

# Satellite Programmes: Barriers and Enablers for Student Success

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Rachael Gardiner and Heather Watt

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*I couldn't believe it when I found out I could study in the Sports Centre down the road, made it so much easier with the kids. It was great, I now have a job at a local rest home. Must say the weekly income is amazing!! (Student)*

Satellite campuses in outlying towns and regions are intended to serve students who cannot travel for higher education qualifications, and who do not see themselves as suited to online programmes. The profile of a satellite student is diverse across several domains, including age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and learning capabilities and experiences. While this could also be said of students on the main campus, satellite students face additional barriers on their way to success and completion, identified in this report as barriers and challenges related to accessibility, affordability and accountability (Kazis et al., 2007).

Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BoPP) has been delivering the 18-week Health Care Assistance programme (HCA) Level 4 since 2001. In the most part, graduates either find employment in the health care sector, or continue onto higher level study, such a Nursing or Midwifery. Satellite delivery of the HCA programme commenced in 2008 in Whakatāne, followed by further programmes including Waihi in 2013, and Matamata, Tokoroa and Thames in 2014. In 2015, Putaruru was added to the group. This report covers Whakatāne, Tokoroa, Matamata and Thames, and includes contributions from participants who attended programmes in 2011-2014.

This project sought to examine the experiences of students in the HCA satellite programme, given the consistently high levels of completion (82% - 100%) and satisfaction with the programme (100% satisfied or very satisfied). The focus was on identifying the actual and potential issues that both providers and students face, and successful strategies for responding to these challenges. A second aim was to provide a set of guidelines which may be used to assist the development of further satellite programmes by our own, and other Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) and Private training establishments (PTEs) who serve multiple communities. This report therefore aims to provide a clearer insight on the benefits to students within communities without extensive provider networks for tertiary specialist programmes, and limited availability of technological resources to assist teaching and learning.

A mixed method approach was adopted, which generated insights and data from four sources: a literature review, institutional records, focus groups, and individual interviews.

Participants were 32 current and graduate students, 4 teaching staff and learning facilitators, and 11 stakeholders and employers from three representative satellite sites: Whakatāne, Tokoroa/Matamata and Thames. The student participants were drawn from a population of approximately 225 HCA satellite programme graduates (Table Two). No significant variation across sites was noted in the data gleaned from focus groups or interviews.

Transcripts were coded and themed to align with topics identified by the literature, which were

- Motivation
- Academic challenges
- Whānau
- Delivery
- Learning environment
- The meaning of success
- The future – for the graduates and the programme

Key enablers identified through the study were motivation, relationships and cultural recognition, and the way in which the satellite programmes built and sustained these. For most students, the biggest challenges were to do with either their home life, or work commitments. The cost of the course and the loss of income was significant, but had been considered well before enrolment, and was not seen by most as a barrier to study. (Out of scope for this project was the question of potential enrollees who considered the programme, but didn't enrol due to cost or financial constraints – a topic which could well be considered for subsequent study). For providers a central point of note is the importance of the 'fit' of the teaching staff with the students and community as the face of the organisation. Students were very clear that their rapport and relationship with tutors was a paramount reason for their growth in confidence, and ultimate success.

The findings from this project have helped shape the resource that accompanies this report, *Guidelines for Scoping Successful Satellite Programmes* (Appendix B). As the main project output, they have also been included at the end of this Executive Summary.

While satellite programme delivery will always be highly context and provider specific, four other considerations for our own organisation as well as other providers arising from the project included the role of specialist liaison staff, the importance of partnering with community and other organisations, use of external contractors to provide pastoral support, and student access to technology.

The main limitations of the project also relate to the unique nature of every satellite programme and hosting location. The study has examined one single programme, HCA, offered by a single provider, BoPP. There is ample scope for testing the usefulness of the *Guidelines* in alternative/broader settings. A further field of inquiry might be to compare the experiences of Māori and non-Māori, or students with different entry-level qualifications, or different age brackets. It is also acknowledged that the research has relied almost solely on retrospective self-reporting, which will always be highly subjective; triangulation with programme outcomes will continue to be necessary to support the conclusions offered here. Nonetheless, the project team believes that many of the enablers and barriers noted from participants' experiences will be transferable to other providers considering satellite programme development, and look forward to ongoing discussion about this relatively undocumented feature of our contemporary higher education landscape.

## GUIDELINES FOR SCOPING SUCCESSFUL SATELLITE PROGRAMMES

### What does the COMMUNITY need?

- Who are the region's largest employers? What is the prevailing industry sector? What are the employee gaps?
- Who are the local trainers/providers/schools? What is the region's higher education history?
- What is the size of the potential student pool, and what are their aspirations?
- Who are the potential local partners/champions?



### What are the LEARNER needs?

- What are the learner demographics (age, ethnicity, gender etc.)?
- What is their schooling/study history? Are there extensive language, literacy and numeracy needs?
- What are the constraints for access (transport / work, including shifts and seasonal / schooling and childcare)?
- What are the key academic and pastoral challenges?



### WHEN and HOW?

- Course delivery dates - alignment with schooling dates / home institution / seasonal work etc.
- How many days a week of class time? Will this be combined with online delivery? Independent learning projects? Work placements?
- How does this align with progression/pathways into further study?
- What is the minimum and maximum class size feasible?



### TEACHERS and RESOURCES

- What are the teaching requirements and staff availability? What contingency plans exist if key personnel are unable to complete delivery? What are the costs - including transport and accommodation?
- What are the resource requirements (equipment, computers, Internet)? What are the start-up and fixed costs?
- How will pastoral and allied support (e.g. learning facilitators) be supplied to ensure equity with the main campus students?



### WHERE?

- What suitable venues are available? What is the site approval process? What are the facilities and how will shortcomings impact delivery and/or content? What are the risks?
- What travel times/costs will this mean for students?
- What alternate provision for Internet access, library resources, and social spaces could be negotiated locally?



## INTRODUCTION

### Satellite campuses – what and why?

A satellite campus or programme is a programme(s) of a tertiary organisation that is physically at a distance from the original site. This satellite may be located in a different town or region, and is usually smaller in physical size and scope of offering than the main institution. The separate satellite is covered by the same accreditation and will most likely share administration. It may, however, have a separate budget, resources, and teaching staff.

In many cases, the primary benefit of satellite campuses is to serve students who cannot travel far from home for higher education qualifications because of family responsibilities, their jobs, financial limitations, lifestyle choices or other factors. Fonseca and Bird (2007) discuss “the 30-minute convenience limit for commuting” (p. 2).

Satellite programmes also benefit the community. They focus on specific towns and regions that are under-served by main campuses, and allow more direct access to higher education for local residents, for example, Māori communities and women and caregivers with dependents. This is especially useful for the 25-44 year old student group that is often bound to one locality due to family and work obligations, but who can now attend educational courses they may not otherwise be able to, or even consider. In fact, say Fonseca and Bird (2007), “one could argue that branches [or satellites] have helped to create much of the explosion in [tertiary] attendance by non-traditional students as much as one could argue that branches exist because they are a response to that burgeoning enrolment” (p. 2).

Other key benefits as a consequence of entry into new markets include reduced congestion on the main campus and increased revenue from higher enrolments.

Technology, and the online and distance education it has enabled, is the theme of much of the literature on the expansion of education provision and the move from 'brick' to 'click'. Technology certainly enables a number of operating models for satellite campuses through shared governance, administration, core business operations and quality and content of course curricula (KPMG, 2012). Students at branch campuses can access library materials on the main campus electronically, and technology allows institutions to administer registration, admissions, and financial aid transactions remotely. Why then, not offer video-conferenced, or live-streamed lectures in the approach being popularised by the availability of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)?

