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# **The effectiveness of vehicles promoting eLearning professional development**

A research thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Communication Management, at Massey University, Manawatu

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## **Abstract**

The influence of vehicles, such as email, websites, and newsletters, to promote eLearning professional development is an area of study that is marked by a lack of research. The aim of this thesis is to develop an understanding of the role that the vehicles used to promote formal eLearning professional development opportunities play in influencing staff awareness of academic development programmes.

Using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, seven groups of Massey University staff were asked to recall and assess the effectiveness of the vehicles used to promote eLearning professional development. The research also drew on web metrics data to provide an observational assessment of the popularity of the University eLearning professional development webpage.

The results suggest that motivation plays a key part in staff awareness of formal eLearning professional development opportunities and the vehicles used to promote them. Further, motivation and institutional factors, such as an institutional eLearning strategy, are interrelated. Therefore the vehicles used to promote eLearning professional development need to be varied and focused on the strengths of each vehicle. There is also potential to use eLearning professional development courses themselves as effective means of promoting other eLearning opportunities. Additionally, the findings suggest that technology-reliant vehicles, such as email and websites, help in converting staff interest in eLearning into action in the form of enrolment into professional development courses. For staff who are less interested in eLearning, a strategy that involves

developing relationships within key personnel within departments is likely to be highly effective in changing perceptions and encouraging engagement.

It is hoped that the findings will assist academic development units to strategically promote their eLearning professional development to a wider academic audience

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction and background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This research will analyse the effectiveness of the communication vehicles used to promote formal eLearning professional development (PD) offered by Massey University's staff between January 2006 and May 2007.

This study is important because there has been little research on the best ways of communicating to staff to make them aware of the formal professional development opportunities in their institution. Professional development courses are unlikely to have any impact on a staff member's eLearning practice until they are made aware that they exist. By analysing which vehicles are the most effective in reaching staff, there is potential for formal types of eLearning professional development to influence a greater number of staff.

This research used a methodology that weaved in the interpretations of the researcher and respondents' perspectives with objective data gathering methods. The methodology aimed to provide a clear picture of the institutional environment in which the vehicles used to promote formal eLearning professional development opportunities operate. In providing staff with an avenue for their institutional perspectives to be complemented by those of the researcher, a deep and rich account of the institutional context was developed. To help mitigate the potential of the researcher's perspective to bias the findings, a series of relatively objective data gathering methods were used. These

methods included recording web page visitor activity and drawing on data that was generated as part of a cross-institutional research project.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first introduces the topic of study and provides a historical background to eLearning and its associated professional development at Massey. The second chapter summarises the literature, focusing particularly on promotional experiences in corporate universities and elearning professional development in a traditional university. In chapter three I describe my methodology and the data gathering methods used, as well as outlining the composition of the respondent groups. In the fourth chapter I report on the results generated from each respondent group, followed by a discussion of the findings in chapter five. The sixth and final chapter provides a conclusion and presents a set of recommendations and directions for future study.

Since I undertook this research, eLearning at Massey has undergone significant changes. These changes have been the catalyst for the institution to adopt a new learning management system, increase its support resources, and establish a strategy that contextualises eLearning PD. While the findings could therefore be seen as being dated, history has demonstrated that the promotion of eLearning PD is often overlooked and undervalued. Assessing the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD at a time in the University's history where the PD itself had matured to meet the institution's needs, provides valuable lessons for organisations that are undergoing an eLearning renaissance, as well as those whose use of eLearning is relatively embryonic.

## **1.2 Background**

To understand the place that eLearning professional development has in Massey University, it is useful to review the context of eLearning PD at Massey. In the following sections I summarise: eLearning professional development at Massey University, the influence of the University's eLearning strategy, the promotion of eLearning PD, institutional changes that have impacted on eLearning, the current provision of eLearning, and the effect that New Zealand eLearning funding opportunities and policy developments have had on eLearning at Massey University.

During this research I was both researcher and an employee at Massey University. The following sections draw on my knowledge from working in eLearning at University, as well as discussions with colleagues who have an institutional knowledge. My dual role can be seen to position this study in the field of insider research, in terms of Robson's (2002) definition of a project where the researcher has a direct involvement or connection with the research setting.

