high your teaching workload was, the expectations for the number of research outputs were the same. Blackbird (T, 2015) found that quite demoralising:

*To have a senior person say that to you, that’s quite hard, when you work extremely hard and when you are producing stuff, to think that [teaching] counts for nothing in terms of the accounting of the value of your work.*
Chapter 5: Massey University

**Systems rewarding publication not teaching**

Participants recognised a conflict between what their role theoretically involved (teaching, research, contribution to the university), and what was rewarded in terms of promotions and career progression, which was primarily research outputs. "If you can get publications and research, that’s where you’re going to get rewarded in terms of promotions or, or whatever. That’s what the institution clearly signals for you to do" stated Kea (T, 2015). Or, as Kakapo (T, 2015) put it "you will never progress to the holy grail of the university if you don't publish".

They note that contributing to the wider organisational community or focusing on teaching rather than research does not help with career progression, and consequently academics needed to make a choice at some stage during their careers about what they really wanted to focus on. "for most academics the aspiration is to become a professor. If you do this kind of work [contribution to community], you never will and so you have to actually make a decision" (Kakapo, T, 2015). This expectation was clear to the interviewees, as Robin noted "I'm stuck here as a senior, I'm not an associate professor yet [it is] nobody's fault but my own because I do prioritise the teaching" (Robin, T, 2016).

However, Kakapo (T, 2015) was of the opinion that universities really needed to address this disjuncture between the responsibilities of the academic role, and the rewards. "I think universities have to look and think really hard about that". Blackbird (T, 2015) echoed this when identifying the difference between what they thought was valuable about the work they did, and what the institution and funding model valued:

> I have to think, well my value is not measured by PBRF even though it does seem like it. The value comes from the pleasure that I get from teaching students and from doing the research that I do and actually producing some outputs that end up in chapters or journal articles. (Blackbird, T, 2015)

**Balancing teaching and research time**

All participants commented that it was hard to find time to do both research and teaching. "What I don’t prioritise is academic writing and for an academic, that’s not actually a particularly good decision" (Kakapo, T, 2015). Some commented that when the pressure hit and there was no time to do both that 'research comes last' (Robin, T 2016; Blackbird, T, 2015), while teaching often seemed to take priority:
Chapter 5: Massey University

At the moment what's suffering is writing. I've got a couple of things that are pretty close to finished but I can't seem to find the time to finish them. But that's just the typical thing you find when your teaching load's quite heavy. (Kea, T, 2015).

Kea (T, 2015) was of the opinion that a good way to balance the research and teaching aspects of the role would be to have the summer reserved for research activity, "you'll have a happier faculty because they've got time off to do the other part of what we all love doing, which is research and writing. We're not just teachers. We create knowledge.". Similarly, Kakapo (T, 2015) argued that Academic life needs large blocks of time to achieve meaningful work "you talk to any academics and they'll say, I just need time to concentrate in order to write". Keeping the balance was important from Kea’s perspective:

I like doing both. If I had full research, I'd be bored out of my brain because I'm too lazy. And if I had full teaching, it would just drive me nuts because I wasn't doing any research, you know. I've got to have a balance. (Kea, T, 2015)

However they noted that the balance isn’t easy to achieve on a daily or weekly basis, because "even if you have the time, you can’t change gear. It's a different mind-set and ways of working" (Kea, T, 2015).

Complexity of relationships with teaching and research

The way that academic staff felt about time spent on research compared to time spent on teaching was complex and changeable. For example, in the first interview, Robin (T, 2014) saw teaching as inherently more rewarding than research "my research, I've got some good things in some good places but there are times when I rather have to make myself write whereas I think teaching puts energy in as well as taking it out". By the time of the second interview a year later, Robin was preferring research over teaching:

You have those golden moments with the teaching, of course you do. I love that, when we were doing that stuff in class. I mean it's just great but you know, the research part of the job, this is just so interesting and I'm getting paid to read this stuff and write it down... it's the job at its absolute best. (Robin, T, 2015)

In the final interview a year later, Robin spoke again of prioritising teaching "I have prioritised the teaching for a range of reasons, not least of all, you know my own ambition [to gain a teaching award] ... It tends to be the research that cops it in my
case” (Robin, T, 2016). Robin’s vacillation suggests that it is not as simple as an academic preferring one activity or the other, engagement with these core parts of an academic’s role can vary within a person over a period of weeks or months.

**Professional development**

Institutional provisions for teacher professional development had a significant impact on how teachers designed courses, and the approach they took to their teaching practice. The participants in this research had received little in the way of formal training from the institution, but had engaged in a wide variety of informal and self-led professional development activities. Because professional development at Massey was strongly influenced both by Rules and Community, this section has been placed between the two components.

**Previous teaching experience**

The Massey participants had varying levels of training or professional development in how to teach. Three of the participants had previous teaching experience in other domains, such as in K-12 education, or ESOL teaching “I picked up a bunch of sort of generic teaching skills there” (Robin, T, 2014). They drew on this knowledge and experience when teaching tertiary students “I still use a lot of that now and it’s served me really well” (Robin, T, 2014), although as Kakapo noted there was still a lot to learn due to the difference in cohorts being taught “there’s been all kinds of things that I’ve had to change what I do in terms of my own teaching practice both with the online environment and the difference in teaching adults” (Kakapo, T, 2014).

**Lack of induction teacher training**

A key reason why these participants still drew on their previous experience when teaching in the tertiary environment was the lack of formal training provided on how to teach at tertiary level.

_No one ever really trained me as a teacher, as a lecturer, you know. I mean you get the odd thing offered here and there but you don’t go through a process, you just get a PhD or something and then you go and do the other aspect of the job._ (Robin, T, 2014)

This lack of specialist training in teaching was commented on by all participants, although it was recognised that this was a sector wide issue, rather than an institutional issue, with Kakapo (T, 2014) observing, "so many people in the tertiary sector have no teacher training whatsoever".
Kakapo (T, 2014) was of the opinion that "it's much easier to come in to the tertiary environment as a trained teacher". Certainly, participants without prior teaching experience reported that "in the beginning it was an awfully steep learning curve" (Blackbird, T, 2014) because "there wasn’t a lot of guidance" on how to teach. Blackbird, Robin and Kea had similar experiences despite the fact that they all started at different times in the previous 20 years. Blackbird commented that "training and development was very underdeveloped when I first arrived at the university, you were expected to be able to teach and I could soon see that it was something you had to work at" (Blackbird, T, 2014).

**Current Professional Development approach**

The University's approach to training staff in how to teach has changed in the 10-20 years since the majority of the participants began teaching, as Blackbird (T, 2014) observes "there are a lot more professional development opportunities than when I started". These training opportunities ranged from initial workshops on how to give lectures and tutorials, to regularly occurring internal seminars, and the opportunity to seek 'just in time' support from the Teaching and Learning consultant section. New staff were also expected to complete in-house teaching and learning modules during their first 1-2 years of teaching.

**Self-selecting bias**

Starling (ED, 2016) noted that because professional development was not a mandated requirement there tended to be a bias towards self-selection. In other words, those who were self-motivated to improve their practice were those more likely to engage in PD activities "you get the same people going to these things across the university, so the people who are really interested in their teaching, not necessarily the people who need to go to these things" (Starling, ED, 2016). There were however occasional examples where senior management in a faculty section had identified problems with a programme, often related to student retention or pass rates, and staff members had then been required to make changes to their course design or teaching practice:
I see the whole spectrum and I could tell you now that there are programmes where papers and the folks teaching into those papers are being forced to do something about their teaching and redeveloping papers and the wider programme as well, putting things in place to support students. (Starling, ED, 2014)

For the most part, however, professional development was driven by individual staff who were keen to improve their teaching practice. Among participants, individual drivers varied from the general desire to be a better teacher (Blackbird, Robin), to more specific goals, for example "one of the things I would really like to be able to do is to really focus on how to do distance teaching better" (Kakapo, T, 2015). Wanting to increase their skill level in the use of technological tools was common, even among staff who were experienced teachers:

I have to now get real advice on the online component especially because there's a lot of technological things that you can do that can assist you in contacting and maintaining the participation of the online student that I'm not really aware of. (Kea, T, 2014)

Learning from other teachers

A common form of PD mentioned by staff at Massey was informal learning and sharing of practice through the kinds of conversations that happen spontaneously in the workplace "just word goes around. Like [another teacher] did some quite innovative stuff with his distance and on campus teaching as well and you just get to hear about it" (Kea, T, 2015). Colleagues were generally happy to share what they had done, as Kea explained "you just wander up and he's really happy to talk to you about it and show you all through it". This collegial attitude toward sharing effective teaching practices seemed to be widespread, and responded to the desire expressed by most participants for 'just-in-time' professional development:

You'll be talking with someone about how that works well, like Prezi, [a colleague] over the other corridor, I mentioned it and he said oh yeah I'm using that and so I said well can you show me what you do and how it works so I had 15 minutes with him and then I went off and tried it again myself and thought yeah this will be great I can do this. (Blackbird, T, 2014)
Reflection and self-directed learning

Teachers also mentioned self-directed learning on the job as a key component of their professional development "most of my learning has just been through practice" (Kea, T, 2014). Because of the lack of training when starting at the institution "I entirely picked things up as I went" (Kakapo, T, 2014), teachers spoke of designing courses based on "my own expectations around what constitutes good online teaching from my own experience over the years" (Blackbird, T, 2015). Reflection was a practice regularly engaged in by participants. As Robin (T, 2015) comments "you think how could I have done that a bit better".

There was a sense of professional development as a perpetual activity when participants talked about their teaching. For example, Robin (T, 2015) said "the fine detail of how I run these papers is of course evolving". Teachers also used reflection and review along with external feedback "to continually try and build things" (Blackbird, T, 2014) and to improve their teaching. Some of the push for continual improvement came from a sense of deficit, as we see here in Blackbird’s (T, 2014) comment "when I got here I used to spend hours and hours on my teaching because I’m a bit of a perfectionist but I was conscious when I started I was a terrible teacher".

Teaching and learning circles

Teaching and Learning circles were an activity instigated by high-performing lecturers at Massey, and the purpose of the group was to provide informal mentoring through a group rather than through a formalised one-to-one structure.

It was a group of teaching award winners who got together and thought well what can we do for other people in the university and one of the things that we really lacked ourselves was mentoring...we decided rather than go for mentoring arrangements we’d actually have mentoring circles because we could really see the value of those in terms of learning from each other and most of us adhered to that sort of two way model of teaching anyway so it was something we felt quite comfortable with. (Blackbird, T, 2014)

The groups were advertised and staff interested in going made contact with the organisers. The circles were set up as mixed groups. Within each group they aimed to include people from different perspectives, levels of experience and roles, including teaching consultants or people who work in student learning to bring the student perspective (Blackbird, T, 2014). The expectation was that if you joined a group you would attend all (or close to all) of the meetings in a year, which were held approximately monthly, excluding the Christmas / summer break.
Chapter 5: Massey University

The groups provided opportunities for members to raise topics of interest or get help with particular teaching challenges "we discuss everything from assessment to flipped classrooms, what can I do on stream to encourage students to participate, or I'm having issues with X can you help me or I'd like to do this how might I do it" (Blackbird, T, 2014). All the participants were aware of the mentoring circles, and those that had been involved in them had positive experiences, for example Starling (ED, 2016) said "They're quite good. I went to those for a couple of years and they were pretty interesting", while Blackbird (T, 2014) enthused "they're just really enjoyable and you learn heaps because it doesn't matter what discipline you are in often there are the same challenges in terms of meeting the needs of students".

An important element of the mentoring circles was their voluntary nature. Blackbird (T, 2014) explained that "we've fought to keep it independent of things like appraisal processes because you want members who are in there to be there because they want to be there not because they are forced to be there", pointing out "that would really change the nature of the conversation".

**Vicarious learning**

Outside of the semi-formal setting of teaching and learning circles, staff also mentioned learning vicariously from other colleagues' success and mistakes "observing what I think are the good teaching practices and the bad teaching practices of others that I've experienced" (Kea, T, 2014), and sharing practices "you learn stuff from your colleagues, what they're doing...there's really good sharing of different practices that people do" (Kea, T, 2015). Co-teaching with other staff on a course also provided opportunities for learning and development, as Blackbird (T, 2016) noted "I'm teaching with two stellar teachers, so I can see already that I can learn lots off them."

**Learning from students**

Participants also talked about learning from interacting with their students. "If the ideas didn't resonate or have value to them in their practice or in their everyday lives, they just told you straight out - this is a complete waste of our time. So that completely changed my teaching practice" shared Kea (T, 2014). Making changes based on student feedback was common "I do quite a lot of getting the students to write about what works for them and what doesn't work, what they value, what they don't value" said Kakapo (T, 2015). Similarly, "a lot of change in my practice has been
based out of what I am seeing in terms of their postings or in terms of their emails to me” Blackbird (T, 2014) claimed.

Teachers also described learning from their own experiences as a student. Here, Blackbird (T, 2014) describes their experience of completing an online course and how it changed the way they taught:

> It was really good because you could see then what frustrates students about these environments, you could tell exactly how do I do this, this is all new to me, I don’t understand where to get this where do I look for this and having that sort of understanding helps you with things like setting up the navigation through your course. (Blackbird, T, 2014)

**Learning from Teaching & Learning consultants**

The teaching and learning consultant section held multiple responsibilities, but one of those responsibilities was to provide just-in-time or on request responses to teaching staff who wanted educational design help with their courses. Interactions with teaching and learning consultants were mentioned by all but one faculty staff member, and in each case faculty found the support offered to be very helpful to their teaching practice. Robin (T,2015) credited them as being "my channel of ideas really", while Blackbird (T, 2015) attributed a significant portion of their professional development to "discussions I’ve had with teaching and learning consultants". Staff went to teaching and learning consultants when they had ideas for things they wanted to do, but weren’t sure how to implement them, or when they had heard about new technologies and wanted to know more about how to use them.

> A lot of it I will just work one to one with a teaching consultant because I will say well I’d like to do this how will I do it or what are the possibilities of this new technology they are offering us what can I do with that. (Blackbird, T, 2014)

In some cases, Heads of School brought teaching and learning staff in to provide professional development sessions, but this was very much dependent on the individual manager making the request. There did not appear to be any drive from senior management levels to encourage greater use of the consultants. Starling (ED, 2016) seemed to find the 'don’t-call-us-we’ll-call-you' approach a little frustrating as it limited their reach and ability to influence teaching practice across the wider university.
Chapter 5: Massey University

We used to get out and try and share as much stuff as we could and heads of school would bring us in and we’d then draw things from other, other schools and departments and share them as examples. But there’s a limit to what you can do. Obviously, you’re limited by who you know and who knows you. (Starling, ED, 2016)

The limited number of teaching consultants compared to teaching staff prohibited the unit from providing proactive support to teachers (Starling, ED, 2015). Funding limitations in the teaching consultant budget also restricted the development of PD resources for ongoing use. "It would be really useful, I know I've spoken about it for years but nobody wanted to let me do it ... you would need at least year, probably a couple of years to do it properly" noted Starling (ED, 2016). Because of these restrictions, the teaching and learning consultants primarily provided professional development in an ad hoc, on request manner.

Community

Teaching participants frequently referred to colleagues in their disciplines and departments when discussing their courses and teaching practice. Peer communities had a large influence on teacher’s professional development, as mentioned above. Engagement with a peer community also had an impact on course and programme design, and research. Of note, while the teaching participants spoke at length about community influencing their practice, community was not mentioned by the educational designer in this sample.

Collaborative and collegial

Participants described a collaborative, collegial and supportive atmosphere between teaching colleagues at Massey University, although there were still a few "big egos" (Kea, T, 2014; Kakapo, T, 2014) who preferred to specialise in their own subfield rather than share in the teaching of undergraduate courses. In general, however, among the colleagues that the participants interacted with, there seemed to be a culture of "everyone pitches in and seems to be prepared to do anything" (Kea, T, 2014).

The collaboration extended from helping colleagues with grant applications, to working together on research, and providing each other with advice on teaching. Contrary to other organisations that Kea (T, 2015) had worked in, he found that the collaborative ethos was "not something that’s an exception that you manage to generate with one person because you get on with them", rather, their experience was
that it was "across the board" and applied to research as well as teaching. Part of the reason for the strong collegial approach might have been due to the lack of prestige of the institution, as Kea (T, 2016) observed “we're small, and we're social scientists at a predominantly agricultural university, no one's got a big ego or are that pretentious so therefore it's a really good space to collaborate in”.

Collegial course design

The collegial atmosphere in Blackbird’s team had a positive influence on the coherence of the courses within the programme, as the team would discuss what was taught in each course and how it contributed to overall programme goals. Blackbird (T, 2014) was surprised at the suggestion that anyone would approach course development differently "because we operate on a model of collegiality there is no way that I would teach whatever I like on my courses within [my discipline] so it is discussed what we teach".

At times this could mean that teachers were not teaching courses that specifically related to their own research interests. "You effectively what taught what needed to be taught in that space as agreed by the rest of the staff members around you which may or may not then correlate with your research interests", noted Blackbird (T, 2014). Kea (T, 2014) noticed a similar level of flexibility within the team he worked with "they're just happy to pitch in and teach anything", and was equally happy to teach whatever was needed to fit into the programme "just chuck anything at me. I'm going to have to learn it anyway".

Inter-campus rivalry

There was on occasion some tension between staff in the same discipline area who taught at different campuses. For example, Kea (T, 2015) described how teachers at the Albany campus in his discipline refused to teach the distance version of a course, and as a result "the Massey people feel a little bit put upon because they're doing both distance and on-campus teaching" (Kea, T, 2015). It seemed that there were different cultures at the different campuses even within the same discipline.

Alternative communities

Not all participants were part of a strong internal peer community. Some were busy with research and administration responsibilities which were taking priority (Kakapo, T, 2016), and reported more interaction with external peers at conferences.
than with internal colleagues. In addition, it is worth noting that the meaning of community was not the same for all teaching staff. While some were strongly oriented towards (and influenced by) a community of peers (e.g. Blackbird, Kea), there were others who were more influenced by their practitioner community, which included their students (Kakapo), and some who were strongly connected with and influenced by the teaching and learning consultants (Robin, Blackbird).

Of the participants, only one presented a view that included students in their peer community. Kakapo (T, 2014) talked about developing their postgraduate students toward becoming a community of scholars and encouraging them to interact with each other and teaching staff. "I encourage them to think about themselves as peers and colleagues" (Kakapo, T, 2015). This approach possibly stemmed from Kakapo's teaching beliefs that student and teacher each bring experience and knowledge to the interaction and can learn from each other.

Division of Labour

At Massey University the responsibility for creating and delivering online courses rested with the teaching staff, and they held the largest part of the division of labour. Others involved in the course design process were the educational designers (if invited by faculty staff to be part of the development of a course or programme) and copyright staff, who would access completed courses to check that resources provided were meeting copyright requirements.

Centrality of the teacher

In contrast to the Open Polytechnic, where the educational designer was the central figure in the course development process, at Massey the teachers were the central figures who worked with the other roles around campus to ensure the course was produced effectively. As Kea (T, 2015) noted, "there's good practice guides out there and you learn stuff from your colleagues, what they're doing, but pretty much it's up to you". This example from Blackbird (T, 2014) shows how the responsibility rested with her (not the educational designers) to resolve a technical problem affecting her course:

_That was something that happened this year, students are saying oh it's messy and we can't get the material from the online links which of course they can't so I rang up the copyright person at the university and said which of these can we give the students and then I rang up the student production people and said can you do this for me so I got it done._
As the central figure responsible for the course, the teachers designed their own course pages, which Starling (2015) argued was not an efficient or effective way to design a course because "you're effectively asking people who have got no expertise in design, in web interface, in usability and it's a big thing. The graphic interface greatly effects how you interact with the materials". Starling (ED, 2015) noted that unless it was used carefully, Moodle had a propensity toward the "scroll of death" which would lead to students spending far too long trying to find information. Starling (ED, 2015) gave an example of one course he printed out that was 15 metres long. It was an extreme case, but illustrative of the concern that Starling had around faculty abilities to design online courses appropriately.

**IT and helpdesk**

Massey staff worked with IT helpdesk staff on day to day operating issues related to courses, for example Blackbird (T, 2014) noted "I do use those people for how do I change this or how do I get all my email postings in one block instead of a hundred a day coming into your email". The IT team also helped with taking print material and putting it up into online courses, and uploading core resources.

The IT centre maintained a helpdesk for Moodle which fielded any student queries from the contact centre related to accessing their Moodle course, so it was rare for a teacher to need to respond to student’s technical queries. This was both a positive and a negative thing as Starling (ED, 2014) noted, since it removed one of the prompts or points of contact that would naturally occur between teachers and educational design staff:

*We also put a help desk in for all our stream technical enquiries. And we lost a lot of the interactions that we got with academic staff through that as well which was good in one way because it was always niggly stuff but it would always give us a chance to look at what staff were doing in their courses and actually say, oh, have you thought about doing this a bit differently?*

**Student support**

Participants acknowledged the work that other support staff did within the university, in particular recognising the work of Pasifika and Maori liaison support workers and staff at the international school who supported ESOL students. All teachers talked about having supportive managers in their Head of School, and were
full of praise for other support staff, including the "approachable and helpful" administration staff, and "super helpful" librarians (Kea, T, 2016).

Educational Design

**Role of the Educational Designer**

Teaching and learning consultants filled the role of the educational designer at Massey University. They helped with decision making about what technologies to use in a course, how to design courses visually, development of assessment, and in providing general peer review and quality assurance. Student evaluation was also a part of their remit. They were available on request by the lecturer, which teaching staff appreciated.

*It’s really quite nice because you just make a phone call and they just send someone who will sit down with you and they’ll say to you, what do you want to do and then they’ll say, this is what we can do. These are things you might not have thought of that we can do.* (Kea, T, 2014)

An important aspect of the relationship was that it was optional for teaching staff. As Blackbird (T, 2015) noted, “I could certainly go to a teaching and learning consultant and say, I’d really like to change my lectures... [but] you wouldn’t have to. There’s no expectation that you will do this”.