This report makes three arguments in favour of on-the-ground satellite programmes over cyberspace, which are further elaborated in the 'Discussion' section (p. 24). These are:

- The profile and learning preferences of the students in this study, who value face-to-face contact and relationships as an essential prerequisite to learning.
- The opportunity for the satellite campus to move quickly, establishing programmes with a short lead time, to address community needs, to respond rapidly to experiences during delivery, and to adjust offerings and locales, as existing needs are satisfied.
- Cost-effective delivery with minimal infrastructure and investment required.



## Project aim and objectives

Satellite campuses and branches remain largely ignored in the academic literature, note Fonseca and Bird (2007). Yet as described above, this solution to better meet institutional and community needs is a good fit for small-to-medium sized, regional ITPs such as BoPP.

This project sought to examine the development and implementation of BoPP's HCA programmes delivered at satellite programmes across the central North Island. The focus was on identifying the challenges that satellite programmes and their students face and strategies for responding to these challenges. We were interested in understanding and collating potential enablers and barriers to student success along with the pedagogical elements that assisted and hindered student success in these programmes. A central aim was to capture stories of change, for the students and their whānau and community. A second aim was to provide a set of guidelines which may be used to assist the development of further satellite programmes for similar disadvantaged population groups, and be used by other ITPs and PTEs who serve multiple communities.

The specific research question posed was: "What are the challenges faced by students enrolled in satellite programmes and how do they overcome these challenges? What enables them to succeed despite the challenges they face?"

This report provides a clearer insight on the benefits to students within communities without extensive provider networks for tertiary specialist programmes, and limited availability of technological resources to assist teaching and learning.

## A BRIEF SCAN OF THE LITERATURE

Although there is an abundance of literature related to distance education, and a large field of research in foundation and bridging pedagogy, there appeared to be few published studies relating to community satellite programmes and the strategies which facilitate their delivery. However, given the socio-economic profile of the regions, and the relative inexperience of enrolling students with tertiary study and formal qualifications, there are a number of fields in the literature with high relevance to this inquiry. A number of these are overviewed briefly in the following subsections.

### Government policy and 'hard and soft' achievement objectives

One of the Tertiary Education Strategy's (TES) priorities is a focus on assisting students and their families, and those in need of up-skilling via completion of qualifications which will provide them with career opportunities (Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014). To achieve this, government expects that tertiary providers offer targeted services while creating inclusive and supportive environments for a diverse group of students. Further, government expects providers, and especially the ITP sector with its array of vocational programmes, to enable local access to tertiary education.

Another focus area of the TES is to up-skill young people, particularly Māori and Pasifika as they are currently over-represented in the number of students that leave school with low-level qualifications (Sharma, 2009).

The emphasis from Government policy has a direct focus on 'hard' outcomes such as persistence and completion, retention, employment or evidence of further education (Ministry of Education, 2006). However, commentators such as Zepke and Leach (2010a, b) also recognise a national drive towards employability and work-readiness, incorporating 'soft skills' such as interpersonal skills, organizational skills, personal development and analytical skills. Scott (2015) calls this the 'work-

ready plus' factor and argues that capabilities such as 'deferring judgement and not jumping in too quickly to resolve a problem' are not only learnable but something that educators should be including in their programmes. Scott notes a global movement for national educational policy to be prompting both capability and competency, as graduate outcomes.

What this means for learners, such as those who participate in satellite programmes, is that success can be multi-dimensional, from the achievement of a qualification to more subjective dimensions such as the overall experiences of learners. Butcher and Marsden (2004) discuss the 'distance travelled' by learners, or pathway towards programme goals as a measure of success, as long as they are building the soft skills which will underpin longer term learning and its sustainability beyond the classroom. Here, success for individual students aligns with government direction, to increase levels of employment in regional New Zealand, and 'close the gap' between both Māori and non-Māori with higher qualifications, as well as between regional New Zealand and larger metropolitan centres.

### Enablers for participation:

#### 1. Motivation

Motivation to enrol and complete a course of study is naturally an issue which affects all providers and all programmes, but is difficult to define and study. A recent approach has been on studying student engagement as a key measure of motivation (Zepke & Leach, 2010b). A useful definition of engagement is proposed by Coates (2006), where student engagement is defined as "an individual's involvement with the educationally relevant activities and conditions that are instrumental to their learning" (p. 5). Engagement is linked to ideas that individual perception is important, and an individual's subjective perception of their own context, including how processes relate to them is most important. In other words, today's students want to know why they need to learn something and how it will benefit them. Learners expect to see how the programme they have enrolled in will help them achieve their goals, with course content which is applicable to real-world roles and responsibilities: the 'What's in it for me' (WIIFM) effect (Honeyfield & Fraser, 2013).

A second key element of engagement and motivation, is the need for timely and effective feedback, including formative and summative assessment (Rowe, Wood & Petocz, 2008). Rowe et al. (2008) note that "students want more engagement from teaching staff; specifically they want the provision of feedback to be made more personalised" (p. 297). Leach and Zepke (2010b) echo this, but add that feedback is a two-way process: just as students need to understand their progress, so teachers need to know how students are doing – and how they are responding to the teaching and content delivery.

Formal and informal feedback, in class and outside, with plenty of opportunities for individual contact has been shown to work well with second-chance learners (Stanley, Fraser & Spiller, 2011), and is another consideration in face-to-face satellite delivery, rather than an online offering.

#### 2. Culture

Recognising students' culture and accommodating diversity is an important part of the success of the HCA satellite programmes. Alton-Lee's (2003) 'best evidence synthesis' Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling examined a large number of New Zealand studies and research projects. She describes diversity as including characteristics such as ethnicity (including Pākehā, Māori, Pasifika and Asian students), socio-economic background, home language, gender, special needs, disability, and giftedness. She identifies 10 features which support students' need for their cultural identity to be recognised and valued:

- (1) A focus on student achievement,

- (2) Caring, inclusive, and cohesive learning communities,
- (3) Effective links between school and other cultural contexts,
- (4) Responsive to student learning processes,
- (5) Effective and sufficient opportunity to learn,
- (6) Multiple task contexts,
- (7) Curriculum alignment,
- (8) Scaffolding and feedback,
- (9) Self-direction and meta-cognitive strategies, and
- (10) Goal-oriented assessment.

Similar items were noted in a large, multi-year investigation, with Airini et al.'s (2010) report "*Success for all*" supporting the need to use culturally appropriate, nonracist teaching approaches aimed at supporting academic success. In the HCA delivery, teachers actively seek opportunities to build students' cultural pride and mana in class activities. Also relevant is the work of Russell Bishop (2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2009) around teaching practice to improve the engagement and achievement of Māori learners in English-medium settings. The focus is on recognising what Māori students need to succeed: a culturally responsive context for learning, knowing that their background and the experiences they bring to the classroom are valued, and learning which is relevant. Acknowledging the cultural values, attitudes and practices of Māori and other non-Pākehā/European ethnicities can maximise learning while raising self-esteem, and fostering emotional and psychological well-being (Stanley et al., 2011).

### 3. Social connections and whānaungatanga

Social learning and connectedness with teachers and peers are important elements in the learning process for all students, but arguably, are indispensable for students with little experience of study or academic success (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop, 2003; Zepke & Leach, 2010b). Students need to feel included, respected, welcomed, and empowered. As Colville (2007) puts it: "The highest achieving classrooms are ones where the students trust, respect and care about their teacher because that teacher trusts, respects, cares and expects great things from them".