The following section provides a historical account of the development of eLearning at Massey, which is coloured by my point of view as a practitioner who had been employed at Massey for over three years in 2002, and was subsequently employed in the institution's professional development unit from 2005 to the present. As Anderson and Jones (2000) point out, "Practitioners' accounts of their reality are themselves constructions of reality and not reality themselves" (p.44). Therefore I have also drawn on the perspectives of a wide group of staff (as well as the academic literature).

Although, these staff perspectives are not formally acknowledged in this chapter, I have undertaken to indicate where the information provided is my opinion of the researcher rather than the common knowledge of a wider group of staff.

The methodological and ethical aspects of insider-research are covered in more detail in the methods section.

### **1.3 A brief history of eLearning PD and support at Massey**

Massey's eLearning PD history, although a relatively short one, has been influenced by several institutional changes. These changes have, for the most part, taken place in the University's centralised support services.

In the ten years (1997 – 2007) since Massey formalised its commitment to eLearning by investing in a Learning Management System (LMS) called WebCT, eLearning PD has undergone significant changes. Prior to 1997 when the University's Web Teaching Monitoring group assessed 'an integrated suite of Web courseware authoring and servicing tools,' much of Massey's eLearning activity was carried out by individuals within the institution. These individuals, often referred to as 'innovators' and 'early adopters' (Moore 1999), had been using technology in their learning and teaching activities for some time. Institutional adoption of eLearning was a few years behind the early work they carried out.

As technology became more stable and cost effective, its popularity with tertiary institutions grew. Such was the impact of technology in the mid-1990s that theorists,

such as O'Neill, Singh and O'Donoghue (2004), believed that failure to embrace the technological progress made during this time would see institutions unable to meet the needs of the knowledge-based societies. Massey, like many other Universities in the 90s, began to assess how technology could be used to support its strategic aims. The University's move to eLearning was initially tied in with its distance education programme. Massey is unique to other New Zealand universities in that it has offered distance education since the 1960s.

The terms 'distance education' and 'eLearning' have historically been used interchangeably, and authors have talked about eLearning as the new generation of distance learning education (Bates 1999, 2001; Garrison 1993, 1999; Niper 1989; Peters 2001). Although there are advantages and merits of using eLearning in distance education, the two terms should not be used interchangeably (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). The majority of distance education in the tertiary sector is not delivered via eLearning and the majority of eLearning is not used for distance education purposes (Bates 2001; Collis & Moonen 2001; Harley et al. 2002; Somekh & Davis 1997; van der Wende 2002). However, research funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (selected results have been reported in this thesis), suggests that Massey staff continue to be influenced by distance delivery when making decisions about using eLearning.

The most obvious example of Massey linking eLearning and distance education came with the establishment in 1997 of a technology support position in the University's distance education centre – Centre for University Extramural Studies (CUES). CUES

was renamed to NSATS (National Student Administration Services) in 1998. The support position was created to assist the Web Teaching Monitoring group in decision making and to provide technical support (creation WebCT environments, loading student accounts in WebCT, helpdesk support for students and training staff) for the LMS.

Although the support position was located in the University's extramural centre, the staff training aspect of the job was meant to assist all staff. However, given that the support was located in centre that was dedicated to providing assistance to the University's distance education programmes, staff associated the professional development with distance delivery. Having been employed in the support position in 2000, I was made aware of staff perceptions and the legacy surrounding the professional development.

The link between eLearning and distance education was strengthened when the extramural centre's three teaching consultants, whose job it was to provide instructional design support for distance material, began to work with the support position. The consultants' input was the catalyst for changes in the delivery and content of the University's future eLearning PD. In 1999 the support position was formally recognised as being part of the consultants' team.

Changes to the focus of eLearning professional development came late in 2001 when the support position was disestablished and the teaching consultants merged with the University's academic development unit – TDU (Training and Development Unit). This merger created two new teaching consultant positions. In 2002, the technical elements (such as the creation of WebCT environments) that were part of the support person's

work were farmed out to the University's Information Technology Services (ITS). As a large proportion of the original support position's work focused on student support, the consultants and the director of TDU decided that this work did not fit within an academic unit focused on staff support. The removal of the technical support elements allowed the consultants to focus on re-designing eLearning PD.