**Busy Educational designers**

The educational design staff had a reputation for being "incredibly busy" (Blackbird, T, 2014), however the staff they supported had no complaints about the time and support provided. The impression of limited available resourcing in the teaching and learning consultant section increased in 2015 due to a recent restructuring of the section. Blackbird (T, 2015) commented "I’m not sure that it’s been a raging success (laughs). We seem to have fewer teaching consultants, with greater demands on their time". This was seen as problematic, as Blackbird (T, 2015) argued that "people like to have that just in time service", however awareness of "the pressures on our teaching and learning consultants" kept Blackbird (T, 2015) from using their services as much as she would have otherwise. Other teaching staff also commented on perceiving the educational design group as overloaded, as Robin (T, 2016) encapsulates here:
Chapter 5: Massey University

That whole unit, we’ve got two, a local one and a national one, but everything’s under strain and understaffed. You do get the sense sometimes that everything keeps creaking a bit. Creaking in the sense that it’s under resourced. Overloaded and under resourced.

Within the educational design section, Starling (ED, 2015) noted that the structure had gone back and forth between a more centralised approach, and an approach where educational design staff were more closely integrated with academic units. It seemed that there were pros and cons to both approaches, making it harder to decide which would be the most effective, as Starling (ED, 2016) describes here:

There’s some paradoxes there. You go into a school or an academic unit and you’re much more likely to get funding for equipment that you need and you’re much more likely to get support to do these small, quite innovative projects. but the irony is that none of the staff are actually ready for it in big enough numbers ... whereas working in the centre, you’ve got a constant flood of people coming to you and you can tack technologies and innovations on. So its swings and roundabouts really.

Starling (ED, 2014) was in favour of working closely with academics through the process of curriculum review, describing how he " felt as though I needed the prolonged period of time working alongside an academic unit when they’re doing proper curriculum redevelopment, to actually have any decent input into what they’re doing and any impact really." However, Starling (ED, 2014) was realistic about that not happening "we simply didn’t have the staff to say, right, you’re going to go and work with these people for the next 12 months". In addition to the educational designers, there was an educational technology unit, but Starling (ED, 2015) noted that they were "pretty much all tied to Moodle".

Positive relationships

The relationships between teaching and learning consultants and teaching staff seemed to be strong and positive, for example Blackbird (T, 2014) had high praise for the consultant she worked with "I couldn't speak more highly of him he's just fantastic", and this was consistent over time "they do an amazing and incredible job. Nothing is ever too much trouble and I love working with them" Blackbird (T, 2015). Similar comments were made by Robin (ED, 2016) who described the consultants as “crucial” and “very effective” and Kea (ED, 2016) who talked about “really positive” experiences working with the consultants.
Chapter 5: Massey University

The need for structure

As mentioned earlier, there were minimal requirements for course design, and this included no specific requirement for academics to work with the educational designers when creating or updating courses. However, Starling argued persistently throughout the research period for the potential advantages in having a more structured system for course development, with centralisation of course production.

I keep saying to them, you know if you want to head down this route and make our distance offerings or our online content which is everyone basically, really good, you need to centralise production units, have academic development units where you get a team of instructional designer, a learning consultant and production crew and you go in and you work alongside teachers. (Starling, ED, 2015)

Collaborative teaching

Collaborative teaching was mentioned in passing by several teachers, but only one went into detail about how this practice was working. Blackbird talked about two different models of collaborative teaching that she was engaged with during the research. The first model involved co-teaching with one other teacher from within the discipline. For that course, Blackbird (T, 2016) described a division of labour model where each teacher was responsible for certain sections of the course and had sole autonomy over those sections, while higher level issues like overall course topics and textbook choice were discussed together.

We sat down to think about what lectures we might do and the textbook, we spent quite a bit of time then thinking about what did we want to do, what did we think the students should be learning and then we'll talk every so often about what we're changing in our own bits of it. (Blackbird, T, 2016)

Blackbird (T, 2014) felt that this co-teaching approach had a direct impact on teaching practice because of the teaching actions that require a certain amount of relationship building with students. For example she found "I couldn't do the flipped classroom thing till I’d had them for at least a couple of lectures" (Blackbird, T, 2014). Blackbird (T, 2014) explained that they found it "much more difficult to do in a course where I only teach half of it than when I had the class myself because I felt like I had more ownership and more connection with the students". Also, different teaching practices meant that students had to adjust to different lecturer expectations for
engagement. Awareness of this prompted Blackbird (T, 2014) to rethink her lecture plan accordingly:

*What I used to do in week 4 was a scenario-based learning exercise and I can’t do that anymore because the students don’t know each other so well and they are not used to talking and doing stuff in class that I would have set up in those three lectures I would have had prior to this.*

In effect, prior to co-teaching Blackbird (T, 2016) noted she "could go at the pace that the students were at ... I had the control so that if something was difficult for the students, we could spend more time on it". Whereas when she moved to co-teaching, she "felt constrained" by the fact that her lectures were interspersed throughout the semester, often with other lecturers teaching in between, which disrupted the continuity of the teaching.

The second course that Blackbird (T, 2016) talked about had a large number of teaching staff and tutors involved. The course was co-developed at the start, and teachers were encouraged to attend each other’s lectures and have regular scheduled conversations about course coherency and connecting to each other's materials. Blackbird (T, 2016) noted "that’s absolutely a fundamental part of how the new course I’m teaching into operates and I like that”. It was easier to relate to other teachers modules in the course because "the whole course is mapped out in advance" (Blackbird, T, 2016).

When comparing the two approaches, Blackbird (T, 2016) felt that the first approach provided greater flexibility for the lecturer, but the second approach provided more coherence for the student. Although there was less individual ownership in the second model, Blackbird (T, 2016) observed that "I don't feel like I've lost control of the course just because I don’t have that same degree of ownership." Instead, she commented "I like the way it is collegial and we're helping one another".

Kea (T, 2015) was of the opinion that courses that were collaborated on were better courses because teachers were more likely to "put their best foot forward because they know their colleagues are going to review it informally". The downside to collaboration from Kea’s (T, 2016) perspective was "sometimes that can feel a little bit like somebody's watching over your shoulder a little bit", however he noted that "it really is up to you just to say how much you want of that and how much you don't want of it".
Chapter 5: Massey University

Interestingly, the form of co-teaching that was not mentioned much by teaching staff, but that was of concern to the educational design group was "multiple people on multiple campuses, teaching multiple versions of the same paper" (Starling, ED, 2016). A particular challenge with this was "getting some agreement between the different paper co-ordinators of individual offerings on exactly what the course is, what the readings are, how it's assessed", because as Starling (ED, 2016) had noted, teachers tended to have a perception that the campus cohorts were different and therefore the courses should be different, even though they were the same course.

The evolving system

During the research period from 2014 to 2016, there were some subtle changes to the system as the University encouraged staff to video record lectures, and as changes were made to the way educational design staff were made available to faculty. Although some staff expressed pedagogical and ethical concerns about the push for lecture capture as a key tool for online teaching, overall this did not have a negative impact on teachers’ practice. Workload issues ebbed and flowed during the time period and remained an area of concern to participants throughout the study. Teachers noted an increase in PBRF pressure in 2015 and 2016, which impacted on time available to teach. Concerns about student completions began to emerge between 2014 and 2016, however this had minimal impact on online course design. Overall, the system was fairly stable during the research period, as changes to technology and rules did not dramatically affect the system alignment at a high level.

The system illustrated

The Massy University system is captured in the following CHAT diagram (Figure 5.1), which illustrate the tensions and contradictions occurring within the Massey University system during the research period.
Chapter Summary

From an activity theory perspective, the teaching system at Massey University was relatively well aligned. Notwithstanding the set LMS, Teachers had a lot of freedom to choose which tools to use to teach with, and were able to achieve a clear alignment between their tools and their teaching goals. The division of labour was clear, and teachers felt well supported by the other participants in achieving their teaching goals. Most teachers were part of a wider community of peers that had a large influence on their teaching practice. There were some issues identified with workload pressures, particularly related to balancing teaching with research, and imbalances in workload between peers. A moderate level of bureaucracy was complained about.
Chapter 6: Victoria University of Wellington

This chapter contains the third of the three cases investigated in the research project. Data are presented through summarisation of relevant documents from the document review, and through participant quotes and interpretation of key issues emerging from the data. Where quotes are used to provide evidence, the source of the quote is noted in parentheses, along with the year of the quote and the role of the participant (T for teacher, ED for educational designer). The attribution (Journal) refers to the researcher’s journal notes. The CHAT framework is used to organise the topics explored.

History of Victoria University

Origins of Victoria University

Victoria University of Wellington began life as Victoria College in 1897, part of the larger university of New Zealand, and became Victoria University in 1962 following the dissolution of the University of New Zealand. The University underwent significant periods of growth towards the end of the 20th century, as it expanded into premises into Wellington City to house its Architecture, Law and Business schools. Growth continued with the University incorporating the Wellington college of education into a Faculty of Education in 2005, and creating a combined New Zealand School of Music with Massey University in 2006.

Online and distance teaching

At the time of the research, online learning was not part of the University’s strategy, with no discussion of ‘online’, ‘distance’ or ‘flexible’ in any of the key publicly available documents. In fact, Takahe (T, 2014) stated “there was a deliberate policy that Vic wasn’t going to go online...institutionally, it's not a direction that the institution is going”. Consequently, while there were some pockets of support for online teaching, this was unusual. “There are some people who want to teach online who've been told they can't so it's not encouraged” (Takahe, T, 2014). At the time of the research, the Faculty of Education had the greatest number of online courses available, with a handful of other online courses available in other disciplines such as music, business, information studies and science.
Victoria University 2014-2016

Vision

Victoria University of Wellington’s 2014 Strategic plan outlined a 20-year path for the university that the Vice-Chancellor described as "unreservedly ambitious" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, p. 3). The vision of becoming "a world-leading capital city university and one of the great global-civic universities" is supported by their mission to "undertake excellent research, teaching and public engagement in the service of local, national, regional and global communities" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, p. 5). Highlighting the value placed on research and intellectual prowess, the extended vision statement states that "the University will be distinguished internationally by the excellence of its fundamental and applied research, the success of its alumni, and the depth of its intellectual influence." Teaching and learning is discussed primarily in relation to relevance to student's careers, and the creation of "intellectual, social, cultural and creative capital" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, p. 7), while engagement with society is framed in terms of Victoria deepening their intellectual influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Finally, the vision describes Victoria University attaining "the scale, quality and academic profile appropriate to a leading public university" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, p. 7).

Research

Victoria prides itself on its research reputation and capability, with Research and Global rankings occupying the complete first page of the 'Victoria at a glance' webpage (https://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/victorias-story/statistics), and research mentioned as a key factor in the University's development (https://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/victorias-story/history). Research also dominates the strategic plan with 26 references to 'research' compared to 16 mentions of 'teaching', and 13 mentions of 'learning'; and research notably heads any list of priorities, with teaching and learning following later (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014).

Links from government to institutional strategy

Throughout the 2014 Strategic plan it is evident that status is important to the University. High on the list of enabling strategies identified to achieve its goals are the recruitment of "eminent academic staff", as well as "highly talented postgraduate students and early career academics who have the potential to be world leading in their disciplines" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, p. 25). Lower on the list, but still
clearly identified is a goal to increase Maori and Pasifika student recruitment, retention and completion, which linked to the TEC strategy (although this link is not explicitly acknowledged in the University's strategic plan). From 2014-2016 Victoria University sat consistently just above the median scores for completion of courses and qualifications in the TEC Educational Performance Indicators reports (Tertiary Education Commission, 2014c, 2015b, 2016c).

**Internationalisation**

Increasing diversified revenue was seen as vital to the success of the Universities long term goals, indicating an expectation that government funding alone would not be sufficient to support them. One potential revenue source identified was international students, and the University's learning and teaching strategy, which is devolved from the University's strategic plan and was in place at the start of the research, set a specific goal to "encourage and support staff in the internationalisation of curricula and pedagogy where appropriate" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2010, p. 8).

**Goals**

**Institutional goals**

In their interviews, participants identified several factors that they saw as influencing institutional decision making relating to policies, priorities, internal resourcing and by implication, teaching. As Pukeko (T, 2015) noted "you're not isolated from politics and interpersonal differences, especially in this climate".

**TEC influence on institutional goals**

Participants observed the influence of government policies feeding down through the institution. For example, the TEC strategy (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014) goal of increasing vocational outcomes for students had resulted in teaching staff in Pukeko's section spending more time expounding the potential vocational outcomes of their discipline, both internally to higher level management, and to potential and current students.
Some of the statements that have been made about how students need to be going to university to figure out what type of job they’re going to get at the end has created an atmosphere in which we are more inclined to try to make a case to our students about how getting a degree in [my discipline] could be actually practical. (Pukeko, T, 2016)

The Ministry of Education funding for pilots of 180 credit Masters programmes was noticeable for Sparrow’s (T, 2015) area, but did not affect other participants. Some projects outlined in the Strategic plan were noted by staff, for example here Pukeko (T, 2016) comments on the likely impact of the Asia-Pacific strategy (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, p. 23) on their school:

The university itself sees itself as wanting to be positioned at the forefront of developing relations within the Asia Pacific region. Just a couple of days ago, Steve Joyce made an announcement of a $35 million dollar investment and three or four major centres for Asian research which is huge, so I anticipate that’s going to be an increased emphasis in our school.

The corporate university

Students as customers

Some staff felt that there was a strong corporate element coming into the University that was affecting teaching. Pukeko (T, 2015) had observed "general corporatisation, anti-intellectualism, this stuff is actually happening around and I see it". This push was felt to be coming from beyond the University itself, but was impacting on the University's goals and visions, as Pukeko (T, 2015) describes here:

More and more at the university, it feels more corporate than I would've expected and it is continuing to go in that direction. The university is a business and catering to the students in ways that maybe aren't that good.

Pukeko (T, 2015) discussed the balance needed between catering to what students want and need, without letting the customer demand aspect drive course design, arguing that "it's not my job to cater to their expectations if their expectations are unreasonable". From her perspective:

We need to cater to what the students want and part of it is being aware of the student needs and student interests but it can’t be entirely driven by, ohh well the students don’t want to have to write essays so we shouldn’t make them write essays or we should make them write less because they don’t like it. We actually hear these things sometimes from people. (Pukeko, T, 2015)
Increasing layers of management

During the research period, there were changes in the structure of the University that resulted in increasing layers of management affecting all participants. Pukeko (T, 2015) identified "more and more positions that are sometimes paid six figures and well beyond, while at the same time fewer and fewer positions for academics", while Takahe (T, 2016) observed "there's just so many, there's about four new levels of senior management between me and the top boss than there used to be just three years ago".

As well as the changes in general being "very stressful" (Pukeko, T, 2016), these changes had an impact on how staff did their jobs, because each new manager had different ideas about how things should be done. "We're having senior management changing the whole frickin time and every time they do, they bring in new ideas and so we just bounce around. Everybody has a new idea" commented Takahe (T, 2016). Along with this, additional layers of management resulted in a greater number of responses required to management decrees, as Takahe (T, 2016) describes here:

> It used to be that if one of those people above us told us to jump, we would jump, because it was once every year at most and now if each of them says jump once, you're jumping six times a year. It's ridiculous.

Changes in management structure also appeared to have the effect of decreasing the level of understanding that senior management had of what their staff did. As a result, Sparrow (T, 2016) felt that "the people at the very top have less understanding and do less fighting for us, for what we need". This was felt to be especially the case because managers rarely had a background in the disciplines they had domain over, particularly if they were managing a large school or department. As Sparrow noted of her manager "he's not a [specific discipline] person and therefore in this time of moving and change, he hasn't really gone into battle for us." Instead, Sparrow (T, 2016) suggested "I think he's still finding out what we're about."

The lack of disciplinary or even academic background of managers was also seen as problematic for the directions being set. Pukeko (T, 2015) noted an increase in "things that I disagree with that I feel like aren't grounded in good research", which she attributed to the fact that "more people in leadership positions at university have no actual academic background and the fact that they are putting businessmen in charge".

Changes in management also seemed to engender a sense of uncertainty in direction for some staff, in particular where new managers had a significantly different perspective or understanding of the goal of the programme than previous managers, as Pukeko (T, 2015) describes here:
We've also had some pretty tremendous changes in the school in the last year. There's a new director that's been hired who brings a potentially very different perspective from the director that was here when I was initially hired. So there's been some pretty significant changes just in terms of management and potentially more changes moving forward, we don't know... things are in a bit of a flux right now.

This state of uncertainty of management direction and support had an impact on course design as teachers were unwilling to invest time and energy in developing a course that may or may not be supported in future. "How much work do you put into it up front if there's no commitment to delivering it again? Do you spend hours and hours building a beautiful MOOC type course to be delivered once?" questioned Pukeko (T, 2015). The key difficulty here was that "with the change of the director comes big changes in ideology and direction for the school and now we don't know which way the wind will blow with the new director" (Pukeko, T, 2016).

As management structures changed, in some cases the larger faculty group that participants answered to was changing, with the result that for some departments their "position in the larger university is a bit unclear" (Pukeko, T, 2015). Being subsumed into a larger school frequently had the effect that the new school didn't understand why a discipline was structured as it was, and there was sometimes pressure to change a programme to more closely align with other programmes offered by other disciplines in that school, as noted by Pukeko (T, 2016) and Sparrow (T, 2016).

Staff for the most part took a pragmatic approach to managing change coming from above. While participants acknowledged that "uncertainty doesn't create a great work environment" (Pukeko, T, 2015), there was a general sense of participants continuing to focus on day to day work, if for no other reason than "it's hard to know where it's all going to kind of settle and how long it's going to take for it to settle" (Pukeko, T, 2015).

There are some battles that you can engage with and that you should engage with and there are some things where you just kind of have to say okay, I don't like this but I've got these other things to do and that's ultimately going to help shape my career into something that I continue to feel positive about. (Pukeko, T, 2015)

**Fiduciary approach to online teaching**

Online programmes of study at Victoria were "not common" (Takahe, T, 2016), although there was a smattering of individual courses here and there through the institution. Some distance and online courses had been inherited from the University's mergers with the College of Education, and Massey University's music school, so there
were pockets of teaching where staff "have been doing distance classes for quite a long time" (Pukeko, T, 2014). However, these staff and courses were rare.

"I think overall, there is a view that Vic is a face to face institution and therefore distance isn't a priority" commented Heron (ED, 2014). In fact, Heron noted several online programmes that had been scaled back or shut down in recent years. One interpretation that Heron (ED, 2014) gave for why online or distance teaching was avoided was the potential impact on TEC completion statistics (as noted earlier, Victoria's ranking on completion statistics was average rather than exemplary).

When people were looking for a reason to be done with distance, one that was often used was, well this hurts our retention stats and people will take this out of interest. They may never come back and therefore it looks bad for us so distance isn't where we want to go. (Heron, ED, 2014)

However, there were starting to be indications that distance or online courses would be of more interest to the University "if there is some lucrative group or some group where it's in the university's strategic interest to engage them somehow" (Heron, ED, 2014). An example of this occurring was mentioned by Takahe (T, 2014), who had observed a course being created purely to meet financial imperatives "they needed some EFTS for the end of the year and that is why they invented the course". Underlying the financial case for an online course seemed to be an institutional assumption that online courses were cheaper to produce and run. The imperative to achieve more EFTS for the institution before the end of the financial year also had an impact on the course design, as Takahe (T, 2014) noted, "the reason why it was done in six weeks was purely around getting enough EFTS in that year. It was entirely a budgetary decision. It was nothing to do with learning goals". This economic approach was not necessarily supported by staff. Pukeko (T, 2016) voiced a commonly held view that developing online courses should be "for the students' benefit as opposed to thinking about how we can get more money in the pockets".

From 2014-2015 the institution was primarily interested in online or digital learning insofar as it could supplement or compliment face to face delivery, as Pukeko (T, 2015) explains here:

In that Victoria University document about the vision for digital learning, it specifically says that Victoria sees itself as a university in which face to face learning will remain the primary way of teaching. That is by far the preferred platform and the expected platform and that the concern is more about how to use digital media to enhance and engage that classroom-based learning. So that's one thing, is that the university doesn't, at least in that document, doesn't position itself as moving toward having wholly online degrees.
Chapter 6: Victoria University

By 2016, this was starting to shift. Pukeko (T, 2016), a close follower of the University policies, commented in the final interview:

*The talk now is that online education is actually something to expand and to be more involved in, particularly as our current vice-chancellor wants us to double our enrolment numbers in like 10 or 20 years. That's a short amount of time to double enrolments. And we're already squeezed on to this little hill, so how do you do that? And so my sense is that people are looking more positively towards online education and seeing it as something to be incorporated into the university as opposed to something to keep at arms' length which is maybe how it was when I first got here.*

Takahe (T, 2016) agreed with that assessment, noting that the vision to double student numbers "will obviously involve more online distance teaching, so everyone's sort of ramping up, trying to figure out how to do that". Heron (ED, 2016) explains that this shift was likely to be as a result of seeing other institutions moving into the online and distance space "because if they didn't, they'd be eclipsed, you know. Like because other Uni's were doing it, so they needed to too, and distance opens up international student money."

**Keeping up with technological trends**

Another key driver for the creation of online courses was the University's desire to keep up with current trends, and to make sure they weren't going to miss the next big movement in higher education, as Pukeko (T, 2015) describes here "online learning, that's something that people are talking about, we should do that. We'll put this class online". Takahe (T, 2014) was asked to run a 100% online course by their manager because the University wanted to "get a foot in that door" and "see what was involved and see how students responded and how staff responded and how we would do it". Because of that, most of the first course was referred to by Takahe (T, 2014) as "exploratory" and "experimental" with a key focus on how the university might do online courses effectively.

By 2016, however, the excitement about online teaching and MOOCs in particular had died down "the idea of the open online course, I think is less present now than it was in 2014" (Pukeko, T, 2016). From Pukeko's (T, 2016) perspective, this was because "most people have caught on to those as not really being the great way forward and that unless you're Stanford or Harvard, it's probably not worth the time that it's going to take to put those classes together". As she observed, they were not a particularly effective teaching approach as "people don't really stick with them anyway".
Chapter 6: Victoria University

*Earthquake resilience*

At the time the research was conducted, there had been a number of significant earthquakes within NZ in recent years (e.g., Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011; Seddon earthquakes in 2013) that had affected Wellington city, and Wellington based businesses were increasingly concerned with business continuity plans in the event of a large natural disaster striking the capital. In this context, Takahe (T, 2015) referred to a project they were aware of that was being driven by the University to look into how online teaching could be part of an earthquake resilience plan. As a supporter of online teaching, Takahe (T, 2015) noted that for the University moving into the online teaching space, "It's our choice whether we go into them now or whether we go into it the day the earthquake hits. I think you're better off going into in advance, you know".