In the HCA programmes, with classes happening just two days a week, it is especially important to build strong teacher-student relationships. And when students are studying at a distance from the main campus, they will often rely on one another for support, so that peer-to-peer relationships are at least as important, if not more so. Some of the practices adopted here include those advocated in the literature (e.g. Airini et al., (2010; Zepke & Leach, 2010b), such as:

- allowing time in class for students to get to know each other
- setting a class culture in the first weeks of a course
- modelling values such as honesty, respect, rapport, supportiveness, loyalty, shared experiences and common interests
- embedding study skills and language, literacy and numeracy to meet identified gaps
- including cooperative learning and group work
- encouraging student contributions and leadership
- providing student support services

Another field of literature which applies here is that of 'communities of practice'. Wenger (2006) is one of the leading authors in this area, defining a community of practice as a group that interacts through sustained mutual agreement on an enterprise or goal. This description is a good fit for the off-campus HCA programmes where sharing ideas, resources, solutions and support is a key strategy for overcoming the challenges posed by geographic isolation from the home institution.

## Barriers to learning for satellite students

Political, economic, demographic, and market trends are reshaping the landscape of higher education, say Kazis et al. (2007). While these trends affect all tertiary students, they are especially relevant to satellite students who have few choices for locally-available programmes and must rely on the scattered offerings selected as suitable by the providers. Kazis et al. discuss three types of barriers: accessibility, affordability and accountability. Accessibility refers to the location and scheduling, for example, the flexibility to accommodate part-time work commitments. Affordability includes the need to offer part-time as well as full-time study options, to have pathway qualifications (such as the HCA which can be used to meet entry requirements for a degree), and to show relevant and realistic career routes. Accountability barriers relate to the need for institutions to ensure programme quality and continuity. Satellite students should therefore not be disadvantaged by programme structure and duration that make access and persistence more difficult than it is for students on the main campus; and programmes offered must fit with industry requirements, given that employment is for most, a fundamental purpose for studying.

Other studies and commentators note additional barriers. Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) also discuss cost – but the cost to the institution, rather than to the student. They note that with new offerings, such as satellite programmes, programme development, tailor-made initiatives and policy, software, capital infrastructure, workshops, resourcing, learning and technical support staff can be formidable set-up obstacles to overcome. Satellite programmes can therefore not be viewed as an isolated practice, left to grow through its own devices. Rather, buy-in must be institution-wide, including Council, management and frontline teaching staff (Robinson et al., 2009).

In any education programme, in any sector, culture matters. Understanding the background of students and the experiences they bring to the classroom can bridge the gap between activities outside and inside the classroom. Recognising students' culture and accommodating diversity is a central tenet of both national and organisational educational manifestos and is well supported by literature (for example, Airini et al., 2010; Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Heke, 2008, MOE, 2006; MOE & MBIE, 2014). However, satellite programmes may struggle to address best practice provision, with smaller pools of teachers on hand, and without the raft of inclusive and specialized services and spaces available on a main campus. When working with communities with large Māori populations, it is critical that Māori values and language are respected and incorporated into the content to ensure relevancy, maximize learning, raise self-esteem and foster emotional and psychological well-being (Heke, 2008). This begins with the Pōwhiri and orientation whakawhanaungatanga, and must be embedded throughout the programme. Failure to ensure these principles are present in a satellite programme will therefore constitute a considerable barrier to learning for large numbers of students.

## METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method approach to the research project was undertaken to gather an overall profile of our satellite student.

The quantitative research approach for this project was used to source valid and reliable data from student completion rates, programme evaluations and statistics demonstrating student pathway to higher level education programmes which was then measured numerically, and was collated from a statistical point of view (Sarantakos, 2013). This was used to inform both background and context to the inquiry.

Qualitative methodology provided opportunity to explore complexities that were beyond the scope

of more controlled approaches. Qualitative researchers are concerned with understanding the way people interpret their experiences and make sense of the world within their cultural and social contexts (Yin, 2003). The aim is to shed light on the 'informal reality' which can be perceived from the inside, in this case, the perspective of students and stakeholders (Gillham, 2000). The student narrative that was shared during the focus groups provided an insight into their experiences and the ongoing effects of the HCA programme in satellite locations. As Yin (2003) and Gillham (2000) note, the final product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive and captures the complexities and contradictions that arise when people try to make sense of their world; due to the in-depth nature of this type of inquiry, the qualitative research sample is often small and selective. Validity and reliability were managed through attention to a number of steps in the data collection and analysis process. Having two researchers allowed us to compare impressions and observations, bringing in a third party to run focus groups and interviews added an extra layer to the reporting to assist mitigate the issue of subjectivity, and visiting and revisiting the coding and development of themes allowed for reflection and 'reflexivity', as we reflected on and managed our own responses to the data.

## Data Collection

Data was collected from three sources: institutional records, focus groups, and individual interviews.

- Institutional records  
Programme documentation, historical and current statistical data and information from other related allied stakeholders were gathered as a first stage in the inquiry. These provided both background and current context to this research enquiry.
- Focus groups  
Focus groups essentially involve a group discussion 'focused' on particular issues, with the facilitator's role being to guide the discussion through prompting questions, and to keep to the topic at hand so that students were not bringing in experiences that were outside the scope of the inquiry (Yin, 2003). This approach was very successful as it allowed participants to break in and add to one another's stories and recollections. Student narrative shared during focus groups provided an insight into their experiences and ongoing effects of the HCA programme in satellite locations. Stakeholder perceptions of the value of these programmes, alongside teachers' observations of what worked well and what didn't, contributed to a well-rounded overview of the phenomenon being studied: the HCA satellite programmes.

Six focus groups were held in the communities where the satellite programmes were delivered or at a central meeting point (Whakatāne, and a combined group from Tokoroa/Matamata, and Thames). 3 focus groups were comprised of students, made up of 7-9 randomly selected participants from across the programmes. Two focus groups were run with stakeholders invited to attend from organisations known to the Polytechnic and from the wider community. A final focus group brought together tutors and learning facilitators of the different satellite offerings.

All potential participants were identified by the researchers and contacted by an email outlining the project, with a more detailed Information Sheet attached, and were invited to attend a meeting to give feedback. The Information Sheet outlined the usual ethical constraints: participation was voluntary, anonymity would be preserved, responses would only be used for the purposes of compiling this report, and all raw data would be stored securely. Those students unable to attend also had the option of being interviewed by telephone.

Two independent, external facilitators conducted each focus group. The interviewer began

by greeting the 7-9 participants in each group, and further explained the purpose of the project. Informed consent tools approved during the ethics approval process were used with all the participants ensuring that they understood the purpose of project and were happy for their contributions to be recorded and reported. A semi-structured schedule of questions and prompts to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences and offer their contributions freely was employed (Appendix A). The second facilitator present was responsible for scribing and recording the focus group data.

Sessions ran between 60 and 90 minutes, in addition to informal mingling time over refreshments. Each session with students concluded with completion of a group participant questionnaire using Likert scales and open ended questions. We asked the group to complete this as a collective, so that the contributions represented the negotiated and consensual views of the group – any significant differences of opinion were noted by the facilitators.

- Individual Skype/telephone interviews were held with five participants who were not able to travel, or had conflicting engagements on the day the focus group meetings were held.

## Participants

The main participant group was students from current and previous years of delivery of the HCA programme. As with most tertiary programmes, especially certificates and diplomas, the student profile of satellite programmes is diverse. Students come with a vast range of previous educational and vocational experiences, learning and social needs. A number of participants commented that they left school at a young age and hadn't been exposed to education since. Many of the students are therefore first time learners or have had unsuccessful learning experiences previously. This resulted in low confidence in their ability to succeed, but overwhelming pride at the realisation that they had the capacity to pass the programme.

Other participants had enrolled in other tertiary programmes with a range of experiences and varying degrees of success. Lack of pastoral care and tutor contact were most commonly attributed to a negative experience in those programmes. Others felt that the programmes they had done previously compounded their drive to get educated and make a better life for themselves and their families.