Over the next five years (2002 – 2007), eLearning PD underwent several changes. As the professional development was now being delivered from the staff academic development unit, there was a need to redesign the PD to better align with the other courses offered by TDU. The most significant of these was a shift in focus away from mastering WebCT's tools to educational best practice in eLearning. Historically the PD, because of its focus on the technical elements of WebCT, was broken into 12 face-to-face modules. These were reduced to six, then finally to five modules. The final product (the Online Learning and Teaching Programme – OLTP) involved the departure from face-to-face delivery that was not feasible to run for small numbers of staff across Massey's three campuses, in favour of an online programme that ran for four weeks, in WebCT, and comprised five modules. Each of these modules focused on a different element of eLearning, such as communication, web design, assessment, content delivery. There was also an introduction to eLearning module focused on defining eLearning and establishing the community of learners.

The OLTP was designed to mirror best practice by allowing participants to experience eLearning from a learner's perspective. Learning from this point of view is widely



regarded as being one of the most effective ways for teachers to get the insight they need in their own teaching (Simpson 2001; Kidney 2004; Massachusetts\_DoE 2005; Milne & Dimock 2005; Pegler, 2005, Salmon, 2000; Ambrose, 2001; Kempe, 2001). On completion of the programme participants were given credit on their PD record that TDU managed.

Although the OLTP was seen as the flagship of the PD offerings, in 2005 a two-week online course (WebCT Experience) was created to assist staff who were unfamiliar with WebCT. The aim of the WebCT Experience was to produce participants who were comfortable with WebCT and interested in exploring other eLearning PD opportunities. This course was not credit bearing.

The consultants were also available for small group and individual consultations. As there were only two consultants who supported eLearning, staff were encouraged to enrol in either the OLTP or Stream Experience to get the assistance they required.

#### **1.4 Barriers to eLearning professional development offered by TDU**

TDU's eLearning PD was faced with two challenges. The first was the legacy left behind by the training run out of the University's extramural centre. For three years eLearning professional development was offered face-to-face and focused on mastering the technical aspects of WebCT, which was the University's only support learning management system. Although this type of training was initially popular with staff, in less than two years from when the training was first offered, the number of staff attending the courses dropped considerably. By 1999 the number of staff attending the technical

training courses had dropped from approximately 100 per year to an average of 30. It is not immediately obvious as to why staff interest decreased in such a small amount of time. There were very few opportunities for staff to evaluate the training and no assessment of the delivery mode, content and staff perceptions of the professional development.

Models, such as Kirkpatrick's (1998) four levels of evaluation, highlight the need to evaluate training programmes and their impact on trainees' behaviour. Although Bates (2004) argues that Kirkpatrick's model oversimplifies training effectiveness "by not considering individual or contextual factors" (p. 372), his model stresses the importance of customer satisfaction and the likely bad image among the workforce through unsatisfactory training. By 2007 when the suite of TDU eLearning PD was offered, staff perception of eLearning PD and its effectiveness were mixed. In addition, improvements to WebCT meant it was easier to use and therefore more accessible to a wider audience. Staff could relatively easily design, create and administer WebCT sites without the need for training. Although the revised professional development was substantially different to its predecessors, the legacy of unsatisfactory technical training, coupled with improvements to WebCT, created a barrier to engagement in PD that was designed to improve staff eLearning practice.

The final challenge to Massey's eLearning professional development was that it was offered from under TDU's umbrella. From 2004, from this writer's perspective, TDU's profile within the University had gradually diminished. For many years the unit's

courses were either a requirement for new staff or were needed to achieve particular aims, for example, increasing research outputs, or obtaining research funding. The unit was reviewed in 2004/5 and suffered a budget cut (approximately 15%) in 2006. With fewer resources, the number of PD courses offered was rationalised. As a result, staff enrolments declined and TDU's visibility within the University decreased. The lack of resources created a situation, in the writer's opinion, that Wilson (2005) terms 'the learning complacency gap'. This gap refers to the current impact of learning and development "versus the impact needed to ensure the business really achieves its goals" (p.1). Wilson argues that generally the needs of the business are advancing much faster than the ability of learning and development for staff to evolve to meet them. Wilson suggests bridging the gap between the needs of the business and the staff learning and development by embedding 'e-elements', or 'e-options' in every learning programme, not just those that are related to eLearning.