**Teachers’ goals**

Participant’s individual goals were consistent across the years of data collection, even when participants had changes to their role (for example changes to responsibilities or teaching/research balance), and in one case where a participant changed employer (see Chapter 3).

Sparrow was interested in helping her students become the best professionals they could be, and saw herself as being responsible in helping students meet learning outcomes. Sparrow was also focused on using technology more, both within the courses taught, and also through encouraging students to make better use of technology in their profession.

Takahe was concerned with building literate and critical students, who had a better understanding of the process of knowledge creation and communication. As the programme that Takahe was teaching within was relatively recent, she was also concerned with helping to ensure the programme became properly established in the University system, as well as being concerned about long term sustainability and making sure her online teaching practice could be shared with colleagues.

Pukeko wanted her students to find the course interesting, and was focused on creating the best student learning environment. Finding a balance between conceptual and factual content, and helping students to understand the world around them were goals high on Pukeko’s list of priorities.

Working in the Centre for Academic Development unit, Heron was primarily concerned with improving relationships between teaching staff and the academic development unit, and improving CAD's image to be seen as more helpful to teaching staff.
Participants indicated that the institutional goals did have an impact on the achievement of their personal teaching goals. The primary areas of tension were the changes to management structure and alignment of faculty groups which impacted on the way teachers were expected to align their courses, and financial priorities, which had an impact on workload and resourcing available to create courses.

**Tools and technology use**

**Variations in technology use**

There were several pockets of staff at Victoria University who were engaged with online teaching. This research tapped into three discipline areas that were teaching online, and each of the three areas used technologies and tools differently. Takahe (T, 2014) had met several online teachers from across the University (many of whom were not included in the participants here), and had observed "we all use different platforms, different timelines, different ways of communicating with our students". She went on to describe the differences between the pockets of staff she had interacted with. "One group posts a thumb drive out to their students. One uses videoconferencing. A couple are synchronous. One brings together three different campuses around the country, three different universities. They're all different" (Takahe, T, 2014).

**The LMS: Blackboard**

The LMS used by Victoria University was Blackboard. Participants described Blackboard within the institution as being used primarily as an information repository and place to make announcements, occasionally as a place for students to upload assignments or use forums, and rarely as a key platform for teaching. The participants in this study were the exception to this general usage, as they relied heavily on the platform to teach their online classes, compared to their colleagues teaching face to face who maintained only a minimal Blackboard presence for their courses.

Within the LMS, teachers used features such as announcements, discussion boards, assignment uploads, and quizzes, as well as conditional formatting such as limited release, where students had to complete a section of the course or a quiz before they could access the next section. Some teachers created PowerPoint presentations with voiceovers. Some people used the grade function within Blackboard, but many preferred to use excel spreadsheets because "they're more familiar with Excel. They know how to sort it. They know how to make it calculate things. They know how to filter it and they don't know how to do that in Grade Centre" (Heron, ED, 2014).
Chapter 6: Victoria University

All teachers in this sample also used videos uploaded to the blackboard page - some of these videos were seen as a replacement for lectures, and some were more akin to additional readings or support materials for the course. When creating a fully online course, participants used both professionally filmed and self-created videos, as Pukeko (T, 2014) described here:

*I’m trying to come at it from a number of different angles, so both videos that are professionally filmed by the guys on campus with all the technology to do them, as well as check in videos, filmed from my little screen here.*

Where practicable, or if the course had previously (or concurrently) had a face to face option, teachers also uploaded previously recorded lectures to Blackboard. "We’ve put more video material up via Vstream videos that we’ve produced previously in lectures" said Sparrow (T, 2014). Teaching staff also liked to use video for demonstrations, rather than just content delivery, so that students could see how to use tools or materials in practice.

The information repository aspect of Blackboard was used for both face to face and online classes, as Pukeko (T, 2016) described, "we have to have all the course readings there and then all the assignment prompts, and the course outline. So all course information is there". For face to face classes teachers would also post the slides used in lectures.

**Using Blackboard for communication**

The announcement feature in Blackboard was the primary method used for communicating to students (Sparrow, T, 2014), and had been used consistently for some time (Heron, ED, 2016) "so the actual mechanics of communication haven't changed a whole lot over the last few years" (Pukeko, T, 2016). However, changes to hardware, with video cameras becoming standard in staff laptops meant that staff were enabled to use more video-based technology than before. Therefore Sparrow (T, 2014) noted that "a lot of us now use skype as well... that kind of technology has just become so much easier so we might tend to skype students whereas we used to phone them if they had issues".

Heron (ED, 2014) was clear that "regardless of how you do it, the way in which you interact with your students can make or break the distance course", and consequently he communicated to the teachers he was supporting to develop online courses that "it's good to have at least considered how you best want that to work" (Heron, ED, 2014).
**Mixed efficacy of forums**

Blackboard also provided a forum function, which could be used for reciprocal communication with students, but was more often used for peer to peer student interaction. Participants had mixed experiences on the efficacy of discussion forums for online classes. "My experience so far is that discussion forums have been more or less a waste" (Pukeko, T, 2014) said, observing that students' responses to mandatory forum participation tended to be "token" rather than contributing to the course or developing knowledge.

Takahe (T, 2014) found that the length of time for a course seemed to have an impact on forum engagement, as students taking a short summer course of only 6 weeks made great use of the discussion forums, whereas when the same course was run for the normal semester length "it didn't have the same buzz. There was no engagement in the discussion forums. I just lost them. It was like a desert".

Lecturer personality also seemed to have an impact, for example Takahe (T, 2014) gave an example of one lecturer who "rocked" the forums, and so "the students just lapped it up and just wanted to talk to him", compared to other lecturers who took a more reactive approach and tended to get less student engagement. Enthusiasm for forum engagement went both ways, so the amount of interaction that teachers would engage with in the forums was also dependent on the level of student interaction and reaction, as Pukeko (T, 2016) describes here:

> You can tell within the first half of the term ... so classes where somehow it's just gelling a lot more, I find myself interacting a little bit more on Blackboard because people will interact back. And then there are the classes where it's just like calling out into the dark of night with no response and eventually you stop doing a whole lot of that.

Takahe (T, 2014) wasn't overly concerned with a lack of student discussion on forums, though, commenting that "it's okay for them to not always be chatting away and having amazing dialogue. It's one 15-point course in their whole degree". Takahe (2014) was also quite relaxed about which platform students wanted to use to talk about course related ideas, her main concern was just trying to encourage them to talk, telling students "if you guys want to chat about this content, you can chat on Facebook, you can chat on Twitter, you can chat in the discussion forum". Takahe (2014) thought it was better to encourage discussion by making it as easy as possible for students to engage using whatever platform they wanted to use, rather than have forced forum engagement through assigning marks to discussions.
Chapter 6: Victoria University

The LMS influencing course design

Teachers commented on the design of the LMS influencing their course design and teaching, but that didn't necessarily result in an inferior practice. Pukeko (T, 2014) commented "I'm finding that Blackboard is in some ways facilitating how I'm developing the class", however she saw the tool's limitations as a learning opportunity noting that "instead of limiting the potential, I just see that as the platform and so working within the platform as best as possible I'm actually learning more and more". Some teachers, however, did see the LMS as restrictive on their practice. Sparrow (T, 2014) commented that in her department "we do all moan and groan about blackboard... it wouldn't be our decision at all".

Moving from paper to video

Sparrow and Heron had observed a change over the years from distance courses being primarily paper based, to courses making heavy use of video. Sparrow (T, 2014) noted "when I first started here it was paper based entirely and everything was written and I think probably some of that perpetuates a little bit in some courses", however since that time there had been "a huge drive" toward creating video for online courses.

There were several options available for staff to record video for their courses. For a more professionally filmed look, the University had a filming studio available in the library and Takahe (T, 2015) noted that "IT has a cameraman and editor who can come with us if we want to do on location filming". Another option available for staff was software available on faculty computers which allowed staff to record voice over PowerPoint, or mini lectures, at their desk, which could then be edited and uploaded to the Blackboard course page (Sparrow, T, 2014). Takahe (T, 2015) described the setup as "reasonably straightforward...there's a head shot and there's slides and you talk".

Although lecture capture was not widespread at the start of the research in 2014, by 2016 Takahe (T, 2016) commented "people are all recording their lectures now. A lot of people are pre-recording lectures." However, Heron (ED, 2014) noted that use of pre-recorded video lectures had varied across the different pockets in the University that had been doing online learning. Some sections had been creating course videos for long enough that the technology had shifted four times:

I think it was CDs when it first started, then it was a suite of DVDs and then it was USBs and now we use a product called Echo 360 which is like a dedicated online streaming service that talks directly to Blackboard. (Heron, ED, 2014)
There were some potential technical issues involved in using the Echo360 software, including the potential hurdle for staff of needing IT help to install the software on their computer, as most staff did not have admin rights to their computers. For some staff, not being able to instantly install the software themselves and run it was enough of a barrier that they didn't bother using the tool. Another challenge was that the software was known internally by two names - Echo360, and VStream (Heron, ED, 2014). This became problematic for staff who needed the software set up on their course page, as it was not uncommon for a teacher to contact helpdesk asking for VStream to be set up only to be told "I don't know what that is. Sorry, we don't support that" (Heron, ED, 2014).

Several lecture theatres were set up with automated recording facilities, and staff could choose to have their lectures recorded by contacting helpdesk and asking for automatic recordings to be scheduled (Heron, ED, 2014). The automated nature of the setup did present some issues that lecturers needed to be informed about, including advising them that recording would occur even during holidays, and whether or not the room was occupied. More importantly, recording would start and end at set times, so if a lecture started early, or finished late, that would not be captured. In addition, any before or after class questions from individual students to the lecturer would be captured as long as they occurred within the recording timeframe, so lecturers needed to be made aware of the potential for privacy issues, as Heron (ED, 2014) explains below:

A lot of the time when you finish a lecture and you have people ask you questions, that's actually on camera and on mike. There was an example from Massey that I saw where the lecturer didn't know that. One lecturer didn’t know that whereas another did and the way they acted was really different. So the students would come up and say, hey, I've just got some questions and the lecturer who knew said, step over here and they knew where the camera and the audio stopped and so they just went off-camera and you couldn’t hear it but the lecturer that didn’t know answered all of those questions in front, on mike, on screen and that was then available online for students to watch and so that was an issue.

Challenges of using video for teaching

A challenge with using pre-recorded videos was how to ensure the content wasn’t "going to be outdated by the time that it’s actually even used" (Pukeko, T, 2015). Takahe (T, 2014) agreed, suggesting "most content has about a two to three year lifetime and then you've got to move it on otherwise it gets stale". One of the courses that Takahe (T, 2014) was involved with had a number of guest lecturers, and due to staff turnover, this meant that a significant number of video lectures had to be re-recorded with new staff, which Takahe (T, 2015) noted "was quite a lot of work." Even where staff had remained
the same, videos were updated to include a brief update saying "This is what has changed since I recorded this. This is what's new" (Takahe, T, 2014).

The amount of work involved in creating good quality video was seen as a barrier to experimentation with video, especially for special topic courses where there was no guarantee the course would be run more than once (Pukeko, T, 2016). Creating videos was seen by Pukeko (T, 2015) as a significant use of time and resources, and she noted that there probably needed to be some clearer guidance from the department about when to invest in creating video. She was going ahead with creating resources for her current class, but noted that "in the long term, I think it's a bigger question for the school and management of resources and people's time and resources" (Pukeko, T, 2015).

Another challenge with pre-recorded video was the inability to make any changes to the material to suit the immediate context or particular student cohort. As Takahe (T, 2014) noted, "if you're live lecturing, you can modify, you can change". However, when the material is recorded several months earlier than it will be seen by students, "we've got no idea how the students are going to respond". Creation of video for online courses meant that lecturers were planning several months in advance for teaching (Takahe, T, 2014; Pukeko, T, 2014).

**Varied use of the LMS between face to face and online cohorts**

The perceived main purpose of the Blackboard site affected how participants made use of the tool, as Pukeko (T, 2016) observed, "I use the Blackboard site very differently when I'm teaching online than when I teach in person. It's a very different set up in terms of how I use it". When teaching a face to face class, Pukeko (T, 2016) had much lower expectations of students engaging with the Blackboard course, and so tended to include less information and fewer activities on the page. By contrast, for a fully online class Pukeko (T, 2016) would "build it in a very different way". This would usually include video lectures, podcasts, news articles and readings. "I always try to bring a variety of different media" (Pukeko, T, 2016).

**Assumptions of student technological capability**

Pukeko (T, 2014) assumed that her students would have the technology to access whatever she designed into her courses, noting that students would be aware of the need for appropriate technology given that it was an online class, "the class presumes access to technology to begin with". This view was cemented during the research period "if you sign up for an online class, you have to engage with the software. It's just how it is" (Pukeko, T, 2016).
However, students knowing they would be required to learn online didn't necessarily mean they would be sufficiently prepared to learn online. Sparrow (T, 2014) was of the view that "just negotiating their way round a course is really tricky for online students". She went on to say "they're like stunned mullets in the headlights, trying to get their way around everything" (Sparrow, T, 2015). Sparrow (T, 2014) thought this was partly the case because "we get people who might not have been familiar with online learning coming in and people who are not brilliant with technology ... because we do have older people coming in who have done other careers".

The other influencing element was the lack of consistency between courses in terms of structure and naming of course content elements (Sparrow, T, 2015). Sparrow (T, 2014) found students struggling to quickly access the material they needed even with small changes between courses, such as "in the last course I had I found my readings under here and now they are called course materials instead of readings", and consequently Sparrow was an advocate for increased consistency between online courses. However she noted this was not always easy to achieve, as different sequencing and presentation of information between courses necessitated different course structures even within the same discipline, let alone between disciplines (Sparrow, T, 2015).

**Working with the affordances of the particular technology**

Pukeko (T, 2015) suggested that a key to successful online teaching could lie in "using the technology to the advantage", and tailoring the class to what a particular technology could do and support, rather than thinking "okay, I'm used to doing three hours of lectures a week, so how can I get three hours of lecture a week online and then trying to overly replicate the in-person experience for somebody who's not in-person". Of course, implicit in that is that is the need for teachers to be aware of what technology was available "and what could be better, new technology" (Sparrow, T, 2014).

**Innovating with technology**

**Lack of time to innovate**

A significant hurdle to innovative use of technology in Sparrow’s teaching practice was lack of time to try new things "if I had time to think about it, I might've done something innovative" (Sparrow, T, 2015). Workload pressures (as mentioned in the workload section of this chapter) restricted Sparrow’s ability to experiment with new technologies or make changes to her courses "the intentions are still there to make more use of video. That hasn't changed because things have been too busy" (Sparrow, T, 2016). This was compounded by not knowing exactly who to seek support from to find out more
about how a technology might work in a course. Sparrow (T, 2015) noted that in order to be more creative with the online courses she needed "space and time to do it, and accessible support when you need it".

The time involved for teachers in experimenting with new technology was not inconsequential. Heron (ED, 2014) observed that staff would often need at least two guided sessions on how to use a new technology before they felt comfortable implementing it in their teaching, in addition to whatever time they invested on their own to become familiar with the tool. Finding the time to be innovative then became a source of tension, as teachers needed resourcing to free up time to innovate, but couldn't necessarily get that resourcing unless they were already being innovative. Takahe (T, 2016) was of the opinion that only those teachers who were trying new things with their teaching would get decent support from the institution:

“They can't do one on one support for all staff. The only way we get one on one support is by doing something that's kind of innovative. Which is a good incentive to always stay one step ahead of the pack. (Takahe, T, 2016)

**Failed experiments**

Another important point regarding experimentation with new technology, is that the time invested is not necessarily going to be recouped by being able to make use of the same tool in future iterations of the course, particularly if the experiment didn't work as well as the teacher had hoped and they decided to try something different for the next course. For example, after running limited release sections in her Blackboard course for a year, Pukeko (T, 2015) decided that she would be unlikely to continue using them, as "some of the feedback I got was that it felt too controlling or too babying". On reflection, Pukeko (T, 2015) decided "I don't necessarily like feeling like I'm treating my students like children or that I'm not trusting them from the beginning and it feels like that is in some ways demonstrating that you don't trust them from the beginning".

In some instances, changes to courses might result in better outcomes from a student point of view, but make things harder for the teacher, and so then the teacher is left with a difficult decision about whether to continue with that approach. For example, Takahe (T, 2014) had taken advantage of the flexibility of teaching online to experiment with flexible assessment dates, which effectively allowed students to tailor what they wanted to do, and when, which was quite different from the more traditional approach that would occur in a face to face class where the cohort would move through the material as a whole, and be assessed at the same time. However, she did concede that it was harder to administrate, "it was a nightmare for me but it was great for the students".
Chapter 6: Victoria University

The upside was that the design meant that "if students drop the ball early on, there's a chance to catch up and have another go later on in the course. It's not like, I missed the lecture. I'm stuffed" (Takahe, T, 2014). Overall though, the administration burden was too heavy, and so Takahe significantly reduced the flexible assessment options for the next course iteration.

**Incompatibility between systems**

Potential for incompatibility between systems also led to complications for teaching staff making changes to courses. For example, Sparrow (T, 2015) described investing many hours in creation of new videos for a course, only to find they couldn't be added to the course page because of a technicality in the way the course page had been initialised which meant the videos were not compatible. Although the technical problem was eventually solvable, workload pressures meant that Sparrow did not have time to address the issue in that teaching semester, and so the newly created resources weren't able to be used that year.

**Institutional interest in technological innovation**

Irrespective of the challenges of implementing new tools in their courses, the teachers at Victoria still expressed a strong interest in experimenting with how courses were taught and supported. At the time of the research, MOOCs were a relatively recent creation, and many institutions (and teachers) were interested in the circumstances in which a MOOC might be a useful way to teach. Takahe (T, 2015) was a supporter of the concept of open source knowledge, and was interested in the idea of MOOCs.

*I'm interested in flexible learning and I can see that there is a space for MOOCs in that question around how can we create new learning pathways for our students that cater to their lives. Plus Victoria University's just said they want to double their student numbers in the next 10 years or 20 years or something, and if they want to do that, they're going to have to move into online learning, right. Wellington's not big enough.*

Her sense of the support for MOOCs in the University was that it was mixed, with some management staff interested in the current fad, and others who were less keen, but felt it was important to at least be seen to be experimenting with the concept.

*My sense is that most people are quite cynical about MOOCs, that there are some very senior people on the university council who have just heard of them and are excited by them, that think we should do them but there are some other people who think, well we should maybe dip a toe in this. If everyone else is in this space and we haven't even dabbled with it, in case it does kick off, we should at least have a half a clue. (Takahe, T, 2015)*
Takahe (T, 2015) observed that it was important for there to be staff at the University who were at the leading edge of the potential technologies and actively trialling new things, as that then encouraged the University to invest at least a little in current technologies. Likewise, Heron (ED, 2016) argued that it was important to keep up with new technologies because "if you don't, then you're going to be archaic, and people will stop coming to Vic if you're not actually using some type of technology". From his perspective, pressure to keep students engaged and avoid negative student feedback were "big drivers" for the university’s choices in supporting technology in teaching. Heron (ED, 2016) observed "I think they realised we need to do this, otherwise we're going to get left behind".

**Face to face vs online**

Because of the relative rarity of online courses at Victoria, it was common to find that most students had not taken online courses before, and so when they were in a research participant’s class, it was often their first experience with online learning. Takahe (T, 2014) spoke of discussion forum non-engagement being a big issue for her course, whilst Sparrow (T, 2014) talked about the challenges of students navigating through an online course in the limited time they had to study and Pukeko expressed concern at students seeing online study as an easy option. However, the participants were all very experienced in teaching online, and as Sparrow (T, 2015) said of her discipline area "we've been online for a long time, we've done fully online courses, so we know what [the students] do struggle with".

**Preferring face to face teaching**

Similar to the Massey University participants, teachers at Victoria expressed a preference for face to face teaching. "Having been teaching online for several years, the face to face is actually, for me, more rewarding.", said Takahe (T, 2016). Having said that, Takahe (T, 2016) was still keen on teaching in the online space. "That's where I would still choose to teach a certain amount of my courses, there's huge freedom in it. There's huge flexibility in it. The students like it." (Takahe, T, 2016).

Pukeko (T, 2015) felt that working on campus at an institution that wasn't primarily focused on online learning meant that there was insufficient reason to teach online. "I don't really want to do online learning...it's not that I'm anti online learning, but I think that there's got to be a reason for it. There's got to be a strategic reason to do classes online" stated Pukeko (T, 2015).
Lack of synchronicity seen as a barrier

From a teaching perspective, Sparrow (T, 2014) found the lack of synchronicity of online teaching to be a barrier to student learning, because of their belief that for students to learn effectively, they needed to be able to talk to one another.

*You have to get ways for them to talk in different ways because I think talking about [the subject] is really important and talking for learning is really important. They need to talk and chat and test out ideas and negotiate meaning if you like, they need to do that. So we have to facilitate that in different ways online because mostly it's not synchronous you know they're not in time, so that's a real issue.*

However, there was an assumption that "most of our students do not like having to work in synchronous time because that's why they're online" (Sparrow, T, 2016), which then put limitations on the technological tools that could be used to increase opportunities for online students to talk to one another. It was a challenging issue to navigate, Sparrow found.

Monitoring student understanding and progress

Sparrow (T, 2016) also described a commonly recognised issue in online teaching, the challenge of gauging student understanding without being able to see student body language or expression "you know when you come to [a face to face] class, you can kind of see who's struggling, or who's got it but you don't know that online". This was particularly relevant for situations in Sparrow's programme where the teacher needed to evaluate how the student interacted in groups, or with other students. In face to face teaching, Sparrow (T, 2016) said "you get a feel for how good they are at that and you know whether they are really latching on to the important things", whereas for online students "you've only got their feedback, and it's written". Pukeko (T, 2015) agreed with this sentiment, "I feel very strongly there are things that happen in some of these classrooms that can't be replicated online".