In addition further challenges are presented in communities which have a more limited range of tertiary educational opportunities: students and their whānau have less awareness overall of how to apply, what the expectations are, the 'unwritten rules', classroom etiquette – and so on.

**Table One: Participants (n=47)**

	STUDENTS	TEACHERS/LEARNING FACILITATORS	STAKEHOLDERS: EMPLOYERS
WHAKATĀNE	18	2	7
TOKOROĀ / MATAMATA	9	1	3
THAMES	5	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>

The 32 student participants represent 14% of a population of approximately 225 HCA satellite

programme graduates (*Table Two, p. 16*). The team conducting the focus groups and interviews felt that the students who took part in the study were a realistic cross section of total student demographics. There was no significant variation across sites observed while coding and theming responses.

### Data analysis

All interviews were taped and transcribed and scripts returned to participants to check before analysis. Following transcription, data was coded through a thematic analysis which allowed a detailed account of the data. The principal researchers met regularly to moderate process and identify emerging themes and responses.

Distinct commonalities were noted in the responses of different stakeholder groups, who each had key impressions and/or concerns: for example, students were happy with the course, but less so about the learning environment, tutors talked about having to problem-solve to provide resources and equipment, and stakeholders were most interested in improved workplace competency and work-ready candidates. Further, each group contributed useful accounts of what they perceived the enablers and barriers to satellite programme delivery and attendance to be. However, it was decided that rather than report the findings according to their source, a more reader-friendly and useful approach would be for each theme identified in the literature would be discussed as a separate topic, drawing on the relevant contributions of all informants.

### Limitations

This study was designed and conducted as a predominantly qualitative study centred on satellite offerings of a single programme, HCA, offered by a single provider, BoPP. Supporting commentary from the literature scan has been included in the report for comparison and interest, rather than in any attempt to suggest the findings described here are representative of a larger sample. We believe that many of the conclusions drawn about participants' experiences will be transferable, as well as the principles of good practice for other providers considering satellite programme development outlined in the *Guidelines for Scoping Successful Satellite Programmes* (Appendix B). These are presented in the spirit of collaboration and knowledge sharing, rather than as proven and immutable requisites.

It is also acknowledged that the research has relied almost solely on retrospective self-reporting, which will always be highly subjective. It is hoped that the very positive accounts of this particular satellite programme experience will be corroborated over time through other studies, and success and completion statistics relating to graduate outcomes.

Additional areas noted for possible future research include an investigation into the impact of study costs on enrolment decision-making, and a comparison of the enablers and barriers to satellite study for different 'demographic' groups: Māori and non-Māori, students with different entry-level qualifications, or different age brackets – topics which were outside the scope of the current project, but which would contribute to a more detailed understanding of the field.

## FINDINGS PART I: CONTEXT

### The programme

The Health Care Assistance programme (HCA) Level 4 has been delivered at BoPP since 2001.

Graduates of this programme are equipped with a range of knowledge and skills relevant to the health care sector, for careers such as health care assistant, caregiver (rest home or community based), home support worker, teacher aide (special physical needs), community worker, or physiotherapy assistant.

Graduates also have the skills and knowledge to enable them to pathway into study on the Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery programmes.

The 18-week programme covers a range of topics including: Anatomy and Physiology; Professional Practice; Comprehensive First Aid; Working with Health Care Consumers/Tangata Whai Ora; and Community Health. Students also need to undertake 40 hours of work experience (paid or voluntary) to complete the programme, although this may be covered by their regular health-related employment. Classes are taught two days a week, with the rest of course requirements completed as self-directed learning. Real world connections and feedback are integral parts of the HCA qualification – both in satellite programmes as well as on the main Tauranga campus. Guest speakers, work placements and anecdotal stories from practice shared by both teachers and students keep the programme “authentic”.

Satellite delivery of the HCA programme commenced in 2008 at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi in Whakatāne, followed by further programmes including Waihi in 2013, and Matamata, Tokoroa and Thames in 2014. This report covers Whakatāne, Tokoroa, Matamata and Thames, and includes contributions from participants who attended programmes in 2011-2014.

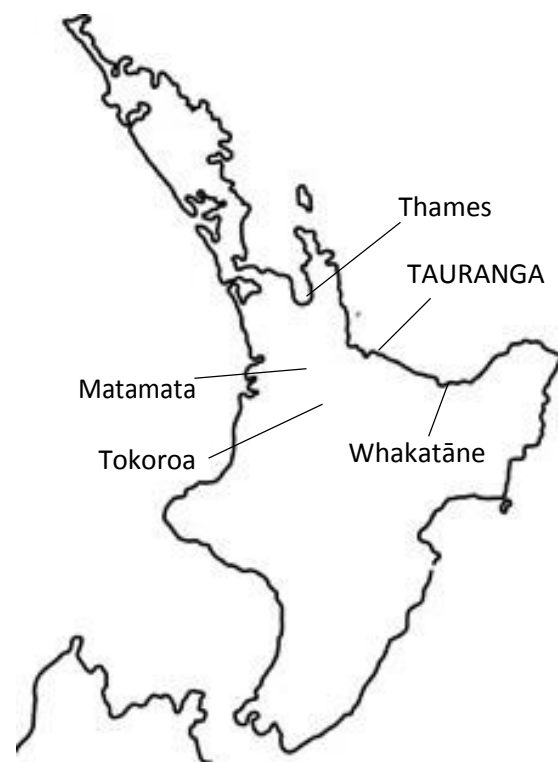
### The regions

The four study regions share a number of commonalities, beyond limited access to tertiary providers and qualifications; although Whakatāne is home to Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, it does not offer the same range of bridging and healthcare programmes as Bay of Plenty Polytechnic.

First, in all four regions, the percentage of the population holding a formal qualification is less than the New Zealand average of 79.1%. In Thames and Whakatāne, the figures are 72.3% and 72.6%; in Matamata, 68.5%, but in Tokoroa, just 54.7%. A similar pattern is evident in the percentage of households with internet access: all four areas are below the national average of 76.8%, with the lowest rate in Tokoroa, of 41.7%.

Each of the areas except Matamata, has a lower median household income than the New Zealand average, and only in Thames is the rate of home ownership slightly above the New Zealand average.

Population ethnicity demographics also show a divergence from the national average of 14.9% of citizens who identify as Māori. Matamata in the 2013 census was close, with 14.8%, but also shows the greatest gain, with an increase of 15.6% of Māori residents over the previous census data in 2006, compared to a total population increase of 3.5%. In Thames, the Māori





population was 16.6%, with an increase of 3.2%, compared to the overall population, which is decreasing. But in Whakatāne and Tokoroa, the strength of Māori populations is most evident, with 2013 figures of 43.5% and 45.2% of the total population, respectively (Statistics New Zealand, 2015).

Understanding the geographic setting for the satellite campuses has been an important aspect of their design and development. Low levels of schooling, household income and internet access mean that teaching teams have had to adjust their assumptions about available resources, and the types of activities students can do out-of-class as independent learning projects. Larger Māori populations has underscored the importance of delivering content which has cultural relevance, as well as the need for local ‘sponsors’: individuals and organisations with mana, who support the programme and encourage participation.