O'Neill, Singh and O'Donoghue (2004, p.317) argue that "as the rate of technological progress gathers momentum the skill gap widens and the level of training needed to catch up becomes deeper, creating an instant hurdle for those lacking the necessary skills and expertise". As the major University activities – research and teaching – rely on technology, there was an increasing need for the PD that supports the activities to be current, in regard to both the content and its use of technology.

Since TDU's inception in 1997, its professional development (with the exception of eLearning) was delivered face-to-face with little attention given to the role of technology.

The perception of TDU's professional development therefore appeared to be connected with training that had been delivered in the same way with relatively few technology concessions for over ten years. The lack of technology in professional development, combined with the unit's diminishing presence within the institution meant that TDU's eLearning PD struggled to raise its profile among the University's staff.

## **1.5 The history of eLearning PD promotion**

The present writer argues that the impact that changes to eLearning PD have had on its associated promotion have been minor. However, promotion of eLearning PD has increased in importance over the years and this has been due to several factors. The most influential factor revolves around what Rowland (2002) refers to as the 'fragmentation of university life'. Managerial control, policy initiatives, and the tension between teaching and research are all examples of the "fractures" that have led to incoherency in university life. The result is that work pressures lead to increased time pressures (this fact is reported in the findings), whereby staff are more likely to respond to communication promoting PD than they are to search out the PD opportunities available in their institution.

Historically, vehicles such as pamphlets and newsletters have been the most frequently used when promoting eLearning PD at Massey. In the early 2000s, technology-based vehicles such as websites and email were used just as much as the non-technology-based vehicles. The presence of communication strategies or plans that can guide the use of these vehicles is, however, missing. De Vries (2005) believes that the success of eLearning programmes must include a way to get the word out to potential audiences.

TDU had no communication strategy for the promotion of eLearning PD, and therefore the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD were never evaluated. Decisions to use certain vehicles were based on factors such as availability, reliability and popularity rather than strategy. By the mid-2000s emails and websites were TDU's most commonly used vehicles used to promote all of its PD.

There have been two websites created to promote eLearning PD. The first site was created in 2001 by the teaching consultants and was used to provide information on eLearning pedagogy rather than just the PD that was on offer. In 2003 that site was replaced with one that promoted all of TDU's courses and services and had an online enrolment form. With the popularity and reliance on emails and websites for information dissemination, the availability of a clickable link that allowed for convenient enrolment into courses led to a substantial (75%) increase in online enrolments.

While the technology-reliant and traditional vehicles were used extensively by TDU to promote its PD, other avenues were also employed. Symposia, department presentations, one-to-one consultancies and membership on University committees were used to assist in raising awareness of PD opportunities and to encourage staff to take up or to spread the word about the PD that was on offer.

## **1.6 Institutional changes and their impact on eLearning PD**

The changes in eLearning PD have been played out against a backdrop of University-wide changes. The establishment of a new campus in Auckland in 1993, the merger of the Wellington polytechnic in 1999 and the creation of a College based system in 1998,

influenced the way that the University functioned. The creation of two new campuses fundamentally changed the University's structure from a single campus, multi-mode University to a multi-campus, multi-mode University. Although these events were not directly related to eLearning, they did affect how eLearning PD was delivered and promoted.

Adding to the complexities of a multi-campus institution was the University's move to a College based system. As Colleges came to terms with their structure, they put personnel in place to support technology endeavours. Of the five Colleges (College of Business, College of Humanities and Social Science, College of Science, College of Creative Arts, College of Education) three Colleges (Business, Humanities and Social Science, and Science) took the initiative to support eLearning and created dedicated technology support positions. One of these Colleges, the College of Business, went further and established an eLearning centre. This centre provided eLearning training and support for the College's staff. Staff in TDU and the centre formed a close working relationship that lasted three years until the centre was disestablished. This is the only example of the centralised and College eLearning resources working in a coordinated manner.

The College positions, combined with the College's influence on University strategy and direction, changed the way eLearning was supported in the institution. Before the establishment of Colleges and eLearning positions, the University had run a centralised support structure with the majority of eLearning support located in the University's extramural centre. When the three Colleges created eLearning positions, the University's

eLearning support changed from a centralised to a centralised-decentralised structure. The change in structure coupled with the image issues TDU was dealing with, may have led to a lack of staff awareness of TDU's eLearning PD. Staff in Colleges could now turn to their local support person for eLearning related help and bypass the central support services. The delineation between College and central support was problematic, as there was no requirement for the College support to interact with the centralised support. As a result, there was an increasing lack of coordination between the Colleges and units such as TDU.