Because of the challenges of the medium, Sparrow (T, 2016) felt that teaching had to be "much more deliberate and intuitive when you're at a distance". For example, Sparrow (T, 2016) could see if face to face students were struggling with workload or assignments because "half of them are suddenly not making lectures", whereas it was a lot harder to get that sense of how students were coping online. Pukeko (T, 2015) found this aspect challenging as well, although she noted it was "a challenge in live teaching too, making sure that people are engaging with the material and actually getting something out of it".
**Developing a community**

A particular challenge for Takahe (T, 2015) was developing a sense of connection with the online students. She found that compared to face to face classes where teachers could "go on week long field trips with their students and show them stuff and learn about their innermost thoughts", with the online classes "You don't get that sense of community to such an extent, and you know, I miss that" (Takahe, T, 2015). Part of the issue was the size of the online class. Takahe (T, 2015) noted that when her class had been smaller in the past it was easier to get to know students individually, whereas now with larger cohorts she found the class was "too big to know their names when you don't know what their faces look like especially when they all have similar surnames and things. I mean I literally am like, which Robert is that?". A counter to this was that as the class had grown in size, so had the student's engagement with each other rather than with the teacher. "I think there's a bit of a sense of community amongst the students now which is nice but I don't really feel like I'm part of it to the same degree" shared Takahe (T, 2015).

**Types of student learning online**

Teachers had a wide range of types of students studying online. In addition to the students who were campus based, and wanted to take a course that would fit their timetable, online study also enabled students who would not normally be able to study the course, to enrol. For example, Takahe (T, 2016) observed that "you get a different kind of student because you get the students who are full-time parents or employees or you know, live in other countries".

In Sparrow's department, there was concern that students who enrolled online because they were working fulltime would not complete the course. "We do recommend that they are not working full time but some of them despite the best recommendations will still work fulltime and try to do it, they usually come to grief" commented Sparrow (T, 2014).

**Student feedback about online vs face to face classes**

Some departments taught the same course in either face to face or online options, to allow students the option to choose which mode would suit them best. Despite having chosen the online mode, Sparrow (T, 2014) described some online students as being envious of their on-campus compatriots.
I think the grass is always greener on the other side when you’ve got two parallel courses and I think students, especially the online students, think this will be so much better if we were on campus but I don’t think they realise that actually they’ve got their materials accessible to them all the time whereas you have a lecture, it’s been and gone.

Sparrow (T, 2014) pointed out that while online students may miss out on the personal connection side of the equation, as far as content went, they were better off than face to face students:

We use blackboard for lecture notes and things like that [for the on campus class] but it’s nothing to the support that the onliners actually can access or go back to and revisit if they wanted to. There’s just more for the onliners to get but they keep thinking that they are missing out because they haven’t got this kind of personal contact or that they can’t talk with the other students but I think they actually miss out less than they think they do.

**Online courses attracting less capable students?**

Heron (ED, 2014) had observed that students took online courses both "to suit their timetables which I think is awesome", but also that in some departments "the courses themselves began to be treated as a bit of a dumping ground. So once the on-campus ones filled up, it was like, no. You can’t take the on-campus one. But you can take this online one". Whilst it increased EFTS for the department, a problem with this approach noted by Heron (ED, 2014) was that it often meant that students who ended up taking the course online were those students who hadn’t managed to meet the enrolment deadlines for the face to face class. Therefore, they had shown already that they "didn’t have the best time management skills by the time they got into distance", and therefore they often didn’t successfully complete the course. Concerns about low completion rates then became "another barrier that people were quick to latch on to" and was a factor in reduction of interest in teaching online in that department from Heron (ED, 2014)’s perspective.

Another concern about online teaching identified by Takahe (T, 2014), although not supported by her own personal viewpoint, was the concern that some staff expressed about quality assurance and avoidance of cheating in online classes. For instance, Takahe (T, 2014) noted that "because Vic is a campus university there's a lot of questioning around authenticity. A lot of people are wondering, how do you know that your students are actually taking your tests?". In response, Takahe (T, 2014) had to add on-campus invigilated tests to the course "which I think is a massive waste of my time and their time but we’re doing that because then we can say, I saw them write that test".
**Chapter 6: Victoria University**

**Blended courses**

During the period of research, there was an increase in some areas of face to face and online courses being combined into blended courses. Sparrow (T, 2015) noted "there’s a lot of people here now because of the small numbers in each of their courses, having to do mixed delivery of their papers so they don't deliver it twice." This meant that they were looking at ways to "integrate them a bit more together" (Sparrow, T, 2014). For the most part, this seemed to involve finding ways to replicate the face to face experience in an online environment.

*At the moment we are trying something with the face to face and we were trying to think how on earth that would go into online and I'm not quite sure. We'll need to talk about that before next year to see if we can do that.* (Sparrow, T, 2014)

Because it was easier to amend face to face teaching, Sparrow (T, 2014) noted that they would "sometimes trial something in the face to face first and then think about how it will adapt to online". However, Pukeko (T, 2016) suggested that was not necessarily the best way to approach online teaching. "Online teaching can do other things ... it's not about making online teaching exactly like the classroom experience but accepting that these are going to be different experiences". Instead, she suggested it was "not thinking about how do I replicate the lecture experience for these students. I don't think that way". Rather, she would focus on thinking "okay, this student is sitting on the other side of their screen. How do I communicate this information and those same three goals that I laid out before, how do we do that in an online context? " (Pukeko, T, 2016).

Similarly, Takahe (T, 2016) found that teaching online gave her an appreciation for what the different formats could provide to students. She notes that "the online teaching has made me appreciate what I can do face to face that I can't do online. So I don't often stand up and just give an hour long lecture because I could do that online". Being fully comfortable in the online space, Takahe (T, 2016) found that her approach to face to face and online teaching was a little different to some of her colleagues "like where other people are excited by what you can do online, I get excited about what you can do face to face". For Takahe (T, 2016) this tended to involve using the online space to provide more content, and using face to face opportunities to build community and get to know students.

Heron (ED, 2014) noted that maintaining consistency between face to face and online versions of a paper was important, as divergence typically occurred when lecturers changed or moved on. He noted that distance courses tended to be developed at one
point in time, and were often updated in a "we'll just stick a bit in here and another example here" kind of way, which meant that after a while "they started to differ significantly from what was offered on-campus" (Heron, ED, 2014). Similarly, for Sparrow (T, 2014) the biggest challenge in teaching both in face to face mode and online for the same course was in ensuring that two courses were kept consistent "that’s probably the biggest tension I think".

**Online engagement dropping under pressure**

One of the problems that Sparrow (T, 2016) saw with online teaching was how it often became the pressure valve when workload became too much for teaching staff "because, you know we’re all busy and it tends to be the thing that drops, you know, I haven’t talked to my online students". This, she felt, did have the potential to impact online students more negatively than their face to face counterparts, as it was a lot easier for a lecturer to ignore online discussion posts than to ignore a question asked at a lecture.

Pukeko (T, 2014) observed the same dynamic in reverse, finding that it was harder for students to avoid or ignore lecturers in face to face teaching, but comparatively easy in online classes. "It's just different when they have to show up each week, twice a week in person with a person staring them in the face and sometimes with a tutor too, staring them in the face" Pukeko (T, 2014) observed. Pukeko (T, 2015) found that students often needed encouragement to concentrate and engage in class, and that was easier to do in a face to face setting:

*Sometimes it's easier to check someone and be like, hey put your cell phone down and engage in the conversation or whatever it is. It's easier to do that in person and it's harder to do that sometimes in the online setting.*

This may also be related to Pukeko (T, 2015)'s feeling that students took online classes as an easy option. She described one class where the students were all on campus students for their other classes except her class. From her perspective "it was very hard to not view that as the course being seen as a sort of, easy, you don't have to take time to go to lectures type of experience" (Pukeko, T, 2015). This then extended into students not fully engaging with the work in the online class, which Pukeko (T, 2015) found frustrating. She explained "it was clear that they had never done any of the readings. There's no way that they could've responded to the questions the way they did if they had actually ever read any of the course material".
Heron (ED, 2014) suggested that online teaching required either more motivated students, or for teaching staff to provide more prompts if it was going to be successful, simply because it was easier to forget about things that were not immediately present. "I think online learning definitely suits some people’s learning styles better. You do need to be more, more motivated or have more prompts from lecturers or tutors that things are due because it is easy to forget about them", pointed out Heron (ED, 2014).

**The unappreciated work of teaching online**

An issue with online teaching at Victoria, probably because of its rarity in the institution, was that there was little recognition of how much work was involved. This was problematic because it meant that "when you run online courses, you don’t necessarily get credit for running them in the way that you would if you were to teach a face to face course" (Takahe, T, 2016). In Takahe’s experience "the distance takes the same amount of time or more time". Sparrow (T, 2014) and Pukeko (T, 2015) concurred:

*It can take as much time as you want it to take. Some people don’t put a lot of time into online and just let it run but I don’t think that works. I think it probably is pretty much equal if you are doing a good job. (Sparrow, T, 2014)*

*It’s quite a lot of work. I mean it is actually quite a lot of work to do an online course and do it well. (Pukeko, T, 2015)*

However, Takahe (T, 2016) was hopeful that as more teachers taught online, there would be an increased understanding of the amount of work involved.

*It’s quite invisible if you teach online and the amount of work involved in the co-ordination and the building of the courses and creating a safe learning environment and designing the course in the absence of a room. People don’t appreciate the work that goes into that but the more that people do it, the more they’ll realise it.*

Of course, some of the workload depended on how teachers chose to set up their interactions with students. For example, Sparrow (T, 2016) suggested that "online teaching is much more time consuming than face to face, because if you’re responding to individual students, that’s much longer than taking a question in a class that I’m teaching face to face". A challenge here was deciding whether to respond individually when student queries came in, knowing that "they tend to come at all hours of the day and night " (Sparrow, T, 2016), or whether to respond at one time to the whole group. Although it may make more sense logically to only respond at one time, as a teacher would in a face to face setting, Sparrow (T, 2016) was concerned that not responding in a timely manner to
online student queries could result in the student dropping out, because "you only get them when they're really in trouble online".

Heron (ED, 2014) found some staff were intimidated by the amount of work they thought might be involved in teaching online, particularly with the 'always on' nature of the Internet and assumptions that students would want instantaneous responses from their lecturer.

_They felt that you had to always be there because the Internet is this always on environment that you somehow had to always be online as well and that your students could be doing this from anywhere, at any time and therefore if you weren't everywhere at every time, it would somehow have a negative impact on the course. I think for some staff that was a real barrier and they just thought, well, I don't want to do this._

Combined with the sense that written answers took longer than verbal ones, because "you thought a lot more about what you were going to write rather than just speaking to someone in your office" (Heron, ED, 2014), these concerns about the time involved in online teaching were used as reasons not to teach online. However, not all staff were put off by the concept of online teaching being more work, some were "just dead keen" to teach online (Heron, ED, 2014). The attitude seemed to depend a lot on the individual, as Heron (ED, 2014) noted that "if people aren't keen, there's always barriers that come up".

**Online teaching easier now than in the past**

Despite the lack of overt support for online courses, Takahe (T, 2016) could see huge differences in the University's provision of technical and pedagogical support for online teaching over the previous few years.

_Those early days was a lot of, well what are we trying to do and how are we going to reach these students and how do we find the support that we need and where do we get our content from and how do we record it and how long should a video be. (Takahe, T, 2016)._ 

By comparison, Takahe (T, 2016) felt that teachers getting into online teaching at this point would have a lot more support as "it's been normalised". She expanded:

_It would be easier to do it now because there's just a lot of more infrastructure. We have the right technology. We have learning teaching support professionals in ITS and CAD. We have programmes where people can come and see what you've done. We've got whole templates._
Rules

Participants observed rules and policies emerging from a variety of levels within the organisation, including strategic plan level, faculty level and at individual department or discipline level. It seemed that the greater the distance between the teacher and the origin of the policy, the more likely it was that there would be tension between the rule and the teacher or that the rule would be seen as not directly relevant to teaching, and ignored, as explained in the sections below.

Policies and regulation

Teachers and educational design staff at Victoria University did not appear overly concerned about rules when designing courses. While there was an awareness of the existence of rules and policies, it seemed in many cases that staff had a mental divide between acknowledgement of policies and implementation of policies in their teaching practice. Staff at Victoria noticed and adhered to rules as required in order to achieve particular goals, such as creating a new course or programme, however there was no automatic consideration of what rules or policies might apply to their practice once the initial course development was complete. Depending on what aspect of course design or teaching was being discussed, participants referred to a range of experiences from copious volumes of rules and policies to be considered, to a dearth of rules or policies and therefore complete freedom to act as they saw fit. This resulted in a seemingly contradictory array of responses by participants when discussing the impact of rules on their online teaching. These have been collated into three groups below, rules affecting teaching practice, lack of rules or guidance, and wilful ignorance of rules.

Rules affecting teaching practice

Endless paperwork to create new courses

There was a significant amount of paperwork involved in the development of a course. The University had sufficient regulation around creation of new courses and programmes that developing a new course was seen as hard. "Most staff struggle to create new courses. Institutionally and structurally it's hard and you have to do a lot of justification", commented Takahe (T, 2014). There were, however, ways around some of the restrictions. "What we do is we run them as special topics for a year or two and if they're a success, then we turn them into permanent courses", said Takahe (T, 2014). Taking this approach still involved paperwork, but it was easier to justify the need for a new course, by saying "we've run it as a special topic for the last two years and student
numbers have doubled. The feedback's been fantastic. It's going to contribute to this minor which already exists. So we can tick the boxes" (Takahe, T, 2014).

Creating a new programme or course involved large amounts of form filling in. Takahe (T, 2015) spoke of "endless" paperwork where no matter what the teacher wanted to do "there's always bits of paper". After some time working in the system, Takahe (T, 2015) had learnt how to find ways to avoid the paperwork, "I think I've found the cracks between them, I'm learning, so yeah, I often don't submit those bits of paper". Some saw the rules around paperwork as tedious necessities to be tolerated "like getting your course outlines signed off, all of that kind of stuff, is just tedious, but necessary" (Sparrow, T, 2016), while others saw them as "just lumbersome and cumbersome"(Takahe, T, 2016).

We're in the process of putting together a new degree at the moment and yeah, the paperwork, I mean thank god someone has actually been employed pretty much just to do all of the paperwork...it’s insane, the amount of hoops you have to jump through... I’d never knew there were so many committees. (Takahe, T, 2016)

In addition to meeting internal regulatory requirements some areas also had to ensure programmes aligned to industry requirements, which added another layer of complexity. Sparrow (T, 2014) explained "we've got another layer we've got an industry body so they have to approve our programmes as well".

Although there was sometimes a large amount of bureaucracy to navigate, Takahe (T, 2015) was clear that "nobody is deliberately putting up blockades" and that there wasn’t any particular system that was blocking them from achieving their goal. The rules in place meant that "there's just a surprising number of doors that need to be opened along the way".

**Departmental influences on teaching**

As well as having an influence at the developmental stage, the structure of programmes also had an effect on how teachers could teach in the courses within the programme once it was in place. Sometimes this meant that teachers couldn't teach in the way that aligned with their own personal teaching beliefs. Sparrow (T, 2014) describes this restriction:

Our courses are very intense and I don’t think there’s enough processing time, so probably most of us are not teaching face to face in ways that we would like and consequently we're not teaching online in ways that we would like because it’s all taught in a very compact intense way.
Some policies affecting course design originated from higher levels of management in the University, and then had to be negotiated or responded to from a departmental level. Pukeko (T, 2015) gave an example where "somebody higher up, far outside of our school has just come down and said, you can't use attendance of part of mandatory requirements unless you specifically justify why attending class is important". In her discipline, attendance was intricately related to skill assessment, and was therefore seen as "appropriate in a lot of classes". As a result, Pukeko (T, 2015) observed "that's something that has come down from above that we're having to deal with in a school context", which was seen as slightly frustrating.

New management

Staff had experienced significant turnover in management "I've had four different line managers in the last two years" (Takahe, T, 2015). There were also changes to reporting lines. "Now we don't report to the head of school anymore. Now we report to the dean" commented Takahe (T, 2015). Possibly as a result of the management and reporting line changes, all of the teaching participants mentioned feeling as though their area didn't have a clear home in the University structure. For example, Takahe (T, 2016) said "our group doesn't really sit comfortably in the university infrastructure...we sort of float around and we fall through the cracks a bit", while both Sparrow and Pukeko talked about feeling like their groups didn't fully belong in the new faculties they had been moved to.

Faculty Standardisation

Pukeko (T, 2016) had observed an increase in "everything being standardised and everything being managed and that there is a focus on the students as needing things to be standardised, you know basically like templates". Pukeko (T, 2016) acknowledged that there were some positive aspects for students in a more standardised approach, "not all of us are very well organised and it's to the students' advantage to make sure that all the information is very clear for them because it may not be otherwise". However, at the same time, Pukeko (T, 2016) also argued that "there's a benefit to learning to negotiate unpredictable and crazy people ... having to sort of figure out how to work with a disorganised person or a situation that's not all going to be standardised." While she recognised the importance of ensuring that all students got the basic information they needed from a course outline, Pukeko (T, 2016) suggested "let's have a little bit of room for individual personalities and that stuff to come out."

A lot of the ideas about standardisation seemed to emerge from senior management in the larger Faculty, and there was a sense that some of those making the
rules were unfamiliar with current teaching approaches. Pukeko (T, 2016) observed "some of them that aren't teaching themselves, or haven't taught in years really, that come up with these ideas".

**Within discipline course consistency**

Interestingly, the response to the idea of standardisation was quite different when it originated from teaching staff themselves. For example, some discipline areas had been teaching online long enough that they had developed formats for consistency between courses in a programme at the point of creation. However typically, as the courses were taught by various staff, divergence would begin to creep in and have to be rectified, as Sparrow (T, 2014) observed, "I think what happens over time is that they gradually change a little bit and then somebody will say oh they've all got out of line and then we all go back". In an effort to keep courses consistent and easy for students to navigate, teachers in Sparrow's area worked together to ensure their course pages matched. "Now we've all got screenshots of what one course looks like so that we can all put things in the same places and it's got the same label just to make it easy for them" shared Sparrow (T, 2016).

**Emerging pressure on completion rates**

Programme EFTS and completion rates were not of particular concern to the participants because the programmes that they taught in were well established enough that "nobody wants to axe our programme at this point" (Takahe, T, 2016), and completion funding had not yet become problematic. In 2014, pass rates for students were not a concern to the University from Pukeko's (T, 2014) perspective, "I don't know about any official targets or anything like that but we're supposed to keep a general eye on it". However by 2015, Pukeko observed there was emerging pressure on staff to try and ensure pass rates were as high as possible, and this had an impact on the design of course requirements and assessment. She felt the message from management was "you need as many students to pass as you can so maybe be flexible in some of those requirements that would otherwise see a student automatically basically fail the class."

Pukeko (T, 2015) commented that "the way that it seems like the funding for universities is determined, seems like it's a weird incentive to pass students". Pukeko (T, 2015) also noted that there were some students who had "caught on to the fact that the university is trying to get as many students to pass as possible so they sort of push it and push it and push it." As an example, she described a case where a student had failed to submit the final course assessment, but claimed that the assessment had been submitted and therefore obviously the technology had failed. Despite the fact that there was no
record of submission through the LMS at all "the student made a case and ultimately was accommodated by people higher up... I did not actually have ultimate say in that" (Pukeko, T, 2015).

**Lack of rules or guidance for current courses**

For the most part, rules and policies at Victoria University didn't have a significant impact on changes a teacher might want to make to current courses. "I don't think that there's been too many rules around what we can do and what we can't do" commented Sparrow (T, 2015). Aside from the usual restrictions on changes to learning outcomes or assessment regime, teachers had "free rein" to set the course content as they saw fit, "everything that I'm teaching, I get to develop however I want" (Pukeko, T, 2015).

However, there were timing restrictions on when course descriptors could be changed, and often because staff were teaching inherited courses, they wouldn't be able to make changes in the first year of teaching the course (Pukeko, T, 2015). Being aware of the timetable of the bureaucracy was key to being able to make substantive changes to how a course was designed, Sparrow (T, 2016) observed "it's about knowing when decisions are made so that I can talk to the right people at the right time to get what I want to happen".

**Unsure of policies**

Although staff were aware that there were policies in place around changes to courses, there was a lack of certainty about what degree of change would require sign off, and what level of committees would need to be involved. When describing the expected rules to follow, participants used a lot of "probably", "I think", and "I don't think" language, as well as a lot of questioning, indicating a certain level of uncertainty about what the rules required. For example, Takahe (T, 2014) pondered "If I change that essay into a quiz, would anybody care, would that be a problem? Do I need to take that up to the highest level?". Similarly, Sparrow (T, 2015) commented "if I wanted to change assessment, I think that only goes through to faculty board or academic board level".

Heron (ED, 2014) was confident that most policies could be found somewhere on the intranet, "I know that we have a section on our website in the university website slash the staff intranet which is policies and guidelines, I think, so I'm sure it's in there somewhere".

**No policies for online teaching**

There were no specific rules or policies related to online teaching (Heron, ED, 2014). This was a natural extension of the lack of strategic support for online education,
and commensurate with the relative invisibility of online teaching at Victoria. As Takahe (T, 2014) noted "in terms of times when we do stuff and deadlines and things, there's no policy because we don't teach online". This was regarded as relatively liberating "no one can tell me I'm doing it right or wrong" (Takahe, T, 2014).

Interestingly, Pukeko (T, 2015) noted that there were "plenty of handbooks about face to face teaching", but she didn't automatically apply these resources to her online classes. By contrast, Sparrow (T, 2016) commented "that assessment handbook's really helpful if you're a course co-ordinator", and used the resource across both face to face and online teaching.

In terms of semester-based classroom management, Sparrow (T, 2014) noted "there is not a lot" in the way of rules or policies to be concerned about. To prepare a course for teaching, "the office admin people would send out your checklist of what to do as a course co-ordinator", and "there is some documentation on the university website that is generic", but that was all that Sparrow (T, 2014) was aware of. In concert with the individual nature of the existence of online courses, there were no particular expectations for staff around when courses would be made available. Sparrow (T, 2015) wasn't entirely certain when the courses in her area would generally be made available to students, since each teacher took their own approach "we usually put them up maybe a few days ahead, maybe, so it depends. Not much. Usually, they're usually pretty much all go live from the start of the trimester, or maybe the Friday before".

**Wilful ignorance of rules**

When discussing rules affecting their practice, participants at times showed a certain level of disinterest in the existence or relevance of policies to their work. For example, some teachers were vaguely aware of policies that might be relevant, but hadn't necessarily applied them to their teaching, such as when Takahe (T, 2014) casually commented "we have a digital vision strategy and we have a Facebook policy but I haven't read any of these things".

One explanation for this attitude could reside in the large number of potentially relevant policies, and a lack of available time to read and digest them. There was no shortage of policies from a staff perspective, as Takahe (T, 2015) noted "there's lots of policies and I don't really know what most of them are". Similarly, Heron (T, 2016) commented "it was very much, like we have to do this, this and this or this or there's some rule somewhere. You might not know about it but there's a rule somewhere".