## Student data

**Table Two: Student data by campus/satellite site, 2013-2014**

Site	Period	Average number of students per semester intake	Age range	Ethnicity	Average completion per semester intake
<b>Whakatāne</b>	Delivered each semester 2011-14. Took a break in 2015 due to low enrolments	15	17 - 55	87% Māori, 10% European/Pākehā, 3% other (Indian, Chinese, Philippino).	88%
<b>Thames</b>	1 cohort in 2014 (attempted another delivery but didn't get enough students).	7	23 - 62	43% Māori, 43% European/Pākehā, 14% other – Korean.	100%
<b>Tokoroa</b>	3 cohorts between 2013 and 2014. (thereafter combined with Putaruru due to low enrolments).	14 - 18	19 – 58	60% Māori, 30% European/Pākehā, 10% other (Philippine, Indian).	89%
<b>Matamata</b>	3 cohorts between 2013 and 2014 (thereafter combined with Putaruru due to low enrolments).	9 - 14	26 - 48	75% European/Pākehā, 17% Māori, 8% other (Nigerian, Indian, Korean).	82%
<b>Tauranga (main campus)</b>	Intakes each semester since 2001; continues to attract large numbers of students.	55 - 70	17 - 65	65% European/Pākehā, 30% Māori, 5% other (Indian, Nepalese, Philippine, Chinese, Korean, Nigerian).	86-92%

As can be seen in Table Two, there are a number of variations across satellite sites, but the most significant point to note is the cohort size. Where the Polytechnic's main campus consistently attracts large numbers of enrolments, satellite sites have far smaller numbers of students per intake. The Group Leader for the programme comments that this is a fairly typical pattern for most satellite programmes in smaller population areas: over a year or two, the pool of potentially interested

students is catered to, and therefore diminished in size, making repeat offerings less viable.

For this reason, following the study period of 2013-2014, the Tokoroa and Matamata groups were merged, and in 2015, the programme was offered for the first time in Putaruru. Comparative statistics here as a point of interest: class size: 14 students; age range: 24-55; ethnicities: 85% Māori, 15% European/Pākehā; completions: 91%.

In summary, institutional records indicated that overall, completions are high in this course. Additionally, in course evaluations across the years, regardless of location, 100% of students either strongly agreed, or agreed that their overall satisfaction with HCA programme is high. It appeared that despite the logistical and resourcing difficulties tutors faced in delivering a programme in a series of new locations, students were enjoying a success equal to, or above, that of students on the main campus. Based on this quantitative data, there was a lot of interest from the teaching team, as well as wider institutional management, to understand the factors contributing to this success. The second phase of the inquiry, focus groups and interviews, enabled the project team to gather rich and detailed narratives of individual approaches and achievement. Many of their contributions began by acknowledging challenges and barriers, but then moved to reflections about how these had been overcome – as outlined in the following section.

## FINDINGS PART II: PARTICIPANTS

(Note: All quotations in the following sections of the report are from students, unless otherwise stated)

### Motivation

One HCA teacher who had delivered the programme in all four regions covered in this study offered their impression that for many students, enrolment was a 'seize the day' type of response, rather than the result of a longer-term, plotted, career trajectory. Decision-making, according to this teacher, was opportunistic; students simply saw the right course, at the right time, in the right place – and hurried to take advantage. Two comments from students are representative of a large number that appear to support this theory:

*"I really wanted a change in my career path, I had been working at MacDonalld's and when I saw this ad it appealed to me, I have always been interested in health stuff"*

*"I was already working in a rest home so I did it for professional development I guess. The course was a good location for me, close to work and it was also the right time to upgrade my skills"*

Quantitative data from the questionnaire completed by students at the end of the focus groups also supports this interpretation. Students were asked to identify the single most significant reason for enrolling:

- 18 (56%\*) responded that they enrolled because they'd looked after whānau and wanted to get a qualification or that they were working as a health care assistant and wanted to learn about what they were doing.
- 5 (15%) saw the advertisements and thought they should take the opportunity to study locally.
- 6 (19%) knew other people that had done the programme and had said it was great and that the tutors were great.
- 2 (6%) said they wanted to do Nursing but it was too far to travel, so did this instead.

- 3 (9%) were encouraged by their whānau to do the programme.
- 1 (3%) was made redundant so thought they should upskill in something else.

\* Percentages have been rounded.

When coding the transcripts from the focus groups, the narratives students offered around their enrolment decision-making were varied, however there were definite similarities with students wanting a change, developing direction for employment and for some wanting it as a stepping stone for further study. Nursing was a predominant focus for those students. Words such as: “gain”, “improve”, “further” and “upgrade” appeared regularly in the transcripts.

The opportunistic nature of uptake for studying through satellite programmes was even more emphatically demonstrated when students were asked if they would have enrolled in the programme if they’d had to travel to the main Tauranga campus:

- 30 (94%) wouldn’t have, because of family and other commitments, as well as the expense of travelling.
- 2 (6%) said they would have travelled because they didn’t have kids yet, so didn’t have strict commitments.
- 1 (3%) was unsure.

In the focus group discussions, an additional advantage to satellite delivery was raised, when some participants commented that having the programme delivered locally meant that the local context could be used in the teaching and learning. This was of great benefit to students because they learnt new things about their community and district and enjoyed personalising learning into an environment they were familiar with.

### Academic challenges

The programme evaluations at the end of the course indicated that while some students had found the content and assessments challenging, others felt some parts were not demanding enough. This feedback, as well as the representative comments below, again highlights the diverse nature of such a cohort:

*“I was so nervous about studying again as it was forever since I was at school... I felt so dumb at the beginning but actually it didn’t take long to get the hang of it”*

*“Loved the assessments, especially the online ones...I could have spent hours at night doing the quizzes”*

Overall, computer literacy was mentioned several times by students who grappled with technology, as one of the key barriers they had to overcome. Other participants commented the need for an underpinning framework of computing skills from a different angle, noting that they had been able to draw on their past knowledge of IT, and how helpful it was, making access to resources so much easier. Just over half the students in this study (53%; 17 participants) had previously completed other tertiary programmes, in Te Reo, computing, or administration. Fifteen students (47%) had worked instead of study, with a number commenting that they had wanted to study but couldn’t afford it.

Many students shared that they battled with confidence in their academic ability, stating that it had been many years since they had read a book, written for specific purposes or studied for a test. Measuring this in the summative questionnaire at the conclusion of each focus group, we found that

23 students (72% of the sample) rated their prior learning experience as “negative” – they had found school boring, left at a young age, and generally didn’t understand most of what was being taught. Only 9 (23%) were more positive – noting that schooling/study “contributed to the person I am today”, “had ups and downs but served a purpose”, or simply that they had “enjoyed being with friends.”

A number of participants commented that learning some of the HCA content was like learning a new language, especially the anatomy and physiology. However, it was evident that students responded positively to the pace and format of the learning and teaching and having the ability to contextualise the learning in a practical environment cemented their learning. Some commented that passing a test was the biggest confidence booster that they needed, and they actually began to enjoy doing assessments so they could measure their progress. Almost certainly, realising their potential was a dominant factor in student recognition of greatest successes throughout the programme: 100% of the participants felt the programme had met, or exceeded their expectations:

*“Realising we had the ability to achieve through encouragement and support from tutors and classmates gave us the motivation to continue”*

## Whānau

In our focus groups, prompts around the impact of whānau and family, and the extent to which they enabled, or impeded students’ enrolment and completion of the satellite HCA programme, generated more discussion than any other issue. Comments were recorded collectively and anonymously, so that there is no way to identify retrospectively whether there was much difference between the experience of for Māori and non-Māori participants, although given the importance of the whānau connection for these students, this may be an avenue future inquiries might seek to investigate further. Generally, there were two main topics, whānau and the participants’ experience or aspirations as background motivators and drivers; and whānau responses during the study engagement.