There was also an unequal spread of resources in the Colleges. Since 1998 only three Colleges created a dedicated eLearning support position. Two of those Colleges employed the same person in the same role at different times over a five year period. Each support position was also located on Massey's original campus in Palmerston North. The fact that the majority of the University's administration and support was located in Palmerston North was described as proving problematic for many staff on the other campuses, and can be seen as another factor influencing the uptake and visibility of eLearning PD.

Each campus differed in their training needs. The Wellington campus, due to its polytechnic history, had established PD programmes. The PD needs of the Auckland campus appeared to be considerably greater than that of Wellington and Palmerston North, because it was new. In the experience of the writer, organising and running PD that met the needs of staff in all three campuses proved to be difficult. The design of

TDU's 2005 eLearning PD meant that staff from all campuses could engage in it.

However, the popularity of the PD was limited. A possible reason for this was the lack of coordination between the Colleges' support personnel and the central support staff.

The autonomous nature of both the College-based eLearning positions and the centralised equivalent meant that there was no requirement for each to work with one another. In fact, staff in each area reported informally that they were hesitant to work too closely with one another for fear that by doing so they would in some way undermine their own existence and importance within the University. The success of a decentralised-centralised support structure depends largely on the effective coordination of resources and personnel. An opportunity existed for the central eLearning support to use its College counterparts to promote centralised eLearning PD. However, due to the lack of coordination between support people, this opportunity was never fully realised, in the judgement of the present writer. The traction that the centrally run eLearning PD could have established through the coordinated efforts of the centralised-decentralised resources therefore appeared to be lost. The impact that this lack of coordination had on the visibility of the centralised eLearning support within each College appeared to affect it for years to come.

## **1.7 The influence of strategy**

A strategy, or at least a strategic vision, is critical in determining the success of innovations such as eLearning (Guri-Rosenblit 2005; Ismail 2002; Blass & Davis 2003; Greenagel 2002; de Freitas & Oliver 2005; Bates 1999). While there were strategies for promoting the University both domestically and internationally, there was a lack of



similar strategic direction when promoting PD that supported the institution's goals to staff. Massey's non-strategic approach to PD, and in particular eLearning PD, was not unusual. As Collis and van der Wende (2002) point out, change in relation to ICT is often gradual and unsystematic.

To determine the influence that the lack of an institutional eLearning strategy had on eLearning PD, we can also assess the effect it had on the promotion of eLearning PD. When WebCT was purchased there was no online learning and teaching strategy. In 1998, a series of strategic documents were produced to situate eLearning within the University's learning and teaching future. The *Flexible Learning and Teaching* and the *Learning and Teaching on the Web* strategies made specific mention of relevant University charter aims and provided a suggested roadmap for use of technology in learning and teaching. However, changes to the University's structure and New Zealand's tertiary education environment meant that the strategies were not utilised.

In the 1990s New Zealand's universities had enjoyed a period of growth and associated wealth. Toward the end of the 90s student enrolments decreased and universities started to compete aggressively for students. As a result, many institutions restructured their workforce. Some relief came with the increase in international student enrolment numbers in the early 2000s. However, as these declined, institutions had to take remedial measures, which came in the form of more restructurings. Over the next four years the majority of Massey's Colleges shed staff to ensure they were being as effective and efficient as possible. Decreases in student generated income, coupled with the move to a

College based system, led to increasing difficulties in accepting strategies that were perceived by Colleges to be giving money to the University's central support services.

Another challenge was the change in the way in which the New Zealand government funded research in the tertiary education sector. In 2003, Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF) shifted the University's focus from learning and teaching (of which eLearning is a subset) to research-based activities. The shift came with a gradual reprioritisation of the University's resources. Academic staff were encouraged, by way of incentives, such as promotion and in some cases financial rewards, to increase their research outputs. This created a situation whereby learning and teaching were in direct competition with research. Given that there were fewer incentives for learning and teaching, the associated PD struggled to attract staff who had been encouraged to focus their attention on other core University business.

Decreasing student numbers, the move to the multi-campus mode and the College based structure, as well as the increased focus on research based activities, all played a part in the strategic positioning of eLearning within the University. The relatively short time frame in which these significant events took place saw the shelving of strategies that could have better positioned eLearning within the institution. The traction eLearning could have achieved through strategies such as *Flexible Learning and Teaching* and the *Teaching on the Web* strategies was lost among the substantial changes and the lack of coordination between colleges and centralised resources.