Another potential explanation is that lack of enforcement meant that staff could choose to ignore policies without consequence. This sometimes resulted in a very
relaxed approach by participants, as can be seen in Takahe's (T, 2015) comment, "I don't really bother myself with them too much. I don't feel very restricted by them, put it that way".

A third potential explanation for a lack of application of the institutional strategy and associated policies and plans into everyday practice could be the unclear relevance of the plan to staff. In 2015, Takahe (T) noted that the new strategic plan had been disseminated to staff "we had it posted to us. We all got given posters to put on our wall to remind us of what it is". However, she suggested that it was hard for most staff to see where their work fitted into the strategy "because they're classic researchers and teachers and it's hard to see the overlap" (Takahe, T, 2015). The focus on "societal relevance and engagement and outreach and civic responsibility" (Takahe, T, 2015) in the strategic plan was not necessarily something that staff in every discipline could see a clear match with. This uncertainty about the clear linkages between institutional strategy, and participants daily activities was something that echoed through participants comments about institutional policies.

**Workload**

*High workload*

At the initial interviews in 2014, participant workloads seemed full but manageable, and participants were aware they could be worse. Pukeko (T, 2014) noted "especially compared to some of my colleagues, my admin load is pretty light right now, for which I'm grateful...just balancing the teaching and the research is enough at this point but it could be a lot worse". Workload levels increased between 2014 and 2016, with some participants showing signs of strain in the 2015 and 2016 interviews. Takahe (2015) tried to make light of the issue, commenting "I guess where I'm at is feeling a bit like I've got too much on which is probably what everyone says to you, who you interview", while Sparrow (T, 2015) talked about an "astronomical" increase in workload that had taken them nearly to breaking point "I've talked with the head of school and said that I actually physically couldn't do it again. It was just too much".

Takahe (T, 2016) was regularly operating at 8-16 hours a week above what she was employed to do, due to limited staffing in her area. She was hopeful that there would soon be additional staff employed to bring the workload back down "because we've got a ridiculous number of courses for just us to run...it's crazy". Things did have to get pretty difficult for the team before recruitment of another staff member was considered though.
"I suppose almost having breakdowns has led to some good outcomes for us" Takahe (T, 2016) said wryly.

Sparrow (T, 2015) said that management were aware of the workload issues that were spread through the department, as "there’s another couple of lecturers who are in the same position too". Part of the issue lay with increases that had been made to the discipline portfolio without increasing staff numbers "we haven’t given away any programmes and we’re loading this pile up on top which means there's also a lot of additional stuff." (Sparrow, T, 2015). As a consequence, for Sparrow (T, 2015) and her colleagues the work felt relentless "you’d meet in the corridor saying, it’s relentless. That’s what it is and she was absolutely right. You’d just get one thing done and there’d be the next thing off the top of the pile".

**No time to renovate courses**

One side effect of the high workload was that course development for already existing courses tended to get shunted to the bottom of the list of priorities, so any plans that a staff member had for enervating a course or including new technologies would get put off. As Sparrow (T, 2015) said, "when you’re in that mode, all you can do is survive". In one instance, a set of resources that had been created for the course weren’t working for technical reasons, and Sparrow (T, 2015) was in a position where:

> I didn’t have time to ask for help or sort it. It seems nonsensical now, looking back on it but there just physically wasn’t enough time to find some help to see what the problem was and so I missed out on using all of those resources.

The perpetual busyness meant that course improvements kept being pushed back, "my goal is to work that for the online students as well and I still haven’t got to that because of lack of time" (Sparrow, T, 2016). When this happened repeatedly, the chances of actually achieving the intended teaching goal seemed to reduce in likelihood to a point where it was seen as potentially unachievable. This was illustrated when Sparrow (T, 2016) said "I’ve been really busy this semester, and I finally might get what I want to get done in the second semester. Who knows? You've got to have dreams".

Pukeko also found that the realities of updating a course didn’t always match the plan, "I had hoped to be a little bit further along with planning the class but I just haven’t had the time to do it so I’m behind" (Pukeko, T, 2014). She observed that she might have been ‘delusional’ in thinking it could have been done in the available time:
I had thought it would be set up by the time that the classes start and now I’m realising it might be more of a, get a few weeks up and then while they’re working through that, be working on the next few weeks. So I’m no longer delusional in thinking that it will just be done. (Pukeko, T, 2014)

The references to dreams and delusions reflect the degree to which participants felt that achievement of their teaching goal was beyond their direct control. Sparrow (T, 2016) rated the chances of her actually getting the work she wanted to get done on the course completed as around 50%, observing that "There's lots of factors kind of underlying it, aren't there", and implying that only some of them were under her control.

Variable hours

Although the contracted working week for teaching staff at Victoria University was 37.5 hours, that was rarely the amount actually worked by staff. Pukeko (T, 2016) commented "my sense is that we all work a little bit more than that a lot of the time and maybe a little less than that some of the time". Some of the fluctuation was due to the normal ebb and flow of teaching, marking and research, as Pukeko (2016) explained "there are certainly times of the year where I know that people do have to put in that amount of time, I mean just to get through the marking and to get through the teaching". There were frequent examples of teaching staff working well above the standard hours, although this wasn't necessarily a permanent feature. For example, Pukeko (T, 2016) commented "I would say that I probably average, during the teaching period with the work done on weekends, maybe 50 hours a week but I wouldn't say that I always work 50 hours a week". Takahe (T, 2015) agreed, noting that the workload and areas of criticality "depend a lot on the time of the year".

Departmental variation

There were some differences between departments in terms of workload management. For example, Pukeko (T, 2016) described a working environment where there was an expectation that "when you're on annual leave, you don't respond to emails, like unless there's something really, really serious, you're not expected to be on the clock when you're on holiday". In Pukeko (T, 2014)’s experience "they really are, I think genuinely concerned with faculty workloads and staff workloads and making sure that people are able to balance between the teaching, the research and the admin". By contrast, in Takahe’s area, she ended up working while on leave, simply because there was no one else available to take up her work whilst she was away.

In Sparrow's area workload was organised collaboratively with colleagues "it's quite a collaborative process, we say what we want to teach and then we see how our
timetables and workloads work out, who is doing which research projects and has got
time out, who's on study leave”. Then, after team agreement on who would do what, "our
head of school makes the final decisions about workloads" (Sparrow, T, 2014).

Balancing career with work/life balance

After initially saying 'yes' to most things that came her way, by the 2016 interview
Pukeko had developed a stricter time management policy that involved saying 'no' more
often, "I was always okay with time management but I'm pretty strict about it now". This
new approach had emerged because "I can really see if I do that, then I won't have time to
do this and I no longer sort of approach it of like, well just take everything. I'll be
eventually able to fill it all in" (Pukeko, T, 2016). Having a good balance between
personal and work life was important to Pukeko (2016), who was fully cognisant of the
fact that her ability to say no to additional work was related to being more established at
the institution. Because of her longevity, she was no longer fearful that saying no would
have an impact on her career progression.

I'm in a position now where I'm actually able to say no to a lot of things which
is good and also probably comes with having been here for a few years to get
to that point where you can say no and feel okay about it. (Pukeko, T, 2016)

Reduced hours on paper but not in practice

One typical approach that departments took to managing workload as courses and
programmes were being developed was to allocate the staff member additional teaching
related hours and decrease the research related hours they were required to work.
However participants found that didn't work in practice due to PBRF pressures. Sparrow
(T, 2015) reported "all that happens is they just reduce your research hours but you don't
reduce your research. You still keep doing it". She went on to say:

I'm still quite angry about the fact that it's okay to say, oh yes, you've got too
many teaching hours, we'll take some hours out of here. But that's not a
reality. In our workload plans that they can just juggle to make it look all
right but actually, it's not. It doesn't actually add up in reality.

Research

Victoria University followed what was considered to be a standard ratio for
teaching and research in New Zealand Universities "it's officially 40% teaching, 40%
research, 20% service" (Pukeko, T, 2014). However, the reality could vary from person
to person. For example, Takahe (T, 2014) estimated that she currently did about "50
teaching, 30 service, 20 research", due to the responsibilities of her role. Regardless of
those responsibilities, Takahe was aware that if she didn't increase her time spent on research that she would soon be in trouble. "I'm fairly new still so nobody's counted my research outputs yet but I really should be knuckling down, doing my research and I know that I'm going to get in trouble on that one" (Takahe, T, 2014).

**Lack of time to research**

Teachers often struggled to find the time to produce the research outputs desired. Takahe (2016) shared that she had "a list of five papers that if I stop doing everything else right now and just sat down, I could write these papers and I could pop them out". However stopping doing everything else was not a realistic option, and so the research papers didn't get written. Pukeko (T, 2014) confessed that "so far I have found it difficult to research while teaching", and so she was reliant on the mid-term and summer breaks to get any research work done.

In Sparrow's section, they had recently had a workload review that had decreased (in theory) staff teaching loads so that they could have more time to do research for PBRF. The result, as Sparrow (T, 2014) described it was that "we are all much more research informed and research active than we ever were", however they now had less time to embed the research into their teaching practice than they did before, which Sparrow remarked was "mad". Also, since many of the staff in Sparrow’s sections were highly committed teachers, they often ended up doing the same level of teaching they had previously in order to not let the quality of the courses drop. Finding time to balance research and teaching was tricky. Sparrow (T, 2015) talked about it just being too much to fit it all in.

*I love my research too. I really do like the job. I like both parts. I'm not one of those people who's really switched to research and couldn't give a stuff about their teaching. I like both and I like to do both well and it's just too much.*

**PBRF pressure**

With the internal (practice) PBRF round in 2015, staff were constantly aware of the need to be producing research outputs. "2018's another PBRF year, so publications have to keep coming out." (Sparrow, T, 2016).

*It is the main income of Vic and they were number one last time. And so they're feeling real pressure to stay at number one this time. And they were at number one because they played the same dirty games that everyone else who's been number one before played.* (Anonymous1, 2016)

---

1 Due to a desire to continue employment, this participant quote was anonymised
Chapter 6: Victoria University

The pressure to produce research outputs increased during the 2014-2016 period, with some staff having fairly serious conversations with their managers about whether they were going to be productive enough for the upcoming PBRF round. Takahe (T, 2016) reported that her lack of sufficient outputs might result in being removed from the list of research active staff that are considered in the PBRF round:

*I had a recent performance review meeting with my boss and I think I might be coming off academic contract, temporary, short term at least because I’m just not going to deliver on the research and the PBRF pressure is ridiculous and I’m just going to not deliver.*

Takahe was quite positive about the potential change and the removal of the associated pressures to be research productive, commenting "it's funny, most academics would feel like a massive failure, but I was never really in it for the research anyway" (Takahe, T, 2016). However she did note that she expected the change would affect her long term promotion prospects because "you still get promoted according to your research outputs and I won't have any" (Takahe, T, 2016). Despite the potential for loss of earnings, Takahe (T, 2016) felt the change would work out well because of the decrease in pressure from management to be performing differently to her actual daily workload.

*I think it’s worth it for me, even if it means I don’t get promoted at the rate that I would have done, I think it gives me three years of doing stuff that I do and not being criticised for not doing the stuff that I don’t do.*

**PBRF doesn’t reward teachers**

Staff at Victoria identified the challenges of being focused on teaching rather than research in a system that primarily rewarded research. As Sparrow (T, 2014) commented, "research is certainly rewarded in all kinds of ways whereas teaching although they keep saying its rewarded it really isn't". Takahe agreed:

*The problem is just that you don’t get rewarded for that work in a university environment. You know, the PBRF and the teaching systems that are in place don’t acknowledge that kind of role. So a lot of the work that I do doesn’t get acknowledged.* (Takahe, T, 2015)

Pukeko (T, 2016) had been offered a role with oversight of the programmes in her area, but was advised by higher level colleagues at the University that "at this stage in my career, in order to advance or get promotions, I need to be focusing on my research and to actually not do any more admin than I’m already doing". Takahe (T, 2015) observed a
mismatch between the University strategy and the roles needed to enable that strategy, and the reward system for academic staff.

*Those roles which everyone acknowledges are important roles, are not roles that fit within the reward system. There’s a mismatch. I know that the job that I do is good and important and I can align my job with the strategy [but] then you have to tick PBRF and research and teaching outputs.* (Takahe, T, 2015)

The problems with a heavy focus on research outputs also came through in conversations with Heron (ED, 2014), who noted that it didn't particularly help with the mandate of the Centre for Academic Development to have staff who were so focused on research that they had no interest in trying to improve their teaching practice.

*Although there’s heaps of staff out there that are super interested in teaching, there are also others that are primarily interested in research and they are really quick to try and find reasons not to buy into what you’re trying to promote.* (Heron, ED, 2014)

Some staff were clear that the value they perceived themselves as bringing to the institution was not primarily research, as Takahe (T, 2014) pointed out "I know what I do and the value that I bring to the university and I don't think that's in research". Even participants who specifically enjoyed the research aspect of the job were often driven by the value of knowledge creation and sharing rather than by a desire to get a specific PBRF ranking. Pukeko (T, 2015) explained, "with research, if you're lucky, you know publications go out into the world and again, if you're lucky they educate other people or they contribute to dialogue".

*Publish or perish*

All the teaching staff made reference in their interviews to the possibility that if they didn't perform adequately, they could lose their job. These comments tended to appear at stages in the interviews when research pressures were being discussed, implying that staff were highly conscious of the impact that under-performance in research could have on their continued employment. The adage ‘publish or perish’ seemed in the forefront of participants minds, and there was a real sense of the power that the institution had over the participant's lives.
Chapter 6: Victoria University

As long as I can just keep my head above water and show that I have a reasonable research profile, I think they’ll let me stay. (Takahe, T, 2014)

If you are not PBRFable you are gone absolutely gone and before each round people are gone, removed, yeah taken out. (Sparrow, T, 2014)

These jobs are so hard to come by...so I feel really lucky to have this job. (Pukeko, T, 2015)

These comments, more than any others in the interview data, highlighted the significant emphasis that Victoria University placed on maintaining its status as the highest-ranking research university in New Zealand at the time of this study.

Community

The main aspect of community discussed by Victoria participants was the various ways in which the communities they engaged with internally and externally aided their professional development. This ‘community of practice’ influence was described both within disciplines, and also across subject disciplines within the community of online teachers at the University. Participants described positive relationships with peers, and in particular with immediate colleagues in their area. References made to formal learning through qualification and institutionally provided training sessions were significantly outweighed by copious references to peers and self-selected communities as sources of learning and development.

Professional development

Teachers at Victoria University primarily saw themselves as responsible for their own professional development, rather than having expectations that the institution would have minimum standards in this area. All participants indicated a very proactive approach to their professional development as a teacher, looking to several sources including colleagues, for ideas of what to do differently in their practice. “I’m always looking for ways to improve my teaching, particularly based on experiences from other people that have actually implemented and tried it”, noted Pukeko (2016).

Interest and qualifications in teaching

Several of the participants expressed a long-standing interest in education that had been in place since before their current roles. For example, Takahe (2014) shared "I have probably always been interested in education, I've always imagined myself going into some form of teaching", while Pukeko (2014) said "I never wanted to do anything
else. I wanted to do [my subject] and I wanted to get a PhD and I wanted to teach from a teenager".

It was common for participants to have engaged in self-led professional development in teaching. Pukeko (T, 2016) had completed some training in University teaching while completing her PhD, while Takahe (T, 2014) noted:

*I was interested pretty early on in teaching and then I also took a formal course in university teaching and learning. So before I’d ever really had to design a course or run a course I was already learning about the theory and exploring those ideas.*

Sparrow (T, 2014) had completed a teaching related qualification some years previous, and Heron (ED, 2014) was part way through a course on higher education at the time of the research.

**Centre for Academic Development**

Formal advice on teaching and the tools available to support teaching was available from two sections in the University: the Centre for Academic Development (CAD), and the IT section which included the ’Contact for Academic Technology’ or CAT, who could give advice on technological solutions available. The Centre for Academic Development ran a number of professional development sessions for teaching staff, although none were specifically targeted at staff teaching online only. Sessions were provided on how to use Blackboard, both at introductory and advanced levels. Sessions were also available on demand for how to use other teaching tools. ”We also run, sometimes, specialist sessions if we have requests for them " (Heron, ED, 2014). Another option provided by CAD was one on one sessions where staff could get further or more specific advice. Heron (ED, 2014) often found that these one on one sessions would start off with the staff member asking about how to use a specific technology, but often broadened into conversations about their teaching practice more generally, as in this example:

*The other huge part of my job is just one on one meetings with staff about particular issues that they have and so maybe they’ll get in contact and say, how do I make an assignment on Blackboard? I missed your course and then you’ll go to their office and it will start with, how do I make an assignment and then it will go, what about these other features on Blackboard and then it’ll go, what about these other things in my classroom and so on.*

Despite the variety of formal support available from the Centre for Academic Development, there seemed to be a preference for staff to approach other staff members
for support and ideas about online teaching, rather than seek advice from the Centre for Academic Development. Takahe (T, 2014) at one stage found herself an accidental preferred source of advice through word of mouth referrals:

*People were asking me, how do you do this and how do you do that? And I was like, this is how I do it but that's not necessarily the best way to do it. I'm just making this stuff up, you know. Go and talk to CAD. Why aren't you talking to CAD? That's their job.*

**Institutional sessions inconvenient**

The teachers in this research study acknowledged that there was institutional professional development available, but noted that it wasn't always convenient to attend sessions occurring at fixed times. The implication was that improvements could be made to the timing of professional development sessions to make them more useful for teaching staff. Sparrow (T, 2015) noted "there was a person assigned to our faculty and they do run lots of courses but actually, they tend to run them at times when we're all busy teaching".

However this issue only applied to some participants, with others regularly attending sessions or workshops provided on campus. "There are a number of different workshops available through campus that I try to go to, I think every week there's one or two if not more different lectures and workshops about facilitating teaching" said Pukeko (T, 2014). One source of regular professional development sessions was a seminar group called Vic Teach, which included "a weekly learning and teaching seminar in which different people from around campus give 15 minute presentations, usually within the framework of why and how I use blank in my teaching" (Pukeko, T, 2015).

Several teachers who attended these sessions were driven by a desire for continuous improvement in their teaching practice, such as Pukeko (T, 2014) who was "really concerned about whether my students are getting the best experience as possible", and Sparrow (T, 2015), who commented "I've been a course co-ordinator for a lot of courses and I like them to be tight and I like to be accessible and I like them to be good courses".

**Peer support**

In some instances, staff who were experienced in online teaching were expected to help other staff who wanted to develop online courses. Both Takahe and Pukeko often found themselves in that role.
Last year I was asked to help one of the other lecturers to develop his class, a class that he teaches in person, they wanted to turn it into an online class, so I was actually asked to help him to network with the different people on campus... it was expected of me that I would do that (Pukeko, T, 2014)

While services provided by CAD and CAT were appreciated, Pukeko (T, 2016) felt that having a within faculty teaching staff member who was familiar with online teaching resources and support services was often more useful. This was especially the case as teaching staff could provide practical advice based on personal experience, rather than the more theoretical advice typically provided by CAD and CAT.

If they go and talk with somebody that's sort of distant over in the Centre for Academic Design, they might come away thinking, oh yeah, that sounds like a good idea, but maybe that person hasn't actually implemented it before but they're just showing you the features available in the software, [whereas] I've sort of been able to say, like oh, I tried that. It didn't work for these reasons. (Pukeko, T, 2016)

**Learning from students**

Teachers talked about learning from student's responses to courses, and making adjustments on the basis of student engagement and feedback, "I learn quite a lot from them" shared Pukeko (T, 2015). Sparrow (T, 2015) noted that student feedback was comparatively important to reflect on when adjusting the course for the next iteration as "the work that you assume they've done, they haven't done, so you learn from that, so I know that I will have to put in even more support than I thought I was giving already for next year". Interacting with smaller tutorial groups also provided valuable feedback for teachers, as Sparrow (2015) describes here:

They're like a little sounding board for me of the bigger group. You know, I can get a feel for how the cohort's feeling and the things that are stressful and the things that they're not sure about so I can be proactive and talk to people who might be able to change that or change it yourself.

Similarly, Pukeko (2016) talked about the importance of reflecting back on how a class went before running it again. For instance she noted, "I've been preparing a class to teach next semester that I've taught twice before and looking at it now there's some things I think were good and other things, I wouldn't want to teach the class that way again". From Pukeko (2016)'s perspective, there would always be room for improvement in the way a course was designed.
Chapter 6: Victoria University

I've never gotten to a point where you just have a course from last year and you just go with it, you just teach it, you don’t spend a lot of time redesigning. I tend to redesign everything which takes a lot of time. I’m sure that people higher up would prefer you just go with what you had before but I think it has to be improved upon.

**Professional organisations and conferences**

Teachers found being part of professional organisations and attending conferences was helpful to their teaching practice. Often staff had been completely subsumed into their discipline community, and were not aware that there were other teaching focused communities of practice out there. Discovering these other communities was potentially momentous for teachers. For example, Takahe (T, 2014) found "going to the ASCILITE conference was really massive for me...it blew me away. I was like, oh my god, there’s a whole world of stuff going on out here and I don’t know about any of it". Pukeko (T, 2016) talked about regularly following teaching and learning publications, for example the Chronicle of Higher Education because "they have regular series on different tips for better university teaching and talk through all the different ideas there and people write in with things that they've done. So I follow that".

Heron (ED, 2016) commented that attending conferences about teaching practice in particular were useful because it was easier to connect with others who were having similar challenges. From his perspective "it’s kind of reassuring in a way that there’s a lot of people grappling with this type of stuff and no one seems to really have it figured out which is exciting and yeah, reassuring sometimes" (Heron, ED, 2016).

Teachers were particularly interested in what worked in practice for others, not just what the theory suggested would work. Takahe (T, 2014) commented "I'd like to know what other people do because you know, a lot of the literature is very heavy on theory and not on, well we do this and, yeah, that's normal". This was particularly an issue for staff at Victoria because "there aren’t that many people around here who run online courses, so I can't go, is that normal?" (Takahe, T, 2014).