First, whānau experiences of health and healthcare, and the impact on participants had led several students to consider this line of work. Various students talked of the fact that they had been sole caregivers for family members and were looking to increase the knowledge they had gained:

*“I had cared for Mum for ages before she died even though I come from a big family, I then saw an ad on Facebook about the course and jumped at it. I was going to do occupational therapy but didn’t have to move to do the HCA”*

Many of the students also talked about ‘bettering themselves’ and wanting ‘more’ for their children. One student had a talented son who was competing in high level sports and she talked about trying to provide enough money to keep him up to speed with the required equipment. Her hope was to get a better job as a health care assistant with an increased hourly rate as a result of gaining the Certificate. Other students commented that they wanted to complete some tertiary study to show their children that they can achieve a goal if they put their mind to it, and to ignite a drive to want to study in the children.

Most students saw themselves as doing something that had not so far been part of the family’s landscape, and so, “breaking ground”, rather than following tradition, expectation or a role model. Only 10 (31%) of the 32 student participants had children that were studying at a tertiary level, 4 had siblings that were studying and 3 had parents that were studying. However, 15 (47%) of the students said no, no one in their family had, or was studying, and that most “don’t know what they want to

do” or have been working.

A second theme was support from whānau and friends during the study period, which varied considerably across the sample. One of the biggest hurdles for some students to overcome was an actual lack of support from whānau. Most students felt that this resulted from a change in the role of the student in the household, and the fact that study took the focus off the whānau at times, which was not something the household had experienced before:

*“My biggest challenge was home life! Support was short lived in my house hold, even a bit jealous I reckon, me studying ...yeah whatever”*

*“My partner had lots of negativity towards me getting educated, less time for him I guess”*

*“Family didn’t think I could do it, so I didn’t either”*

How had students overcome these types of barriers? One participant told us she left her partner, but others had found compromises, and looked for support within the programme, rather than beyond. Teachers may not have specifically taught the theory, and students may not have known the academic term, but there can be no doubt that they established strong and committed ‘communities of practice’. In this situation, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder’s (2002) simple definition of a community of practice is wholly fitting: “Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.” In the focus groups, many students alluded to the fact that fitting the HCA programme into an already busy and demanding life proved problematic: 30 (94%) had other commitments while studying, including children/family, work and community roles. However it was beneficial to have a cohort to meet and work with, “sharing the load” and supporting one another.

Three representative comments were:

*“It was better than expected because the group was small, and the tutors made it a whānau-orientated environment”*

*“Relied on support from tutors and classmates”*

*“The others in the class helped so much with the computer”*

The students’ experience of friendship and support was also noted by others, for example:

*“The Health students seemed to be getting into their learning in a big way, sometimes they would stay on well after the tutor had gone. Not sure if they were studying or just catching up but either way, there was always lots of talking and laughing” (Thames Haurora office facilitator).*

## Delivery

*“I went to [institution name] a few years ago to do a course but it was too Māori orientated for me with too many Māori words I couldn’t understand. I also needed a laptop which I didn’t have, it was all a bit of a nightmare. It put me off for a while but I saw this course in the local paper and grabbed the opportunity...so pleased it was local!!”*

The HCA satellite programme is designed as two days per week class time, alongside self-directed

study and work experience. This meant quite a full curriculum, and a fairly fast pace through the material, and in fact, almost all the students commented on this in their focus group/interview feedback, with 29 of the 32 (91%) agreeing that, given the right circumstances, they would have liked longer delivery time.

However, given the 100% satisfaction rating already mentioned above, this was clearly not an overwhelming concern. Again, comments fell into two broad topic areas: delivery and teaching staff. Teachers had shared the programme content, assessment requirements, and teaching schedule with the students from the outset, and the classes had considered time constraints and deadlines together, negotiating workable solutions. The programme design incorporated a range of activities to address different learning styles and preferences, with a lot of resources students could refer back to, as well as practical applications, which were highly appreciated:

*“Everything always seemed to be up to date, the online videos and resources were excellent”*

*“Amazing stuff like dissecting hearts and lungs...gory but fascinating...my dog got to have the leftovers”*

*“I really loved the use of spaghetti and vacuum pipes for the practical demonstrations”*

The dominating theme relating to tutors was around the support they provided for students. Despite being satellite students studying in a location at a distance from the main campus, they commented that the tutors were easy to contact and were flexible in their delivery to meet the needs to the group. Participants went on to comment that tutors always got back to them if they had questions or concerns and were happy to go the extra mile to help them succeed. Further, although satellite students did not have the same resources on hand as the students at the main campus, such as library facilities, they felt that having more one-on-one time with their tutors overrode any potential disadvantage that their physical location could have brought about.

Participants also commented that the tutors were able to adapt their teaching to ensure that all students grasped what they were teaching, and they appreciated that wherever possible, tutors used practical tasks to teach theoretical topics. This was particularly evident around the Anatomy and Physiology component of the programme. The following comments from the focus group transcripts attest to the professionalism and expertise of the teaching staff, as well as their skill in establishing strong and supportive relationships with their class:

*“Managing to do CPR after losing my husband because I hadn’t known how to do it [4 years previously] – could only do it because the tutor stayed with me and helped to keep me calm”*

*“Confidence grew from tutors believing in us and breaking work into manageable chunks”*

*“Approachable, knowledgeable and encouraging”*

*“They listened”*

*“They changed classes if we needed to do something different”*

*“Made a huge difference, have done courses before but left because I didn’t like the teachers – the tutors on this course were great”*

*“They have made me want to keep studying”*

Teaching staff certainly appeared to carry the largest burden in ensuring the satellite programmes’ success. An important part of sustainable delivery therefore centred on their own strategies to

overcome challenges of off-campus locations. First and foremost was attitude and belief in the programme, and one's own colleagues, as the following comments indicate:

*"Well it can really be hard work out there...on your own but having said that, the students and staff at the various venues make it all worthwhile"* (Tutor)

*"The most important thing is to stay in touch with your own colleagues and try and make time for meeting to further discuss any problems or issues that have come up, otherwise it feels a bit lonely sometimes"* (Tutor)

Tutors were also aware of the need to connect closely with the community as a fundamental good practice approach to keeping the programme grounded and relevant:

*"I think it is important to be able arrange some guest speakers from the community to come in and talk about practice and experiences. As a tutor you get to know the students so well but a variety of ideas and discussion is great. I think they get a bit sick of one person all the time"* (Tutor)

### Learning environment

The venues differed greatly across the four sites, as to what they had to offer in the way of vicinity to refreshments and library resources. One of the locations was a high school prefabricated building on the outskirts of the school grounds. The kitchen facilities were very poor along with the heating during the winter months. Tutors found that students were accommodating in helping to make it conducive to learning by happily rearranging seating plan and bringing hot food to share. The venue in Tokoroa by contrast was a very well established community centre with ample light and kitchen amenities. Several students commented that although the venue they studied in might not have been ideal, the fact that the course was delivered locally outweighed the fact that they did not have all the luxuries that students on the main campuses experienced. Participants also commented that small gestures like organising tea and coffee and having the tutors participate in bringing kai to share made the group feel connected and like a whānau, and created a supportive, welcoming environment. Tutors inviting whānau to come and meet the other students and tutors and to share kai at celebrations was also significant and arguably more memorable than the shortcomings of the venue itself:

*"The inconvenience outweighed any negatives that there may have been...we just got on and made it happen"*

*"Cold and noisy but it was convenient"*

*"Good that the tutors connected with the local library so we could use computers and get resources"*

*"Nice and comfortable...Nice to have tea and coffee provided"*

Teaching staff also noted the 'can-do', and 'get on with it' attitude of students:

*"Although the students don't have the resources that the main campus does, it appears that they do a lot more sharing with each other and several of them use public library services and amenities which again is integral to the community of learning"* (Tutor)

Stakeholder comments show the support and goodwill from host organisations who recognised the

added value of having programmes on site, such as

*“It’s been so good having the Poly here onsite at the school, it really gives another element to the place and the students can see that there are other things going on as well as their world within the school grounds” (Matamata School administrative assistant)*