## **1.8 Domestic factors affecting eLearning**

In the ten years (1997 – 2007) since Massey purchased WebCT there have been significant changes in New Zealand's eLearning tertiary sector. These changes have influenced eLearning at Massey as well as many other institutions in the sector.

One of the most influential changes to the tertiary sector's support of eLearning came in 2001 with the establishment of the eLearning advisory group, created by New Zealand's Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The purpose of the group was to provide strategic eLearning advice for the tertiary sector. Arguably their most influential recommendation was the use of incentives to foster collaboration between New Zealand tertiary institutions. As a result, the eLearning collaborative development fund (eCDF) worth \$14 million and the Innovation and Development Fund (IDF) worth \$40 million were established. The funding was, in the case of eCDF, earmarked for collaborative projects in eLearning. The eCDF fund was the first example of government money being targeted for eLearning, and the funds attracted a great deal of interest from tertiary education providers.

Each year from 2003, millions of dollars were made available to institutions willing to collaborate in projects that could benefit tertiary eLearning. From the outset, the advisory group considered eLearning professional development a "must have". This prioritisation can be partly explained by the lack of capability of many institutions to support eLearning. The funds were designed to encourage the assimilation of eLearning PD and for all tertiary institutes to work more closely together in innovative eLearning

projects. The uniqueness of the funding was also one of its disadvantages. In a climate where student generated funding had steadily decreased and research funding was now contestable, any additional income was attractive. In total, 264 eCDF applications were made to the Tertiary Education Commission. While the funding helped to raise the profile of eLearning, it is debatable as to whether it helped the credibility of eLearning as a worthwhile teaching and learning tool.

Massey was successful in receiving eCDF and IDF (Innovation Development Fund) funding in excess of \$6 million. In the four years of eCDF funding, Massey was the lead collaborator in six projects. Two eCDF projects were led by TDU, of which one was focused on eLearning PD. The Train the Trainers (eCDF 514) project was designed to assist 'trainers' in collaborating institutions to develop their own eLearning PD. The project was based around the OLTP (Online Learning and Teaching Programme) that was used by Massey at that time. Ultimately, the project benefited Massey's eLearning PD, in so far as it improved TDU's OLTP's structure and provided funding to enhance the content and how it was delivered to staff. Staff feedback on the programme indicated its worth as a professional development tool that had the potential to have a positive impact on eLearning activities. The project also raised Massey's profile among both domestic and overseas tertiary institutions.

While obtaining external funding was a success on one level, it did not improve the relative importance of TDU's eLearning programmes at the institutional level. In the view of the writer, there is a notable difference between what was intended from the

funding and what happened, at least within the Massey context. The eCDF's stated aim was to increase the quality of eLearning for learners as well as to obtain the strategic implementation of eLearning in tertiary education organisations. There is little evidence to suggest that because of the funding there was a strategic implementation of eLearning at Massey. Due to the lack of an eLearning strategy, there was little opportunity to enhance the quality of the institution's eLearning PD and to provide an effective basis from which eLearning PD could be promoted.

## **1.9 Summary**

In the ten years since the University purchased WebCT in 1997, Massey's eLearning PD has undergone substantial changes. By 2007 a suite of eLearning PD that focused on educational best practice was available to all Massey staff. Although the PD was successful in receiving government funding, the institutional acknowledgement was not forthcoming. As a result, the PD was not seen to be a necessity for staff using eLearning in their teaching and learning. Additionally, the legacy of unsatisfactory technical training had created a perception among staff that eLearning PD was connected to distance education and focused on mastering the mechanics of WebCT. This perception and a lack of a University eLearning strategy coupled with changes to the University's structure and the tertiary sector meant that eLearning PD was not a priority for Massey staff.

While a variety of communication vehicles were used to promote the PD, their effectiveness was never assessed. The importance of a communication strategy was underscored when TDU rationalised its courses and therefore decreased its visibility

within the institution. Although College eLearning support staff could have been used to help promote TDU's eLearning PD, the relationship between the unit and the Colleges were not well enough established to leverage this opportunity.