**VicTeach**

VicTeach was the name given to the regularly occurring grassroots seminar series for staff. Historically at Victoria University there was little in the way of funding or support for staff to engage in teaching and learning focused research. As Takahe (T, 2014) noted "we never get funding to go to professional development conferences around teaching and learning, we only ever get funded to go to conferences around our own research area". Consequently, when the teaching and learning seminar series VicTeach began, there was a high level of interest from teachers around the University, much
greater than the founders had anticipated. "I think something like 50 or 60 people came to that first meeting which is a lot" observed Takahe (T, 2014). The community who attended the inaugural meeting brainstormed the topics to be covered in the seminars, which ran initially once a month (Takahe, T, 2014). Later on, the sessions increased to two a month, one focusing on shared practice, and one focusing more on theory and research.

A wide variety of Victoria staff attended the sessions, with Takahe (T, 2014) observing that there were "people from all the campuses and there were always teaching staff and people from the library and people from ITS and people from student support services". The sessions were even more popular than the CAD run workshops, which Takahe (T, 2014) thought was probably due to the focus on practice, not on theory, "we like hearing from people who are actually doing the teaching and we like to hear real world experiences".

As the popularity of VicTeach grew, there were moves made to create more structure around it, and a steering group was developed, which Takahe (T, 2014) had mixed feelings about because "the more we become institutionalised, the less control we have". She noted, "it's a fine line to become structured but not to become institutionalised", and it was difficult to balance the desire to ask for funding with wanting "to remain autonomous" (Takahe, T, 2014). By 2016, VicTeach had the attention of senior management and was now seen as "a really important part of staff professional development" (Takahe, T, 2016). She wasn't really surprised by this because "a huge number of staff actually like the opportunity to think more proactively about their learning and teaching" (Takahe, T, 2016).

The teaching and learning seminar series at Victoria was useful for staff to meet other colleagues who were also teaching online, and in many cases were the first realisation staff had that other staff were also teaching online. "There other people at Vic who teach online as I've now discovered through the learning and teaching seminar" shared Takahe (T, 2014). Being able to connect with others was important to staff teaching online, because as Takahe (T, 2014) noted, "it's quite lonely when you first start in that because nobody else knows what you're talking about". For Takahe (T, 2014), finding other colleagues doing the same things was "amazing for me. I've got someone I can talk to. We can like take our laptops and go, I'll look in your course if you look in mine, you know."
Chapter 6: Victoria University

Sharing Practice

Staff were frequently influenced by their peers, as Takahe (T, 2015) commented, "what are the biggest influences on how I do my job? Conversations. Things I read. Ideas in Vic Teach might influence my teaching. Ideas at conferences will influence my research." Thinking specifically about teaching online, Takahe (T, 2015) identified the wider teaching community and support services as key influences, because she relied on them to keep up to date with practices that she didn’t have time to research herself.

The biggest influences on how I do my job in terms of my online teaching, definitely going to conferences, going to ASCILITE, people who come in and talk to us, give seminars, and CAD and ITS are huge influences, huge influences of what’s going on in that space because I don’t have time to be totally on top of it. (Takahe, T, 2015)

When it came to teaching practice, participants were heavily influenced by their immediate colleagues, "I'm more and more trying to listen to what my colleagues around the school are talking about" (Pukeko, T, 2015). Similarly, Sparrow (T, 2015) shared that in her team "we do do a lot of tossing ideas around". Sparrow's team frequently discussed what had worked and hadn't worked in their teaching practice, "so there's a lot of that informal kind of talk and tossing and reflection that happens" (Sparrow, T, 2015).

Each of the Victoria University participants talked about working with colleagues who had similar perspectives and teaching approaches to themselves, and that this brought a feeling of solidarity to their teaching. When describing a decision that she had made related to course design, Pukeko (T, 2015) commented "I don't feel like it's something that I'm just doing on my own because I feel like it's one of the potential goals of the larger programme". Pukeko (T, 2015) felt reassured to be part of a larger pedagogical movement, knowing that her colleagues had similar approaches:

I know that most of my colleagues in my programme would probably say similar things, I mean depending on which part of the discipline they're coming from, they might have slightly different ways of understanding that or use different material to get to it, but I think that teaching students about critical thinking and communication, it's a bigger goal across the programme.

Teachers were often keen to share what they had with others who were interested. Some staff, as earlier adopters of online teaching, found themselves frequently "having some pretty frank conversations with people about the direction of online education at Victoria" (Pukeko, T, 2015). This might include communicating with colleagues who "maybe don't have as much experience actually working with online
education but have heard or are curious about it and maybe want to promote it” (Pukeko, T, 2015), and sharing their knowledge and experience in the field. This quote from Takahe (T, 2016) encapsulates the open sharing attitude that the participants all exhibited about their teaching practice.

>I’ve got a colleague in [another discipline] who wants to start up basically a course just like ours and I was like, hey just copy our course. Put in your own content but copy our structure. Literally copy the Blackboard course. I will give you access to it and for their first year just copy it and take the bits you like and change the bits you don’t like but at least it’s a template to start with.

**Division of labour**

At Victoria University, Heron (ED, 2016) noted that the course development process "was very much the lecturer who uploaded everything, who made the course and they did it the way they wanted". In the process of creating and teaching courses, faculty staff also engaged regularly with "ITS and student learning support and student academic services and those other units of the university" (Heron, ED, 2014). However, there was no specific requirement for teaching staff to engage with any of these other areas (aside from copyright), unless they wished to.

**Variety in staff involved in course development**

Teaching online could involve just one staff member (the course lecturer), or it could involve a combination of course co-ordinator, tutors and administration staff (Heron, ED, 2014). Staff also needed to interact with copyright staff to clear materials for use (Pukeko, T, 2014), although if they wanted to, they could work through the library staff who would help with them to source material and ensure it was appropriately permissioned. Some staff didn’t take advantage of this relationship because they weren’t aware the option existed, according to Heron (ED, 2014):

>I think lots of people don’t know that the library does that and they don’t know who their subject librarians are so they just go, I don’t know who to ask. I probably won’t get caught. No one will really mind. I’ll just scan this article and put it on Blackboard as a PDF because maybe they prefer to read it printed off or something.

Rolling over a course from one semester or year to the next would often (although not always) be carried out by other staff such as IT administrators, who teachers did not work closely with. Because of the relational distance, teaching staff were not always aware of what platform related or university protocol related changes might be occurring that could affect their online course. For example, Sparrow (T, 2014) noted that
Chapter 6: Victoria University

"sometimes you get them back and they don’t quite look like they looked like the year before, and you’re not sure whether they’ve changed the buttons or somebody else has changed the look of the program". The lack of communication between the sections translated to a lack of confidence that courses had been accurately revived. Sparrow (T, 2014) shared, "this year we had a really bad rollover and I just don't know if they knew what they were doing or what happened ... you looked at your course and it didn't look anything like it should have looked like". This then increased teachers’ workloads as they had to manually check each course in detail to ensure it still contained what it needed to contain.

Collaborative course design

Teachers also talked about working collaboratively with team colleagues to create courses, which allowed lecturers to work to their strengths, as Takahe (T, 2014) describes here:

> I designed the structure and the educational process and think about the learning goals and da da da and then she makes the content because she’s way more interested in the content. I’m more interested in the learning process and we make quite a good team.

However, working with others on already designed courses didn’t always go smoothly. Takake (T, 2016) noted that the biggest challenge in having a new lecturer working with you on a course was their desire to make changes to the course. "Every time somebody comes in, actually you don't waste time training. You waste time untraining them because each time they come in, because they're experts, they all want to redesign the course and bring in their new, innovative ideas" argued Takahe (T, 2016).

Sparrow and her colleagues worked collaboratively on course design, and although they tended to be individually responsible for teaching a course (where it was delivered in only one mode), they would still consult the team about potential changes to the course. This was not a required approach, but had become the norm, as Sparrow (T, 2014) describes:

> It's quite a collaborative kind of decision-making process although it could be individual if I wanted to I could just go and change things but we just don't tend to work like that. We tend to check with other people in the team because largely because there are multiple people teaching in the course.

There was an expectation that if a course in Sparrow's area needed revising that "whoever took it over would say is there anything that we need to think about, what could
Chapter 6: Victoria University

I do to change it what would work”, and that in response the team would "probably all have a bit of a say and we might take responsibility for doing a bit of it” (Sparrow, T, 2014). In this section, there was a combined sense of ownership across the courses in the programme, which had come about possibly because the team were "all really aware that the students are doing a whole package" of learning with them, and therefore there was a focus on how each part of the package (or programme) fit together (Sparrow, T, 2016).

Collaborative teaching

Several of the courses that participants discussed were team taught, for example Takahe (T, 2014) said "in my course I have different lecturers for every module and I teach on some of them and I kind of take them through the course". However, the level of input that course-co-ordinators might have over the content provided by the other lecturers varied. Takahe (T, 2014) would say to her module lecturers "this is kind of what I’m looking at. This amount of content, this level of depth. Go for it". In contrast, another teacher Takahe was familiar with would say "this is the course. I’ve designed the whole outline. I want you to give a lecture on this and I want you to give a lecture on that". Takahe (T, 2014) acknowledged that using this approach, her colleague had "much more control over the course content", however thought that "there’s advantages and disadvantages of both" approaches.

In Sparrow’s team, they had experimented with different ways of co-ordinating courses, particularly where there were online and face to face versions of the same course. The model they had currently settled on, to promote consistency across both courses, was that one person was responsible for "co-ordinating both papers but two of the lecturers work online and two of us work face to face" (Sparrow, T, 2014). All the teaching team members were then involved in discussions about what content should be taught and how, and the overall co-ordinator was responsible for ensuring cross-course consistency.

A disadvantage of working with other lecturers who developed content themselves was that there could sometimes be significant divergence between what the course co-ordinator had planned, and what the lecturer actually included in their section, as Takahe (T, 2014) described here:

I can brief one of my lecturers until the cows come home and then they turn up, they’re on camera and we start filming and they start talking and I just think, ohh no. That's not what I thought this module was going to be about and there’s nothing I can do. That is the module because it’s pre-recorded. That is the module and that’s the module for the next two years and that’s hard. I find that really hard.
Chapter 6: Victoria University

Takahe (T, 2014) noted that an obvious solution to this would be to teach the course entirely herself, however this conflicted with one of her key goals for the course "I want them to get a diversity of voices and opinions".

Having a team of supporting tutors and administrators was helpful in allowing teachers to rise above the minutiae of running a course, and focus on teaching, as Takahe (T, 2015) found.

*Because I had the administrator and because I had the tutor, I then felt like, for the first time in four years, I felt like I was actually teaching on that course because in the past, I've spent all my time either doing administration or trying to create a sense of community in the discussion forum and so this was the first time I felt like what I was contributing was actually aiding their learning rather than just creating the classroom walls. It was neat, it was really neat.*

The time freed up through having a teaching team allowed Takahe (T, 2015) to put up new course resources, give productive feedback to students, answer more questions on the modules, provide more scaffolding for assignments, and pay more attention to student progress, all of which she felt "helped the students' learning develop". In essence, having a team working on the course enabled Takahe (T, 2015) to move beyond "just survival" in her teaching of the course.

**CAD and CAT**

Pedagogical advice was available from the Centre for Academic Development team, while technical advice was available from a "capability group within IT" (Takahe, T, 2015), whose purpose was "to build staff capability in use of digital technology and learning and teaching" (Takahe, T, 2015). Within this latter group were individuals known as the contact for academic technology (CAT), who were linked to different faculty groups (Pukeko, T, 2014). They would provide advice on issues like "what platform we would use and how we would enrol students and how we would engage with students" (Takahe, T, 2015). Teachers relied on the IT staff and CAD to provide support and guidance when teaching online "because they are the ones who are really keeping an ear to the ground around what is going on in that space" (Takahe, T, 2015).

Within the Centre for Academic Development, there were staff that could assist with development of new courses, curriculum and assessment (Heron, ED, 2014), and could provide staff with "the bigger strategic thinking at the university " (Takahe, T, 2015). Importantly, the CAD staff were employed as lecturers, and had the same responsibilities to engage in teaching and research as the teaching staff that they supported. "I see us on the same level... I’m a lecturer just like everyone else in the school
is a lecturer and that’s how I tend to view my interaction and relationship with staff” (Heron, ED, 2014). However, faculty staff didn’t always share that view of the academic development staff, according to Heron (ED, 2014):

I’m not sure that that is the same image that schools and faculties have of us. I think schools and faculties see us as either, I don’t know if even above them is the right word, removed from them somehow, so I don’t think they see us as all operating in the same way but we do.

Takahe (T, 2014) found that "CAD were kind of helpful" when developing a new course, especially with embedding pedagogical principles in courses, "because I designed it from the beginning in conversation with them, it’s all, I think it was already quite pedagogically sound even though I didn’t know what I was doing necessarily". One thing that Takahe (T, 2014) found was very helpful from the CAD unit was that "they asked those difficult questions of me. You know, what am I trying to achieve? Why am I doing this assignment?".

Heron (T, 2014) found being in this role and supporting teachers with their practice very rewarding.

I’ve helped people out. I can see a difference in how they are thinking and acting and approaching their teaching after having talked with me or met with me or learnt some new skills through a workshop that I ran and that’s awesome.

However being an advisor rather than a direct collaborator meant that Heron (T, 2014) didn’t necessarily get to see how the advice or professional development provided impacted on students.

I’ll run a session and then people just disappear and you’ll never see or hear from them again and you think, I wonder if they ever did anything with that information that I gave them or I wonder if it did change what they were doing or I wonder if students like what they're doing.

Lecturer perceptions of CAD staff

Heron (ED, 2014) felt that it was important that CAD staff were lecturers rather than having a different job title to the academics they were supporting, in order to lend credence to the advice they gave teaching staff. He observed that "if we were all something else, I don’t know what that other title would be but it might not carry the same familiarity or currency that a lecturer does" (Heron, ED, 2014). In the past, the CAD team had found that "the role descriptions can influence people's perceptions of us and what we do" (Heron, ED, 2014). For example, when they had a part time PhD student
employed the CAD unit found that lecturers were less likely to listen to the advice of that member of the team, observing that "there was a lot of resistance to actually open up and talk about some of these issues because they were like, who is this guy? He's just a PhD student" (Heron, ED, 2014).

It was also important, Heron (ED, 2014) felt, that staff in the CAD unit had an intimate understanding of the challenges of being an academic, and therefore having the CAD staff employed as lecturers helped to support that shared understanding. Having the same expectations of managing teaching and research responsibilities meant that CAD staff were well placed to empathise with academic staff who responded to CAD's advice with "you know that we have to do research, so therefore you know this is too much effort for me" (Heron, ED, 2014).

Uncertain where to seek support

One issue with the technical and pedagogical support available was that staff weren't always sure who to contact for assistance, especially with staff turnover. For example, when Takahe (T, 2014) needed to make significant changes to an online course she found "I didn't know who in this university to go to for help". Sparrow (T, 2014) had similar issues, noting that in that past the team had a relationship with a support person who "was really good but she's gone now”. After that there was "one guy who came up once a week and I can't remember his name” and Sparrow (T, 2014) was unsure which department they were from, or where they would seek help from now if needed.

Heron (ED, 2014) thought that the way in which CAD lecturers worked both within their disciplinary schools, and also in a whole-of-university advisory capacity through the CAD unit might have contributed to staff confusion about who CAD were and what they did.

_We work both as a part of a school but then as a more advisory support type group as well. So I think maybe that contributes to a misunderstanding or a lack of understanding of who the CAD is or even what the CAD stands for. People still ask me, what is the CAD? Where are you from? that type of thing, which is a bit concerning._

The evolving system

Much like Massey University, the activity system for Victoria University was fairly stable during the research period. Similar to the Open Polytechnic and Massey University systems, there was alignment between teachers and their goals, and teachers and their community which remained consistent during the research period. There was some
tension observed between teachers and the technologies in use in terms of the limitations teachers felt the tools placed on their teaching practice, although this did not prevent teachers designing effective courses. Another area of tension was the dearth of specific online teaching support or clear roles and responsibilities for other staff in the development of online courses, which meant that teaching staff weren’t sure where to seek support within the institution for online course design. The areas of biggest change in the Victoria University system were workload and PBRF pressure, which increased significantly between 2014 and 2015, and stayed at a high level for 2016, taking what was initially an area of tension to a level where these factors had a significant negative impact on teachers’ abilities to teach effectively.

The system illustrated

The Victoria University system is captured in the following CHAT diagrams, which illustrate the tensions and contradictions occurring in 2014 (Figure 6.1), and then 2015-2016 (Figure 6.2).

*Figure 6.1. Activity system for Victoria University (2014)*
Chapter Summary

The biggest areas of tension in the Victoria University system were the conflicts between workload and research expectations, and teachers desires to have time to be innovative with their online teaching. Participants expressed mixed feelings about the LMS, Blackboard, but were for the most part pragmatic about working with its affordances and the other tools available for teaching. There were very few explicit rules related to online teaching because it was not a priority for the institution. That provided participants with a certain level of freedom, but also with very little organised support. As a response to this, staff were engaged quite heavily with communities of practice which had a significant influence on their online teaching practice. During the research period there were several changes in organisational structure and management, which had an impact on staff abilities to predict which course design aspects would be likely to be supported and align with new visions for programmes. During this time pressure on staff workload and research expectations also increased.
Chapter 7: Summary of Institutional Cases

This chapter draws together the common threads observed across the three institutional cases, and summarises what was found in terms of individual, institutional and environmental factors influencing teaching. Linkages between the findings and the literature are explored, and new understandings supported by the research are highlighted.

Individual Factors

Teacher beliefs and experiences played a large part in teacher's views of what a good online course would look like, and on teachers' individual goals for their teaching. However, their beliefs, experiences and goals had less effect on their use of tools than might have been predicted, due to institutional constraints. The agency of individual teachers in creating their online course was also tempered by institutional resourcing and rules, which will be discussed in the next section.

Teacher beliefs and experience

Regardless of their institutional affiliation and personal backgrounds, the majority of teachers and educational designers held a view that effective teaching and learning involved dialogue between the teacher and student and therefore teachers preferred to design courses and use tools that would facilitate that dialogical interaction. Because of this, a common focus was on how to create an environment online that would support the kind of easy dialogue between teacher and student that can be achieved in a face to face teaching context.

The participants had varying backgrounds and levels of experience with teaching and designing courses. There seemed to be a tendency for teachers who had more experience to be more accommodating of student's needs and understanding of the challenges students' faced in learning by distance. This resulted in the more experienced teachers taking pains to ensure their online courses were as accessible as possible, such as providing multiple ways to access the same information. In comparison, less experienced teachers seemed to expect students to follow the learning path they had laid out, and to get frustrated when students appeared to not be following it. This could be indicative of different conceptions of learning and teaching held by teachers, similar to those noted by Bond, Ross, and Madill (2006).
Teacher goals

The goals that teachers and educational designers set for themselves remained stable during the period of research, with little variation within individuals over the two and a half years. However, the actions that they took to achieve their goals sometimes changed over time. For example, teachers experimented with different tools to engage students in dialogue, where the initial tool used had not had the desired effect, although changes in this area were strongly tempered by institutional restrictions on technology choices, echoing previous findings suggesting teaching innovations are bounded by available technologies (Bain & McNaught, 2006; Steel, 2009). The amount of focus on teaching goals compared to research goals also varied during the research period, and was closely related to institutional pressures on research at various times. This is discussed further in the section later in this chapter on institutional factors.

Tools

LMS

Teachers were limited in the tools they used to create and maintain their online courses. For the most part, teachers stayed within the bounds of the LMS provided when creating their course. That meant that the inherent pedagogy and affordances of the chosen LMS played a large part in course design, as predicted (Baran et al., 2011; Bennett et al., 2017; Shelton, 2018; Steel, 2009). Occasionally teachers supplemented the LMS with external tools such as twitter, or email, but for the most part teaching occurred within the course page on the LMS.

For some participants the boundaries of the LMS had little effect on their course design. For example, the Massey participants using Moodle (VStream) did not identify any particular limitations of the technologies they had available to them. The additional tools they had available to create videos from their computer, or to record face to face lectures for provision online merged well enough with the LMS that they felt their needs for content provision were met, and the communication tools inherent in the LMS met their needs for communicating with students.

By contrast, teachers at the Open Polytechnic found both of the LMS options in use to be restrictive of their teaching. For the Moodle LMS, the restrictions were not to do with the functionality of the LMS, but rather were related to organisational processes which restricted teacher ability to add or amend resources on the course page during a trimester. For the iQualify LMS, participants noted the limited affordances of the technology and expressed concerns about the tool's ability to support the kind of teaching
they wanted to engage in. This was because the iQualify platform seemed to be designed as an information repository primarily, with limited dialogical tools, and no ability for teachers to add or amend content once the course was created and uploaded to the platform.

The Victoria University participants had mixed experiences with using the Blackboard LMS. One teacher found its affordances quite restrictive and would have preferred another platform to work within. The others also acknowledged Blackboard’s limitations, but took pragmatic approaches to designing courses with it, supplementing with other tools where needed (e.g., videos and twitter).

**Other tools**

Where teachers used other technologies in their teaching they tended to be either tools that were also supported by the institution, such as video capture systems, or tools that were in wide use socially, such as twitter. A few participants made use of tools to create slide-based video lectures, and in these instances they tended to use the technology recommended by their educational designer, or by fellow teachers in their department. Ease of use for both students and teachers was a priority when teachers chose tools.

**IT Pace of change**

The pace of technological change from 2013 to 2017 was significant (refer Table 2.1), particularly for access and usage of the Internet. Teachers were not always aware of the extent to which their students had access to high speed Internet, and tended to make conservative estimates, based on experience from previous years (or decades) about which tools to use on their courses, and on assumptions about the level of Internet accessibility students had. Educational designers, on the other hand, were led more by the available technologies, and tended to assume that students would have appropriate levels of access to support recent technologies such as video conferencing and streaming.

**Community**

The teachers across all three institutions referred frequently to community as an influence on their teaching practice and course design. The Open Polytechnic participants relied heavily on their peers to find innovative ways to teach within the constraints of the LMS functionality. Within Massey and Victoria Universities, teachers referred to communities of practice as sources of advice and inspiration for their own teaching. Informal professional development through peers was significant for teachers at all three institutions, and for some was their main or only form of ongoing development.
as a teacher. By contrast, the educational designers did not refer to immediate peers as having an influence, and seemed less community inclined.

Teachers and educational designers followed wider education related communities (e.g., ascilite, Chronicle of Higher Education) for advice and to keep abreast of trends and new ideas in education. It was interesting to note that all of the participants had some kind of teaching or eLearning qualification. Academics in New Zealand are not socialised or compelled to engage in professional development or qualifications in tertiary teaching (Sutherland, 2018). The participants in this study therefore, were outliers in terms of their engagement with ongoing professional development and their interest in (and gaining of) teaching related qualifications.