*“It was made clear to students ‘you are all as welcome here as the Wānanga students, help yourself to the kitchen, just clean up after you’, even the printing was given at a non-cost arrangement” (Learning facilitator, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi)*

The learning environment is more than just a building and resources, however. The students also brought to class their own tensions, related to their outside lives. It was common for students to be in employment as well as studying, often changing their shifts to fit in with the programme, resulting in night shifts and weekend work. Physical challenges such as fatigue, erratic mealtimes and family demands were exacerbated by the demands of seasonal work, which is pivotal in supplementing the household income in communities such as those that the programme was delivered in. Some students were doing multiple night and day shifts. Students recognised the impact these conflicting responsibilities were having on their own engagement and the wider classroom:

*“I work night shift and although the times of the programme didn’t clash I was always so tired”*

*“I was always so late for class because I had to do my home rounds for work and give out medications to my clients”*

*“I always felt like I was interrupting the class coming in late and often felt behind in my work”*

Teachers therefore had to adapt the learning and teaching to accommodate absenteeism, lack of ability to concentrate, and student stress, and to create an environment in which these issues were recognised and supported where possible, but not punished. The ‘whānau’ environment has already been mentioned above, as a co-constructed outcome of teachers and students working together to minimise barriers to learning and support each other in their endeavours. Once again, this was the solution most students referred to the most effective assistance in enabling their study to progress, even, for some, against considerable odds.

### The meaning of success

In the focus groups and interviews, students were asked about their biggest achievements. Thirty (94%) of participants felt that passing the programme was the biggest success they experienced. Seven students commented along the lines that previous to undertaking study, they had “just been mum” for many years. They went on to say that for this reason, the family did not expect them to pass the programme, and often discouraged them from bothering to go to class because they “wouldn’t pass”. One student commented that her husband believed that every day that she made her lunch, she would take it to her friend’s house and pretend that she was studying, because she was “far too dumb to be able to pass”. This particular student said that the pride she felt from being able to go home to her family and tell them that she had passed was a feeling that she would never have imagined would feel so good.

This lack of support from family often resulted in students doubting their ability and fearing that they actually could not possibly succeed in the programme. For some, this meant focusing on small milestones as opposed to focusing on the bigger picture, for others it meant investing extra time



with tutors and “being selfish” with the family so that they could study at home. Once these students started experiencing small successes, confidence grew and the possibility of passing the whole programme became a reality. Many commented that without the support and patience of the tutors, they would have left the programme before the end, but knowing that they were leaving an unsupportive environment and entering the supportive classroom environment instilled trust and confidence that they could do it. Success then, was incremental and cumulative, and encompassed the journey, as well as the finishing posts. Teachers built this understanding into the programme, with sharing of kai to celebrate successes, both small and large.

Twelve participants (38%) commented that among the biggest success they experienced as a result of completing the HCA programme was the fact that after many years of working in the health care industry, they now had the theoretical knowledge to complement their practice. Many students had been required to perform tasks that prior to completing the programme, had no significance in terms of the high level of responsibility that had been placed on them. For example, some had been giving medications and performing cares on patients without any understanding of the physiological processes that were occurring within the patient. This meant that they did not understand the potential danger of some of the conditions they were dealing with, or some of the practices they were observing among their peers. Indeed, the opportunity to gain a qualification provided more sound practice, and in many cases, an increase in professional position or status to better align with the responsibility assigned to them. Four students gained a job as a direct result of having the qualification.

Finally, gains were social and personal, as well as academic and professional: 28 students (88%) acknowledged “Gaining confidence and friends” as one of the most meaningful outcomes of the programme.

### The future – for the graduates and the programme

Half the students who contributed to the study said that their long term goal was to complete a Bachelor of Nursing after finishing the HCA programme. However, of these, the vast majority said this was not a reality for them because it would mean having to move to a main centre where Nursing is offered. Generally, students said that it was fantastic that the HCA programme was brought to them, but for those wanting to continue on the education journey, it was frustrating that other organisations had not followed suit.

In addition to sparking an interest in tertiary study among the HCA graduates themselves, the ability of satellite programmes to impact on a wider community was evident when students were asked whether their completing study had prompted other family members to enrol in a programme. Most (25 students (78%)) said yes, their kids saw mum studying and thought that if she could do it, they could do it. Of those who said no, the response was generally more, “Not yet, but they are looking at options.”

As noted earlier, in Table One: Student data by campus/satellite site, 2011-2014 and the following discussion, satellite programmes are by nature ‘pop-ups’, responding to a community need and a finite pool of potential students. Once this pool has been tapped, it can be difficult to sustain a programme presence in a region, as the number of students dwindles. Providers need to address this with a suite of alternative programmes to maximise the goodwill and support for study gained in the community. The original programme can also survive with a shift to a new site for a year or two, or by combining classes, such as the solution to low numbers in Tokoroa and Matamata following the 2013-2014 study period, by a combined class based in Putaruru in 2015 and 2016.

## DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Key enablers

Individual motivation appears to be the single strongest enabling factor in accounting for students' decisions to enrol in, and then complete, satellite programmes. Often this appears to be because students are aware that this is a new opportunity, which won't be around forever, and so they are eager to make the most of it. Students in our study were highly appreciative of programmes being offered in their region by well-known and established providers, which allowed them to complete a recognised and respected qualification.

Another source of motivation was the 'fit' of programme being offered. In the case of the HCA programme, participants saw a clear link with roles they were already doing, and/or viable local job and career opportunities. As Fidishun (2005) notes, adult learners are used to understanding what they do in life, and want to know why they need to learn something and what use it's going to be. Motivation is therefore a complex combination of extrinsic (such as salary increases and academic credit) and intrinsic factors (like the desire to grow, and improved self-esteem). Lieb (1991, as cited in Honeyfield & Fraser, 2013) offers six sources of motivation: social relationships; external expectations; social welfare; personal advancement; escape/stimulation; and cognitive interest. All of these elements were present to some extent in our sample study.

A clear implication for satellite programme providers is therefore the need to tap into, and strengthen, these various elements. Alignment of offerings with industry/employer requirements is critical, and this fit needs to be emphasised throughout the programme. Teachers need to foster students' engagement with authentic learning activities, personalized instruction, and timely and effective feedback (Leach & Zepke, 2010b; Rowe et al., 2008).

Interwoven with the need for personalized delivery is the importance of building relationships and seeing learners through a holistic lens. Satellite programmes, with smaller class sizes, represent an excellent opportunity to build 'high trust' cultures with an emphasis on transparent communication and information sharing (Covey, 1989, as cited in Honeyfield & Fraser, 2013). A learning community, in which all participants, including the teacher, share ideas and learn from one another fosters 'reciprocal learning' (Hattie, 2012) and indicates respect for the students' prior knowledge, experience and cultural capital. A learning community also provides the whānau support for class members when this is unavailable in their own domestic situation, and several of this study's participants attributed much of their persistence and success to backing from their peers.

In addition to, but also closely interwoven with motivation and relationships, a third key enabler identified by the project team was cultural recognition. The HCA satellite programme had been developed alongside community and employer stakeholders, and a bicultural, or dual heritage approach, acknowledging the rich health care and educational traditions of both Māori and non-Māori was an integral feature of planning, delivery and evaluation. A useful guide for the team was Bishop's (2003) six practices for effective teachers to enhance Māori students' learning:

Manaakitanga (Caring for students), Mana Motuhake (Caring for the performance of each student), Ngā whakapiringatanga (Creating a secure, well managed learning environment), Wānanga (Engaging in effective learning interactions), Ako (Using a range of teaching and learning strategies), and Kotahitanga (Using student progress to inform future teaching practices) (as cited in Honeyfield & Fraser, 2013, p. 5).