Massey's centralised, decentralised eLearning support structure provided staff with opportunities to receive timely and responsive help from support personnel located in their College. While this structure may have suited staff, it ultimately created another challenge for TDU's eLearning PD. Enhancements to WebCT combined with the College support positions meant that staff felt sufficiently confident with their eLearning skills that they did not need to engage in eLearning PD. In addition, changes to the way the government funded research saw Massey prioritise it over learning and teaching. With incentives to engage in eLearning reduced eLearning PD struggled to get traction within the institution.

Massey's eLearning PD has reached a stage where it can make a difference to the institution's eLearning practice. However, institutional, departmental and domestic factors have influenced how eLearning PD is perceived at Massey and created challenges for those employed in professional development to effectively promote it.



## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

While investigating this research topic, it was apparent that there was a lack of literature on the promotion of eLearning PD as well as the vehicles used to communicate such opportunities in a traditional university. Due to this limitation, this review will draw on the promotional experiences in corporate universities (CU) and eLearning professional development in traditional universities.

The literature defines eLearning in a range of different ways. Brown (2005) sees it as the “use of computers and networking technology for knowledge and skill building” (p. 465). Beamish, Armistead, Watkinson and Armfield (2002) offer a broader definition of eLearning as “a wide set of applications and processes allied to training and learning that includes computer based learning, online learning, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration” (p. 105). The definition used by New Zealand Ministry of Education focuses more on the parties involved:

Learning that is enabled or supported by the use of digital tools and content. It typically involves some form of interactivity, which may include online interaction between the learner and their teacher or peers. e-learning opportunities are usually accessed via the internet, though other technologies such as CD-ROM are also used in e-learning. (2004, p.1)

Most scholars would agree that there has been a dramatic increase, interest and activity in the development of technology-based systems within tertiary environments (for example



Newton, 2003 and Sugrue, 2003). The increased interest and associated reasons for the move to eLearning vary when looking at the corporate and traditional university sectors.

There are a number of definitions of a Corporate University (CU). Grezner (2006) sees a CU as a “function strategically aligned towards integrating the development of people within a specific organization” (p.1). Similarly, Jarvis (2001) defines a CU as a strategic umbrella concept for developing and educating a company’s employees and constituents in order to meet an organisation’s purpose. The corporate sector often quotes the potential cost savings in training and the perception that eLearning can contribute significantly to such savings (Beamish et al, 2002). In traditional universities the reasons for using eLearning range from “improving access to education and training; enhancing the quality of teaching and learning; and the need to remain competitive” (Newton, 2003, p. 1) to “to reach[ing] a greater audience in an efficient manner” (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000, p. 1).

Zemsky and Massy (2004) observed the effect that the rapid integration of learning management systems (often the vehicles used in delivering eLearning) are having on teaching practices. They argue that the impact of technology on education is restricted merely to the periphery, with teaching practices remaining largely unchanged. Elgort (2005) argues “...that by making it almost too trivial to create a course website and transfer existing materials into web-based ones, these [LMS] systems allow lecturers to adopt a ‘surface’ approach to eLearning” (p.183). It can, therefore, be assumed that this surface approach is transmissionist i.e. it simply shifts one group of material to another format and lacks the ‘deep learning’ that is the most effective educational strategy in an

economy of rapid change (Phillips, 2005). Govindasamy (2001) argues that a lack of change in teaching practice is because pedagogy is the most neglected aspect of attempts to implement eLearning. Romiszowski (2004) acknowledges the need for a focus on pedagogy and proposes that an emphasis on the ‘e’ rather than the learning or the need is a possible reason for the ambivalence around the potential of technology. In contrast to Govindasamy’s argument that pedagogy is neglected, Marshall’s (2005) study of six New Zealand universities and three polytechnics showed that pedagogical support was more widely available than technical.

Integration of eLearning systems into many higher education institutions, coupled with the ease of these systems to allow conversion of material into web form, has placed a greater emphasis on institutions’ staff support structures to deliver appropriate and worthwhile PD opportunities. Within tertiary institutions there are a variety of professional development opportunities available. These opportunities can be divided into three types: formal, non-formal and informal.

Formal professional development is often described as formal education that incorporates “traditional classroom education with books, an instructor, and a set period” (Schwartz & Bryan, 1998, p. 8). This description, although it favours a face-to-face delivery mode, provides a useful foundation through which formal, informal or non-formal forms of PD can be distinguished. Examples of formal PD include credit for attending training courses, or study toward a formal qualification. Hegarty et al (2005) add that this type of

PD is often driven by institutional actors such as staff developers and or heads of departments.