**Summary of individual factors**

The factor that participants in this study had the most agency over in the online teaching practice was their teaching goal, followed closely by their engagement with community as they worked towards their goal. As this was the area they had most control over, there were no examples of tension or conflict observed. Teachers’ use of technology was significantly affected by the institutional choice of LMS, and the additional technologies supported by their IT department. Therefore, teachers had much less control over this aspect of their teaching, and there were some instances where there was significant tension between the individual and the tools they were required to use, especially when the affordances of the technology available were at odds with the teacher’s pedagogical philosophy. Participants at Massey University and Victoria University had comparatively more freedom in their choice of tools. When choosing technologies to use in addition to the LMS, teachers were influenced by educational designers and by their peers. Community was a significant source of professional development for teachers who engaged with the community for ideas on how to improve teaching practice and course design.

**Institutional Factors**

The systems and processes within each institution had a noticeable effect on teachers’ actions in creating courses. The impact of institutional structures and processes on participants varied across the three institutions. At the Universities, teachers were conscious of large volumes of paperwork for creating new courses, but very little in the way of rules affecting their course design once a new course had been approved by the institution and CUAP. However, at the Open Polytechnic, institutional rules and processes comprised the majority of the issues discussed by participants that impacted on their
teaching. This is likely related to two factors: first, the industrial model that was clearly in place at the Open Polytechnic; and second, the differing funding and reporting requirements for ITPs compared to Universities. The industrial model will be discussed in this section, while funding will be discussed in the following section on Environmental factors.

**Institutional goals for online learning**

The three institutions in this research were chosen because of their differing levels of involvement in and prioritisation of online and distance learning, and this was reflected in the participants experiences. At the Open Polytechnic, where distance and online learning was the primary mode of teaching and learning there were clear rules, processes and roles for staff involved in creating courses. The organisation followed an industrial model for creation of learning materials, and the environment could be considered highly regulated. The institutional focus was divided between securing ongoing funding sources, and using technological tools to support students' successful completion of courses. Staff were concerned with student successful completion from a social justice perspective, but this complimented the organisational push to improve successful completion rates in order to secure governmental funding.

Massey University had a strong focus on distance learning, but also had a strong campus teaching presence so teachers from this campus were constantly negotiating the different pressures involved in face to face and online teaching. Technical support and professional development were available to teachers 'on request' and there some minor expectations around online case design, with little in the way of policies or processes to ensure consistency.

As an institution, Victoria University had little interest in online teaching outside of dabbling with new tools when the technologies were touted as ‘the next big game changer’ for teaching (e.g., MOOCs). The majority of online and distance teaching programmes had come to Victoria through mergers and acquisitions of other teaching establishments, rather than evolving from within Victoria itself. Staff choosing to teach online occurred in pockets here and there and were expected to seek their own support if required. On campus teaching and research were seen as the main priorities, both institutionally, and by staff.

**Institutional use of technology**

Massey and Victoria Universities showed a preference toward lecture capture as a key technology to use in online distance teaching, where they could leverage off the on-
campus teaching that was already occurring. In instances where there were no on-campus lectures to record, the next automatic approach appeared to be making use of video recording tools and studios to pre-record lectures for students. This approach differed markedly from the Open Polytechnic, where institutionally created video was less common. Instead there was a greater focus on creation of well-developed course websites and materials, online course activities, and use of open source or creative commons imagery and publicly available videos. In both instances there was little true innovation occurring, with new ‘innovations’ effectively substituting new technologies for old, but retaining the same pedagogical underpinnings, as has been suggested is a common occurrence in eLearning (Kirkwood, 2014; Salmon, 2005).

Rules

Rules and processes had differing effects on the participants dependant on their institution. Course design rules and processes were felt keenly by the Open Polytechnic participants, but had only a small impact on teachers at Massey and Victoria Universities. Similarly, the division of labour involved in creating online courses was a significant area of tension for the Open Polytechnic participants, but not for the University participants who had much greater autonomy over their courses. Workload pressures, including pressure to carry out and publish research, were noticeable for all participants, but had the largest impact on the University staff.

Course design policies and processes

Rules, policies and processes had a significant impact on the participants from the Open Polytechnic. The industrial model involved policies and processes that guided how courses were to be created and maintained. There were financial implications for any changes made to the courses so any time spent on course development or revision was meant to be recorded. There were restrictions in place to limit the amount of change that teachers could implement in a course both while it was being taught, and also in between offerings. Courses had to follow design templates and contain specific elements that were common to all courses, and it was the role of educational designers to ensure that each course met the requirements. Teachers did not feel they had the academic freedom to teach as they wanted to within the institutional constraints. This was a key finding not previously discussed in the ODL literature which has tended to focus on technology affordances impacting teaching practice rather than institutional rules or policies.

Participants at Massey and Victoria University commented on rules and processes primarily related to the development of new courses that needed to be accredited. For
existing courses that teachers wanted to revise or change, there was little to prevent teacher's changing whatever they wanted, and there were no institutional requirements to interact with educational designers or any other staff in the process. The biggest impediment to staff at the Universities in making course-related changes was the time needed to make changes.

**Workload**

Participants across the three institutions commented on high workload and pressure to be more productive with the hours worked, which was commensurate with the TEU survey findings (Oosterman et al., 2017). As Oosterman et al. (2017) note, working long hours has an impact on health and wellbeing, however participants observed that not working long hours meant that either their teaching or their research would suffer as there simply wasn’t enough time to do both well in a standard working week. If participants did prioritise health and family time by not working over 40 hours a week, then they were in the position of having to either reduce their research (and their chances of promotion), or let their students have a lower quality learning experience.

**Division of Labour**

Each institution had a different approach to the provision of distance online courses, and commensurate with that, each institution had a different approach to the division of labour and recognition of roles and responsibilities in the course design process. The Open Polytechnic had the most clearly defined roles and processes for all staff. Massey University had clearly defined roles for teachers and educational designers, but processes were minimal. At Victoria University there were no clearly defined roles or processes, as little attention had been paid to online education and how that might differ from on campus education.

The Open Polytechnic industrial model dictated the roles and responsibilities of teachers, educational designers and other support staff in the course creation process. This process was highly regulated, due to the conception of courses as capitalised assets and the need to therefore capture all costs associated with their development. Consequently, interactions between teachers and educational designers occurred only in the confines of the course design process. Within the process, educational designers were accorded a large influence on the design of courses. This level of involvement (and the procedural requirement for educational designers to sign off changes made by teachers) was the cause of significant tension between teaching staff and the educational design team as both parties vied for overall ownership of the material being created.
Chapter 7: Summary of Institutional Cases

At Massey University, teaching staff were encouraged to make use of the central team of teaching and learning consultants who fulfilled the role of educational designer in the organisation. However, teaching staff were aware that there were small numbers of staff in this team, and so limited their interactions so as not to overload the educational designers. The large ratio of staff to educational designers also meant that the EDs were only able to assist a small number of faculty, usually those staff who proactively sought help and who consequently were likely to be the staff who were least in need of help.

Victoria University's academic development unit included staff who provided educational design support to staff. As with Massey, this support was provided to staff who requested it. Support to trial new technologies was available through the IT department. Teachers were conscious that experimenting with new technologies was likely to get more support if it was innovative rather than mainstream. There were no specific processes for teachers to engage with educational technology or IT support staff, as they played no prescribed role in the online course development process.

Working from a campus-based model, the Universities privileged the perspective of the teacher, and educational design was provided as a service to teaching staff rather than having its own purpose or mandate. While this approach meant that there was no tension between faculty staff and educational design staff, it also meant there was huge variety in online course provision, with no quality assurance oversight. As organisations move further into ODL, issues of quality and consistency are likely to increase, and the Universities will need to make decisions about the role they want educational designers to play in effecting consistent quality courses.

**Summary of Institutional Factors**

Guiney (2013) suggested that organisations need to give staff time to experiment with new technologies if they want online teaching to be successful, and that infrastructure, staff development opportunities, and a supportive organisational culture are also important. This research echoed these findings but also identified the significant impact that institutional policies and division of labour have on online teaching practice. Workload issues had a significant impact on participant's abilities to engage effectively with online teaching, by limiting the time that participants had to explore new technologies or make significant changes to courses. Workload models didn’t always capture the additional time involved in online teaching, particularly in the Universities.

Institutional desire for consistency and quality assurance resulted in guidelines or course templates being used to varying degrees across the three institutions. The most restrictive use of course guidelines effectively removed the ability for responsive teaching,
while the less restrictive implementations provided beneficial structure, suggesting that a balance needs to be achieved when introducing templated approaches to online courses. Balance is also beneficial when dividing course development responsibilities between teaching staff and educational designers. Where teaching staff were free to seek support from educational designers as needed (e.g., Massey University), the relationships between the two was positive and resulted in effective collaboration on course creation. Where teaching staff were required to submit their work to educational designers for approval before it could be put online (e.g., the Open Polytechnic) the relationships between the two groups were fraught with tension, resulting in conflict over course content and design. The findings suggest that an optimal solution to providing quality online courses would involve sufficient resourcing for online courses to be created collaboratively between teachers and educational designers.

Environmental Factors

The wider educational system environment had differing effects on teachers depending on the institution they were in. As an ITP, the Open Polytechnic was subject to different funding arrangements (due to the type of institution and its purpose as defined by government) than the Universities. Lack of postgraduate students restricted the Polytechnic’s access to PBRF funding, so the institution was more heavily reliant on government student completions funding than the Universities.

The different institutions also had differing visions and were positioning themselves in slightly different places in the competitive tertiary education environment that has been in place since the education reforms (Crawford, 2016). This impacted on their areas of focus, where resourcing was directed within the institution, and what departments were expected to promote. Victoria University was heavily invested in its status as a premier research institution, and accordingly pressure to produce research was felt most strongly by those participants. Massey University was positioning itself as a ‘global player’, and internationalisation was a key focus. The Open Polytechnic was focusing on its strengths as an online distance learning provider, and was hoping to onsell some of its products and services to other tertiary institutions. These differences in vision were apparent to participants and were seen as driving institutional policies that affected their practice.

Government funding

The most influential environmental factor impacting on teaching practice was government funding. Pressures were felt by all participants in three main areas - student
completions, diversified revenue, and PBRF. Participants at the Open Polytechnic were the most aware of the drive to retain students, however as the research progressed Massey and Victoria staff also began to talk about student completion pressures. The differential funding regimes for Universities and Polytechnics could explain why the Open Polytechnic staff were more aware of the issue initially. Of main concern to participants were requests from within the organisation to reconsider grades or assessments in instances where the proportion of students passing was below targets. Staff felt that these pressures could result in the decline of academic rigour and integrity, similar to the concerns noted by Oosterman et al., (2017).

Participants at Massey University and the Open Polytechnic were conscious of institutional drives to increase diversified revenue. At Massey the focus seemed to be primarily around internationalisation. For the Open Polytechnic internationalisation along with creation of white-labelled courses for onselling to other institutions were strategies that were both obvious to participants and impacted on their teaching practice.

**PBRF**

The comments from the participant in this study about research pressure and in particular the challenges of responding to PBRF requirements while still teaching effectively echo the findings of the TEU member survey (Oosterman et al., 2017) which noted that 43% of respondents found pressure to produce research had become worse or much worse over the last decade. In other words, the experiences of the participants in this study are reflective of the sector as a whole.

Of particular concern to the staff at Victoria University (and to a lesser extent Massey University), was their individual employment prospects should they not produce sufficient research outputs to get the desired PBRF grade. This concern, stated explicitly by some staff and implicitly by others was not unfounded. Since the inception of PBRF, tertiary institutions have changed internal policies on hiring and promotion to match PBRF criteria (Buckle & Creedy, 2018b; Harland et al., 2010). As (Roberts, 2013, p. 512) noted "it is now virtually impossible to gain employment as an academic in Education without good prospect of earning a funded PBRF grade".

The tenor of comments made by participants in this study about the impact of PBRF is similar to findings by Sutherland (2018). Participants were concerned about the time needed to create portfolios, which reduced time available to actually carry out research, and expressed frustration with teaching workloads that made carrying out research very challenging. Similar to the moderately negative impact that Sutherland (2018) found PBRF had on her participants academic lives, the participants in this study
also commented on the stress and inequality issues of PBRF (e.g. part time academics having to meet the same standards as full timers, national publications not receiving the same weighting as international publications, even if they are the more appropriate place to publish in order to serve the community).

Given the issues raised by participants about the PBRF process, it is heartening to see that the 2019 review will consider whether it may be appropriate to move to group-based assessment, and whether adjustments are required to ensure equity across different genders, ages, ethnicities and working arrangements (Ministry of Education, 2018b).

Technology changes

Throughout the period, changes in the wider education environment globally were seen to have an impact on participants and their institutions. Trends in open access education such as MOOCs and OERs were of interest to the institutions, and some participants felt encouraged to create similar resources. The Open Polytechnic was conscious of societal changes in the way people interacted with service providers, such as making greater use of apps and websites, and less use of person to person interactions, and built their new LMS around those expectations. Massey University invested significantly in video capture systems for lecture theatres and a studio for filming, as broadband speeds and infiltration had now reached levels where it was a feasible option for providing content to students. Participants were conscious of worldwide trends such as flipped classrooms, learning analytics and blended learning (Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, et al., 2014, 2015) and didn't want to be seen as the ones who were behind, or archaic in their teaching methods.

Higher education as a business

Participants were conscious of the underlying conception of education as a business, and students as consumers (Emerson & Mansvelt, 2014; Rhoades & Slaughter, 2004). This was apparent to all participants across the institutions and they reported examples from interactions with students, with managers and with institutional strategy that they felt promoted this view. As a group the participants rejected this conception of education, and indicated frustration that the notion persisted and seemed to be spreading.

Further to the invidious sense of academic capitalism was a perception by some participants that managers at their institution were more driven by business models than by education models. This was particularly the case for Open Polytechnic staff, who had recently undergone restructuring, and whose work processes were under review again.
These participants expressed frustration that a lack of consultation had resulted in decisions made by managers around workload, course responsibilities and workflow that they felt were detrimental to both their teaching and research practice. This echoes Bacon (2014)’s observations of increasing managerialism, and hollow consultations.

**Summary of Environmental Factors**

There were a number of environmental factors that had an influence either directly or indirectly on participants’ teaching practices. Participants across all three institutions were conscious of the need to meet government funding requirements. This translated into efforts to support students through to successful course completion, and in perceived pressure to produce sufficient research to meet PBRF requirements. Alongside this, participants were aware of changing technology and new approaches to tertiary teaching, and were concerned about keeping up with those trends. The notion of the student as consumer was received by participants with a certain degree of resignation. While objecting to the idea that an education can be bought, participants were also aware that this was a wider societal issue that they had little ability to change.

**Overall Summary of Influential Factors**

Teaching practice in the online and distance space at tertiary institutions in New Zealand is influenced by factors on several levels. At the individual level, participants beliefs and experiences influenced their teaching goals, and their intended approach to achieve their goal. Individuals drew on a number of sources for ideas to improve their practice, including professional associations and institutional PD, but were most influenced by their peers through informal learning situations and communities of practice.

At an institutional level, workload allocation, and processes around the division of labour in course design had the most impact for participants. Staff frequently felt they did not have sufficient time to effectively teach, due to demands of the administration and service aspects of their role. The Open Polytechnic had a distinct division of labour for course creation, and whilst this improved consistency of courses, it had a significant negative effect on the relationships between teachers and educational designers. In the Universities, there were insufficient educational designers to work effectively across all online courses, and so staff were less supported, and consistency of quality was lower.

Wider environmental factors were noted by participants, with varying levels of impact. Government funding models impacted on staff through organisational pressure to achieve certain pass rates for their courses, and to produce sufficient research outputs.
Participants were aware of changing technologies and wider education trends, and had given thought to how they might affect their practice. The implicit notion of students as consumers affected teacher's relationships with students, and with managers, as they argued over students' rights vs academic rigour.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has drawn together the findings from the individual cases, and reframed them in terms of the factors that are influential at individual, institutional and environmental levels in the online distance teaching system. Through the chapter comparison has been made between the findings from this research, and what was known from the literature, showing the contribution of this research to the body of knowledge in ODL and eLearning. In the next chapter, the implications of these findings are discussed, and recommendations for individuals, institutions and policy makers who wish to achieve effective online distance tertiary teaching are presented.
Chapter 7: Summary of Institutional Cases
Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

In this final chapter the consolidated research findings are elucidated to highlight the implications of the research. The reader is reminded of the context and limitations of the findings, and areas for further research are identified. Finally, on the basis of the research findings and implications, recommendations are provided for individuals, institutions or policy makers interested in the development and provision of ODL education in New Zealand.

Implications

Throughout this thesis, the elements investigated have been considered through the lens of the CHAT framework, which divides a system into subject, goals, tools, rules, community and division of labour. As we consider the implications of the study findings to the wider tertiary ODL community, the CHAT framework will again be used to frame the discussion. Then we draw the lens a little wider to consider the larger contextual factors that influenced this research such as government funding and global education and technological trends.

Goals

Building upon the literature that has studied individual teacher’s beliefs and goals, this research went further and explored the relationship between individual teacher goals and the goals of their institution. The study found consistency within individuals of their teaching goals during the research period, but divergence or conflict in some cases between individual goals and institutional goals, which is perhaps to be expected given that many faculty across all three institutions were strong supporters of the concept of ‘Academic Freedom’. Where such divergence occurred, teaching staff tended to prioritise their individual goals, and work towards achieving those even if that meant working against institutional goals. This can be problematic for institutions wanting to provide consistent quality and service to students, and suggests that institutions may want to make greater efforts to gain academic buy-in during development and implementation of institutional vision and goals. Robust (rather than hollow) consultation with teaching and course development staff on significant changes to institutional goals and direction will also help identify potential roadblocks and unintended consequences of change which will have the double effect of ensuring staff feel included in decision making, and of minimising the risk of not achieving the desired institutional goal because of unrecognised internal barriers impinging on the new direction.
Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

Tools

This research expands on the findings typically reported in the literature around teacher uptake of technology by illuminating the variety of influences external to the teacher that impact on their use of technology. The findings showed that the technologies available within an institution provided the main toolset used by teachers and academics in developing their ODL courses, effectively providing boundaries to teaching innovation. The universities were less regulated than the Open Polytechnic in tool use, and teachers at Massey and Victoria universities felt free to use the technologies that suited them in their teaching and only minorly constrained by the LMS affordances. In contrast, Open Polytechnic teachers expressed significant levels of tension and frustration with the prescribed tools, and were highly critical of the affordances of the incoming LMS iQualify, as well as the regulations limiting teacher use of the outgoing LMS, Moodle.

The increasing shift toward blended and distance learning had more impact on the Victoria University staff, for whom face to face teaching was the norm and the priority, than for staff at Massey University or the Open Polytechnic for whom distance teaching was well embedded as a practice. At the Universities, mixed levels of institutional support for blended or distance learning, and a focus on meeting the needs of the students who were physically present meant that there was less incentive for teachers to invest in distance learning design. Those teachers who did focus significantly on distance learning tended to be driven by their own beliefs and values, as institutional drivers were lacking. Also lacking were institutional constraints on tool use, which enabled those teachers who were interested in developing their distance learning to do so in their own way, although this came at the cost of lack of technical support and resourcing, increasing the time cost of course development as well as the potential for inconsistency across the University.

Rules

The documentation of the regulatory impact on individuals and institutions is one of the key areas of contribution to the literature that is provided by this thesis, as this area has had little investigation to date. Rules and resourcing can support achievement of a goal, or they can provide barriers or obstacles to that achievement. Participants in this research talked primarily of rules or regulations that impacted negatively on their teaching practice. There were very few instances of staff considering resourcing to be adequate to their needs, for the most part there was concern or frustration expressed that the resourcing provided would not allow for the quality or quantity of work required to
achieve either their or the institution’s goals. Therefore, the need for institutions to increase resourcing for course design was clearly signalled in the findings.

The biggest regulatory burden for the University staff was related to the creation of new courses or programmes that needed to be approved by CUAP. This was the source of most discussion around burdensome levels of paperwork and bureaucracy. Creating new programmes was so rare for the Open Polytechnic staff, that there was no discussion of this in the findings. In cases where a new programme was discussed, it had been conceptualised and promoted by marketing, strategy or executive staff, and meeting NZQA regulatory requirements was handled by a different section, with little input from teaching staff.

In the context of making changes to current courses, the university participants were effectively unrestrained by institutional processes or policies in their course design, outside of consideration of whether the technological tools they preferred to use would integrate or be supported by the institutional IT staff. In comparison, the industrial model of Open Polytechnic course design meant that staff there were subject to a highly regulated process for making changes to courses. This regulated process was the greatest source of tension and conflict experienced by the Open Polytechnic participants as it affected nearly every aspect of their teaching practice, from goal setting, through use of tools, and who, how and when teaching staff had to interact with others to create courses. A large part of this tension occurred because there was limited or hollow consultation and communication with affected staff during revision of rules that would affect teaching practice. As noted above, inclusion of faculty and course designer voices when reviewing or developing systems and processes would be beneficial in preventing inefficiencies stemming from a lack of management level cognisance of the intricacies involved in frontline course design and delivery.

**Division of Labour**

The institutions studied had varying structures for the division of labour in ODL course design, which had varying influence on completed courses. In the Open Polytechnic, the clearly distinct roles privileged educational designer input much more than the university models. Massey University, with its history of ODL, had a clearer mandate for educational design input into course design, but even so the degree to which teachers chose to involve educational designers varied and was not prescribed. At Victoria University, teachers were free to seek support from the academic development unit, or the IT unit, but there was no expectation this would occur. The quality of relationships between teachers, educational designers, and others in the divided labour
process was dependent on institutional policies and processes. In the highly regulated Open Polytechnic system, the relationship between teacher and educational designer was fraught with tension and struggles over course ownership. In the less regulated university settings, teachers saw educational designers as valuable support staff.

This study thus provides a significant contribution to the ODL literature by detailing how roles and responsibilities in course design within an industrial model occur in reality. It provides case examples of issues that can occur when the activity of teaching is divided among multiple staff with unclear boundaries and ownership of material. Despite the history of ODL and the predominance of industrial model delivery setups, little research has been done on the lived experience of faculty and support staff implementing such models.