In other words, students were not required to leave their culture at the door when they came to class (Heke, 2008). Instead, the programme was built around strategies which "allow Māori still to be Māori, and also enable successful participation in all aspects of New Zealand life" (Smith, 2012, p. 16).

### Key barriers faced by students

Kazis et al.'s (2007) three types of barriers - accessibility, affordability and accountability - were amply demonstrated by the experiences of our participants. Of these, issues that affected access loomed largest for most students as they considered the commitment to a semester-long course of study, and then faced various hurdles to persistence and completion.

More than three quarters of our 32 student participants told us the biggest challenges were to do with either their home life, or work commitments. Examples here included unsupportive partners and whānau, as well as being the main, or sole parent/caregiver, juggling children's school and sports, and/or healthcare regime and medical appointments. Some students were working night shifts, others had work before and after class.

Affordability of the programme was a concern, but most students had accepted they would need a student loan, and made the decision to invest in their upskilling prior to undertaking the study, so that this wasn't a top-of-mind issue. However, eight students mentioned the 'opportunity cost' of study, stating that being in class meant they couldn't work as much so had to be more careful with money. Financial barriers also included the cost of resources and materials: two students mentioned the need for a home computer which the family had not had previously; three talked of how much easier study would be if the family home had Internet access:

*"No internet so couldn't only get stuff online in class or now and then"*

Issues of accountability were not so much barriers in themselves, as they were indicators of potential concerns related to the satellite programme offerings. First and foremost here were the personal self-esteem and academic confidence – or lack of it – highly typical of the non-traditional students who predominate in smaller rural and semi-rural communities: mature students as well as early school-leavers, students from ethnic and cultural minorities, "second-chance learners" who did not achieve well in their secondary schooling, "first-in-family" learners, and students with disabilities (including learning difficulties) (Stanley et al., 2011). Comments such as *"Didn't think I could do it"* and *"Was scared of it"* in the focus groups generated lots of nodding and agreement from the larger group. Accountability by the provider comes with the commitment made by accepting these students into the course, and the tacit acceptance that delivery will need to be carefully scaffolded, with a range of study skills, and language, literacy and numeracy embedded to meet these needs.

As well as pedagogy and supports that meet the needs of learners, accountability to students from the provider includes a realistic portrayal of employability outcomes. Many of the students in this study were only interested in gaining credentials that would enhance their job prospects – or lead to higher qualifications, such as a nursing degree. In this case, the HCA programme, and the staff who deliver it have shown outstanding integrity to producing promised outcomes, as shown in the 100% satisfaction rating previously mentioned. Maintenance of this record will, however, require constant vigilance and close liaison with employer stakeholders and monitoring of workplace changes to ensure currency and relevance. Any mismatch between what local industries is seeking, and the education being offered by satellite programmes has the potential to become the largest barrier to success of all – for the students and the provider alike.

### Key challenges for providers

As mentioned in the preceding discussion of 'accountability' barriers for students, the weight of responsibility for avoiding these concerns lies with the home institution which is offering the satellite programme. Students who enrol in these programmes are those who have not, or cannot re-locate to larger centres, and who do not wish to enrol in an online qualification. Providers need to recognise their needs and preferences, whether overt or unconscious, building trust and

relationships through a record of reliability. The institution needs to be able to move quickly, establishing programmes with a short lead time, to address student, whānau, community and employer needs, with work-ready and well-suited graduates. They need to be able to respond rapidly to experiences during delivery and subsequent student feedback and evaluations, to allow every possible chance of success and to problem-solve in-situ. Finally, they need to be able to adjust offerings and locations, semester by semester, as existing needs are satisfied. While short-term infrastructure and investment is often ad-hoc and make-do, satellite students must not be disadvantaged in any meaningful aspect of delivery, compared with those who study at the main campus.

As Clayton (2011) notes, social issues distinct to these communities create additional barriers and responsibilities for students (Clayton, 2011) highlighting the need to ensure that both learning support and pastoral care is readily available for satellite students. This again is a matter of equity, matching the pastoral care which is available for BoPP's Tauranga campus cohort. The follow-on from this is the need to manage staffing, of both tutors and support staff, recognising the essential role they play as the 'face' of the programme. Tutors interviewed for this study referred to weeks in which they had taught in three locations, a pace of delivery which they felt was unsustainable. As one tutor said:

*"The driving is extra on the day which is a downfall, especially at the end of the week knowing that you have to drive back from Tokoroa on a Friday afternoon"* (Tutor)

Clearly there must be strong and empathetic leadership within these programmes, and a senior management who recognise and are prepared to compensate staff for the greater-than-usual demands they face personally and professionally, in teaching in satellite outposts.

### Recommendations for effective planning and delivery

The findings from this project have fed into the complementary resource, *Guidelines for Scoping Successful Satellite Programmes* (Appendix B), designed as a stand-alone one-page primer for other providers to use when planning similar satellite programmes to BoPP's HCA, described in this report. These are arranged as a series of five groups of questions/prompts, on the following topics:

- What does the community need? (Employers and stakeholders, education gaps)
- What are the learner needs? (Demographics, aspirations, LLN, access challenges)
- When and how? (Schedules, curricula, logistics)
- Teachers and resources (Availability, contingencies, infrastructure, adjunct support, costs)
- Where? (Venues, facilities, partners)

In addition, the following points are raised for consideration. These are not outright recommendations, as satellite programme delivery will always be highly contextualised, but may be worth investigation on a case-by-case basis:

- Consider appointing a specialist liaison person to oversee all satellite programme delivery, to coordinate scoping, planning and implementation activities, and as a key contact for stakeholders and staff. This would free teaching staff from some administrative functions and allow more class and student contact and better student access to teaching staff.
- Continue to foster relationships with community stakeholder and partner organisations beyond the lifespan of the original programme, to consider alternative programmes for the future and to promote a continuity of presence in the town and region.
- Investigate contracting local people and/or organisations to provide pastoral care and out-of-class support for students. This again frees up tutor time, but also means that the

students have a contact person 'on the ground' outside the two days a week of scheduled classes.

- In areas where there is no suitable 'technology hub', such as local libraries, the provider should consider supplying computing equipment, or assisting students to purchase this at a subsidised rate, and have longer term plans in place for installation, maintenance and replacement.

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## APPENDIX A Survey/interview questions for students

1. Describe the reasons that you came to do the Health Care Assistance Course here.
2. Would you have been likely to enrol in the programme if you had to travel to Tauranga for classes?
3. Did the programme meet your expectations? Why? Why Not?
4. Describe your prior experience with education i.e. school and/or higher learning.
5. Have you completed any other tertiary education programmes?
6. Have any other members of your family completed tertiary education?
7. Has your completion of tertiary education prompted any members of your family to enrol in a programme?
8. What made you enrol in this particular programme?
9. What were your other commitments while you completed this programme?
10. What were the biggest challenges for you throughout this programme?
11. Did you manage to overcome these challenges? If so, what assisted you overcome these challenges? If not, what prevented you from overcoming these challenges?
12. What do you consider to be your biggest achievements/successes throughout this programme?
13. If you could make any improvements to the programme, what would they be?
14. What are your thoughts on the following?
  - The venue you learnt in
  - The timing of the programme, assessments, classes
  - Access to resources e.g. books, internet, tutors
  - The cost of the programme
  - The tutors
  - The resources available to you throughout the programme
15. What have you gone on to do after completing your HCA programme?

16. Has the HCA qualification and/or your experiences throughout the programme contributed to gaining employment, progressing employment you already had throughout the programme?
  
17. Has the HCA programme prompted you to undertake/consider higher level study?

## APPENDIX B GUIDELINES FOR SCOPING SUCCESSFUL SATELLITE PROGRAMMES