**Contextual Factors**

Stepping out from an institutional perspective, to consider the wider social, educational and technological context, there were a number of aspects of the wider context that impacted on the lived experiences of teachers and course designers in this research. These factors would also be highly influential to other New Zealand institutions, while similar factors would be influential to institutions and individuals in other parts of the world.

**Governmental influences**

Participants at all institutions observed the impact of the government Tertiary Education Strategy, and the funding regime overseen by the TEC and commented on their effects on teaching practice. The competitive funding environment was seen as driving the push by institutions to capture international students, and to bring in diversified revenue which had the corresponding effect of pushing for courses to be culturally neutral (in contradiction to the Treaty of Waitangi obligations the institutions and participants were focused on meeting). The Open Polytechnic, as an ITP, was the first to put pressure on staff to increase student pass and completion rates, followed a year or two later by the universities. All participants felt the pressure of the PBRF funding regime and were critical of it, although it had the most effect for Victoria University participants, most likely because of the institutions positioning of itself as the most highly ranked research focused university in New Zealand.

**Global technological and educational influences**

Participants commented on the conception of higher education as a business that appeared to be driving management decisions within their own institutions and
worldwide. Some participants felt institutional pressure to engage with global trends in educational practice such as flipped classrooms, MOOCs, and learning analytics with mixed expectations of any improvement to teaching practice through engaging in these innovations. Increasing connectivity and Internet speeds enabled video as an ODL teaching tool, resulting in teachers being heavily encouraged to use video for their teaching practice, despite any pedagogical or ethical concerns they might have. Teachers were concerned that the 24/7 nature of communications and use of the Internet were creating unrealistic expectations in students of teacher availability.

**Effective and Ineffective ODL Systems**

According to CHAT theory, systems are constantly evolving to reduce tensions and conflicts within them. It is unlikely that any system will ever be in a state without tension. However, there are degrees to which a system can be considered as functioning effectively, and institutions should be aiming for the most functional system possible within their constraints.

An ineffective ODL system is shown in Figure 8.1. In this system the institutional strategies, policies and processes are in conflict with teacher’s needs, for example workload may prohibit effective ODL, or regulations around development of ODL courses may be overly restrictive. When this is the case there will also be an impact on effective teaching, as the conflicting institutional rules and regulations may actually prevent effective teaching from occurring. Where there is conflict between teachers and educational designers (as was seen for example in the case of the Open Polytechnic), this will also have a negative effect on ODL teaching, as the two groups will not be able to leverage off each other’s expertise to create something more than they could have separately.
Figure 8.1. Ineffective ODL teaching activity system

An effective ODL teaching system would look like Figure 8.2. In this system, teachers are supported by the institutional strategies and policies, including policies around workload, professional development, and teaching vs research time. Teachers have effective relationships with their community, and with the others involved in course design, specifically educational designers (but also potentially IT staff, library staff, student support staff). Teachers are able to choose appropriate technologies to support their teaching, and those technologies will (for the most part, although not always) assist the teacher in their teaching goal. To enable this, funding approaches would align with institutional goals for teaching and research, and would support investment in professional development of teaching for tertiary teachers.
Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

Figure 8.2. Effective ODL teaching activity system
Limitations and Future Research

The research was conducted with small groups of participants in each of the three New Zealand institutions studied. Whilst the experiences documented in this thesis are representative of particular contexts, they may not necessarily be representative of the larger institution, especially given the self-selected nature of the sample. Furthermore, the size of the sample means that the findings may not be representative of the New Zealand ODL sector as a whole. Conference presentations of sections of the results to the wider sector did result in positive feedback, reinforcing the notion that these findings are unlikely to be confined to the three institutions studied. However, it would be beneficial for future research to be conducted with other ODL institutions to investigate the influencing factors in their particular contexts.

The data were gathered within a specific period of time, between January 2014 and June 2016. As the research has shown, and theory predicted, the contextual factors in play at that time were influential on participants’ experiences of teaching at that time. If the research were to be repeated in another time frame, with different contextualising influences to the fore such as will be in place following New Zealand’s review of vocational education in 2019, it is possible that different elements of the ODL system may be highlighted as conflicting or in need of addressing. There is an opportunity for future research to explore the extent to which contextualising temporal and societal factors influence the ODL teaching experience, utilising the current research as a comparison point.

An obvious gap in the current research is the lack of individual management voices from the institutions studied. It can be challenging to ascertain who within an organisation is responsible for particular strategy and policy decisions that impact on front line staff, as the dynamics and decision making at higher levels are frequently fluid. There are also commercial reasons why management staff may be less open to discussing strategy and policy decisions in more detail than is available in public documents. Initial discussions with potential managerial participants for the current research indicated that any participation would have to go through various channels for approval, and that data provided would likely be highly sanitised and closely aligned with external publications. Therefore, in the current research, public documents such as Annual Reports and Strategy publications were used as a proxy to represent the managerial voice. However, should researchers find a way around this barrier, the individual manager perspective would be a worthwhile area to explore in future research, as it could provide an alternative and complementary perspective to the views of faculty and educational designers.
Recommendations

This section draws on the findings from the research and the implications that emerged, in order to provide specific recommendations to individuals and institutions considering ODL. Notes are also provided for policy makers on the relevance of the research findings for policy and governance of the Tertiary Education sector in New Zealand.

Recommendations for Individuals

The following recommendations are for individual teachers who would like to engage in ODL. While there are many aspects of the ODL system that are beyond a teacher’s level of influence, there remain several significant areas that are within individual control. These recommendations focus on the areas that individual teachers can have an impact on.

Be clear about your goal, and what tools you need to achieve it

Effective use of teaching tools requires conscious awareness of what the needs of the teaching are, and how the tool is expected to fill those needs. It is also easier to choose tools for teaching when the criteria that they need to fulfil has been identified. Using tools blindly without consideration of the implicit pedagogy in their design will result in that pedagogy driving teaching practice whether it is intended or not. Teachers need to think carefully about the purpose of each element of the course, how their teaching philosophy meshes with the tools being used, and consider whether they need to make changes to the tools or the course design to increase constructive alignment.

Be aware of the needs of the distance student

Teaching online is not like teaching face to face, and a key reason is because the student cohorts are different. ODL students are more likely to be part time, choosing an online learning experience because they cannot manage a synchronous one. However, they still need to feel connected to the teacher and the other students. Good online course design needs to include effective communication tools which do not force students into particular times or places to connect. Good ODL design also needs to pre-empt the questions that students are likely to ask, and provide answers in a clearly accessible place.

Recognise the time needed for effective ODL course creation

Allow time to create online distance material. Teachers new to ODL will need time initially to learn how ODL teaching differs from face to face teaching, and what
implications that has for the design of courses and interactions with students. With ODL a significant portion of teaching time is taken up before students enrol, in the development of an effective course. Teaching via ODL does not have to take more time than face to face teaching (dependant on teaching style and preparation habits), however it is unlikely to take less time, so it is not an easier alternative to face to face teaching.

**Learn from others; an individual does not have to be the sole expert**

Colleagues are useful sources of advice and support. Grass roots communities of practice are to be recommended, as they can provide practical tips relevant to the student’s sociohistorical cohort. Professional associations that specialise in ODL are also useful ways to learn more about effective ODL.

Distance educators have for decades worked in teams to create effective learning material. While in the past this has been partly because of specialist technological knowledge gaps which may not be the case today, there is still significant value in working with others to create ODL courses. See educational designers as collaborators. They bring a wider view of teaching and learning from outside of an individual teacher’s discipline and area of experience, and can provide advice on a variety of approaches and tools to use. It is also valuable to have peer review of ODL courses to pick up on any discrepancies in course design or content, and educational designers can help with this as well.

**Seek professional development**

If the organisation does not provide specific professional development for ODL teaching, request it. In the meantime, teachers should avail themselves of informal learning opportunities through conversations with others who are teaching online. Join or start a teacher led community of practice where experiences can be shared, and ask for advice. Consider further training in teaching, eLearning or ODL course design. Teaching is an art as much as a science, and a profession more than a job. Ongoing professional development is part and parcel of being a professional.

**Recommendations for Institutions**

The following recommendations are for institutions, regardless of what level of engagement they currently have with ODL.

**Provide ODL professional development**

Teachers need professional development support, not just to use administrative systems, but to make best use of teaching technologies. Providing access to technologies for teaching is a good start, but unless staff have training in how to use the tools, and time
to experiment with using them, they will not be used. Teaching staff also need support to
develop ODL specific teaching skills and strategies. Many tertiary institutions provide
little in the way of professional development in teaching, so this is an area that could be
strengthened. Providing staff development in this area will pay dividends in the quality of
courses developed, and the level of student learning occurring.

Choose technologies carefully

The LMS an institution uses will have a significant impact on how teachers teach,
so careful attention needs to be paid to the particular affordances of the specific LMS
chosen. Thought needs to be given to the implicit philosophy of teaching that the
institution wants to promote, as discrepancies between the institutional intentions or
goals for teaching practice and the affordances of the technologies provided will cause
tension and challenges for teachers, educational designers, and students. Note that is the
actual courses and how they are taught that will tell students what the institutions goals
and priorities are, not the values espoused in strategy documents, or advertised through
marketing campaigns.

Create the right level of regulation

Effective ODL requires a certain level of regulation and quality assurance, because
discrepancies between courses are much more visible when the courses are provided
within an LMS compared to when teaching occurs in a face to face environment, and
because consistencies are more efficient to maintain over time. Inconsistencies in
presentation of basic information are confusing to students and cut into their learning
time. Learning via ODL is challenging enough due to student’s likely time pressures; any
impediments to actual learning time need to be minimised. Furthermore, in some cases,
confusing course design can lead learners to believe that the course is too far above their
capabilities, and they will drop out part way through, having a negative effect on the
student’s progress towards a qualification, as well as impacting the teacher and the
institution.

Minimum course guidelines or templates are recommended, but if they are to have
full effect they also need to be enforced. The person checking this should ideally NOT be
the educational designer, as this lends the impression that the educational designer is of a
higher level than the academic, which then leads to conflict or tension between these
roles, preventing effective collaboration. In some institutions it may be more appropriate
for the teacher’s manager to check that courses are meeting quality standards.
Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

Consult the experts (your staff)

Teachers and course designers need to be treated as priority stakeholders by senior management, and consulted with on the impact of potential regulation or process changes. Institutions also need to carefully consider the trickle-down effects of what may on the surface appear to be small or insignificant changes. Due to the often unrecognised or unknown linkages within a system, there is a good chance that even small changes will have a significant impact on staff, and on the quality of learning provided to students. The potential for small changes to have significant effects can also be a positive outcome. This is something that institutions can leverage off successfully, provided the voices of those actually working within and throughout the system are heard and responded to appropriately.

Sharing of roles and responsibilities

Ideally, academics and educational design staff should be positioned as equals and collaborators for ODL courses. Teaching staff need to recognise the value of the educational designer viewpoint, as they can see across the organisation and bring learnings from other disciplines and approaches that could be relevant to the teacher’s course design. Educational designers need to support the teacher’s subject specific knowledge, and work with them to find the most effective ways for the teacher to share that knowledge with students. Pay scales should recognise the expertise that each party brings to the activity.

Invest in educational designers and a clear design process

If an institution is serious about teaching through ODL, they need to invest in educational designers, and create an explicit process for ODL course design that is resourced appropriately. The process needs to be explicit, not implicit or relationship driven, and should aim for the least level of regulation needed in order to create effective ODL courses. At a minimum there should be time and resourcing for teachers and educational designers to discuss course design at a planning stage, time for teachers to consult with and collaborate with others implicated in the course design (including educational designers, library and student support staff, IT staff, other discipline teaching staff), and time for teachers, educational designers and the discipline or section head to agree on the completed ODL course before it is taught. Provision also needs to be made for how ongoing course revision will be managed, and what level of peer review or evaluation will occur both during the development of ODL courses, and for any ongoing course amendments.
Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

**Provide time and professional development for ODL**

Teachers and educational designers need time to create effective online courses. Teachers who are new to ODL also need sufficient time to become familiar with ODL learning design, in addition to the time they will need to create their course. Institutions need to provide professional development for staff in this area. In addition, institutions should encourage communities of practice for both teachers and educational designers. Communities of practice provide practical advice specific to the learner cohort that can supplement and explicate the theoretical approaches provided by institutional professional development.

**Recommendations for Tertiary Sector Governance**

It will be pleasing to policy makers to note that the research clearly showed the impact of governmental policies and funding on teaching practice. For this reason, tertiary sector policy makers should include front line academic staff and other support staff in their policy development, as well as institutional management, as they will be able to provide valuable feedback on the likely impact of potential policies on teaching practice, and, by extension, students as well.

Educational trends are pointing to increased use of ODL and blended learning for all levels of education. Given the known discrepancies between ODL completions and face to face student completions, government funding regimes would be wise to consider alternative funding for institutions that wish to engage in ODL that do not penalise them for providing education to part time or distance students.

The PBRF funding regime has had a significant impact on how staff balance their teaching and research practices, particularly when institutions use their reputation for research to create a space for themselves in the competitive funding environment. While it is reassuring to see that PBRF will be reviewed in 2019 to take into account some of the issues raised by participants in this research, it is important that policy makers continue to evaluate how these funding programmes influence institutional priorities and the corresponding impact on tertiary teaching staff practice and wellbeing.
Conclusion

This research has responded to a gap in the ODL literature at the systemic level, and provided a longitudinal, cross-institutional view of the individual, institutional and environmental factors that influence online distance learning in New Zealand. Changes over time were observed through the lens of Cultural Historical Activity Theory, which provided opportunities to focus on specific areas of interest such as tool and technology use, rules and regulations, communities of practice, and systemic division of labour. Commonalities and differences across the three observed institutions (and fourteen participants) have been discussed, with examples from the rich data collected informing the implications and recommendations produced. These implications and recommendations developed from the following four key concepts that emerged from the data collected.

1. **To effect change in ODL teaching practice, intervention at multiple levels is required.** Professional development may influence a teacher's goals and approach to teaching, but they will still be limited by the technologies and specialist support available to them at an institutional level, and the rules and processes in place related to course design and delivery.

2. **Teachers need time to experiment with new approaches and technologies, and to evaluate those changes.** Workload models that do not take into account innovation time, or that neglect to recognise administration overheads are a barrier to effective teaching practice.

3. **Educational designers often have a wider view of an institution’s teaching practice, and can bring a quality assurance aspect to online courses.** However there needs to be sufficient resourcing in this area for it to be effective, and care must be taken in the regulation of interactions between teachers and educational designers not to privilege one perspective over the other.

4. **Governmental funding policies have a trickle-down effect on teaching practice.** The measures used in a funding regime will be the aspects of teaching that institutions value, and that consequently they pressure or support teaching staff to meet. If effective online teaching practice is to be achieved, funding models need to move away from EPIs that are biased against online teaching.
In conclusion, online and distance learning practice is influenced by factors at multiple levels (micro, meso and macro), and changes in these factors over time do have an impact on teachers. Teaching does not exist in a vacuum and a teacher’s practice is directly and indirectly affected by the wider institutional and environmental systems it occurs within. Institutions can support effective ODL by having clear roles and responsibilities for teachers, educational designers and others involved in course design, and by providing sufficient professional development, resourcing and time for staff to develop effective ODL courses. Policy makers can support ODL by creating funding regimes that support teaching practice rather than privileging research, and that do not penalise institutions that engage with ODL where there are likely to be a larger proportion of students who are part time or working concurrently with studying. The current global emphasis on lifelong learning aligns well with the provision of ODL, therefore the findings from this research are likely to be of interest to institutions looking to enter ODL for the first time, as well as institutions who are interested in improving their current ODL practice.
References


Barret, J. (2011). Introduction. In J. Barrett (Ed.), Open Learning for an Open World: Reflections on Open and Distance Learning and Teaching at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (pp. 8–14). Lower Hutt, New Zealand: The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.


References


References

Buntting, C., Williams, P. J., & Jones, A. (2015). The more things change, the more (some) things stay the same. In P. J. Williams, A. Jones, & C. Buntting (Eds.), The Future of Technology Education (pp. 1–11). Springer-Verlag Singapur. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-170-1


References


References


Guri-Rosenblit, S. (2014). Distance education systems and institutions in the online era: An identity crisis. In Online Distance Education: Towards a research agenda (pp. 109–129). Edmonton, Canada: AU Press, Athabasca University.


References


References


Maguire, L. (2005). Literature Review – Faculty Participation in Online Distance Education Barriers and Motivators. Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 8(1). Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/

References


References


Nichols, M. (2011). Distance education at the Open Polytechnic: The “institutional” approach. In Jonathan Barret (Ed.), *Open Learning for an Open World: Reflections on Open and Distance Learning and Teaching at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand* (pp. 15–30). Lower Hutt, New Zealand: Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.


References


References


References


References


Universities New Zealand. (2016). *New Zealand’s Universities Key Facts and Stats*. https://doi.org/10.1364/A0.50.004115


References


APPENDIX A:

Information and Consent Form

Reference Number: 13/221
23/8/2013

INDIVIDUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TEACHING PRACTICE IN THE NZ ONLINE & DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, we thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

The Aim of the Project

This project investigates individual and environmental factors that influence teaching practice in the New Zealand online and distance learning environment, and explores how these change across context and through time. It will focus on the creation and maintenance of online and distance courses by gathering data from Faculty, Educational Designers and others involved in the course development process during the period September 2013 to March 2016.

This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for Belinda Lawrence’s PhD.

The Type of Participants being sought

The project will collect data from individuals working in the area of online and distance tertiary education in New Zealand. Participants for the project will need to be involved in the creation or maintenance of at least one course by distance through an online medium for the duration of the project. Participants would preferably have a minimum of one year’s experience in their role, and be intending to continue working in a teaching or Educational Design role for the duration of the research.
Although participants will not be financially rewarded for taking part in the research, it is intended that the investigation be mutually beneficial. It is anticipated that the systems based analysis of the working environment and course creation process will provide beneficial insights for participants, which may contribute positively to improvements in their ability to achieve their teaching goals.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to:

- Participate in three interviews of approximately 1 hour duration, one each year for three years (2014, 2015, 2016). During the interviews you will be asked about your course development experience, your teaching or design goals, your current working environment, any challenges you are or have been experiencing, and your goals for the following year.

- Keep a reflective journal to make notes of any significant events or issues that could affect your teaching or design practice that you may want to discuss in the next interview.

- Agree to the researcher observing some aspects of your work in order to get a fuller picture of the way you create and maintain courses in your particular environment (the exact nature and frequency of the observation is flexible and will be tailored to your individual circumstances should you agree to participate).

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

The annual interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. The original audio files will be kept until the PhD is completed, and then destroyed along with any personal or identifying information gathered. Interview transcriptions and summarised data that do not include individual identifying information may be kept indefinitely.

Access to the data will be limited to the researcher and the researcher’s supervisors during the study. Sections of audio recordings that do not contain any identifying information may be transcribed by a research assistant. The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the researcher and the researcher’s supervisors will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years from the completion of the research project in secure storage.

As part of the research process, you will be invited to review and comment on anything written about you, so that an accurate summation of your experiences and situation are reported. You are welcome to request copies of any data gathered about you during the research project.

The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes your teaching or Educational Design experience, your current working environment, any challenges you are or have been experiencing, and your teaching or design goals. The precise nature of the
questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

**Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?**

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

**What if Participants have any Questions?**

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

**Belinda Lawrence**
Higher Education Development Centre
belinda.lawrence@postgrad.otago.ac.nz

**Sarah Stein**
Higher Education Development Centre
(03) 479 5360
sarah.stein@otago.ac.nz

(This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.)
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. Personal identifying information, including audio recorded interviews, will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years following the conclusion of the project;

4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning will include questions about my teaching or educational design experience, my current working environment, any challenges I am or have been experiencing, and, my teaching or Design goals. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity should I choose to remain anonymous.

I agree to take part in this project.

............................................................................................................. ........................................
(Name and Signature of participant) (Date)

.............................................................................................................
(Printed Name)

(This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.)
Interview Guide 2014

1. Introduction
   - Introduce self – as teacher at TOPNZ, PhD student, interest in systems, processes, prof dev
   - Explain purpose of the study (for me to get a picture of the world as they see it)
   - Explain method of study (grounded theory = me getting increasingly focused on clarifying that I understand their perspective)
   - Opportunities to check transcripts before analysis
   - Give information sheet & get signed consent


3. Main data collection
   - course development experience,
   - teaching or design goals,
   - current working environment,
   - any challenges you are or have been experiencing,
   - goals for the following year

   [Things to prompt for: policies, processes, systems, funding, roles, responsibilities, goals, outcomes, communication, tools, technologies, audience, students, tensions, contradictions, issues, government, TEC, department, institution, control/power/efficacy]

4. Talk about other data collection processes
   - Observing course creation/ maintenance (length and format as suits interviewee)
   - Next interview date 2015
   - Developing a relationship as we explore what it means to be a teacher/ course creator in this environment

5. Thank the participant
Interview Guide 2015

The following questions were used as prompts:

- What is your current role and how has it changed since we last spoke?
- What has the last year been like for you as far as your work is concerned?
- What do you currently see as your goal or purpose in your job? What outcome are you working toward achieving?
- What tools are you using to help you achieve your goals?
- Is there anyone else involved in your achievement of the goal? What is their role?
- What rules or policies do you have to consider when working towards your goals?
- Have there been any changes to policies, systems or processes in your workplace or team since we last spoke? Have they changed anything about the way you carry out your role?
- What issues or pressures are uppermost in your mind at the moment regarding your work?
- What would you say are the biggest influences currently on how you do your job?

Interview Guide 2016

For this final interview we will be concentrating on how things have changed or stayed the same in the two-year period (approximately) since the first interview. I am particularly interested in what may have happened in the following areas of your work:

1. Your teaching goals or intended outcomes for your teaching practice (what are you trying to achieve with your teaching)
2. The tools you use to achieve your goal (including technology, communication, and interaction with others)
3. Your relationships with colleagues or peers (whether this is collaborative, competitive, neutral, how your relationships impact your teaching practice)
4. The rules, policies and procedures that apply to your teaching practice
5. The other people or systems that are required to be involved in your teaching practice (e.g. education design staff, administrators, workflow processes etc)
6. The overall environment you are working in outside of your immediate team, and how this has changed, or what things were most important in 2014 and 2015 compared to what things are most important in 2016
7. Your impression of the issues and constraints faced by teachers of online and distance tertiary education today, compared to when we first met in 2014