Informal professional development includes all activities that staff engage with to increase their knowledge in a particular area, but are not formally acknowledged. This PD may be “unorganized, unsystematic and even unintentional at times, yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person’s total lifetime learning – including that of even a highly ‘schooled’ person” (Bhola, 1983, p. 47). Examples include discussions with colleagues, reading articles and searching on the internet.

Underpinning each type of professional development are implicit assumptions. An obvious assumption is that for staff to engage with formal PD they will need to plan and organise their work and personal lives to accommodate it. Lawless and Pellegrino (2007) point out that despite the lack of research on the effective methods of eLearning PD, effective PD is generally long in duration. In describing the changes to academic roles in universities, Rowland (2002) and Boud (1999) observe that university life has become increasingly fragmented, with the certainties that were taken for granted in the 1970s and 1980s being increasingly challenged. Staff in higher education are now subject to increasing time demands and have competing priorities.

Given the pressures on staff, participation in formal forms of learning is increasingly hard to find. McClusky’s (1963) Theory of Margin helps explain the effects of competing pressures on staff time. His concept “does not directly address learning itself but rather

when it is most likely to occur” (Merriam, Cafarella & Baumgatner, 2007, p. 96). It is based on a formula that pits load against power. Load is referred to as the demands both social and self that a person needs to maintain a minimal level of autonomy. Power is the resources a person can call on to cope with the load. Margin is therefore the ratio of load to power. The more power a person has over his or her life, the greater margin they have to participate in learning (Merriam, Cafarella & Baumgatner, 2007). Similarly Wang and Wang (2004), observe that staff balance both work and personal responsibilities, and that the competing demands on staff time pose a further challenge to integrating formal eLearning PD into their workload. However, Wolfin (1999) argues that overloaded adults are just as able to learn as those that have an ideal power to load ratio. According to Wolfin (1999), an overloaded adult will make a judgement on the value of the content matter and the method of delivering the learning before engaging.

Implicit in Wolfin’s argument is the concept of motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000), show that a person’s motivation is likely to be influenced by incentives, rewards and environmental factors. Motivation is a factor reported by Wang and Wang (2004) and Simpson (2004) as a determinant in staff interest and uptake of eLearning PD. Given that the majority of engagement in eLearning PD is done on a voluntary basis, institutions need to acknowledge that motivations and needs of staff who do engage are different to those non-volunteers (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007). An understanding of what motivates people and the theories behind motivation will assist in designing eLearning PD to make it attractive to a wide audience. However, as Boyer, Maher and Kirkman (2006) point

out, there will always be resistance to eLearning PD, with some staff never accepting its value regardless of the support provided and the strategies employed.

With emphasis being placed on eLearning within University contexts, the formal PD that supports it needs to evolve to assist staff in realising the potential of eLearning while attempting to discourage approaches that are 'surface' in form. Hegarty et al. (2005a) in reporting on professional development offered in six New Zealand tertiary institutes, recommend PD be flexibly delivered and offer staff a range of different opportunities. Marshall (2005) in assessing tertiary education organisations (TEOs) highlights that policies supporting PD need to acknowledge the different needs and competencies of the staff in the organisation. Hegarty et al (2005) go further and point out that the type of assistance that is likely to suit staff comes in both technical and pedagogical forms. Ellis and Phelps (2006) also believe that success for staff in transitioning to online teachers or facilitators comes from them developing more than just technical skills.

In assessing the importance of PD in general, Prebble, Hargraves, Leach, Naidoo, Suddaby and Zepke (2005) state that staff development programmes can be influential in changing teaching practices and beliefs. Keast (1997) supports this notion and notes, in his comparison of distant education programmes, that programmes with a commitment to faculty support and training resulted in higher quality outcomes. Alexander and McKenzie (1998), in characterising the effective educational technology projects, shows that the eLearning success of these projects depends on a number of factors, in particular

that the project must be embedded into the department's normal teaching, and that there should be access to technology and educational support structures.

One of the major challenges facing academic development units within tertiary institutes is the role that informal PD plays in staff engagement with eLearning. Marshall's (2005) study found that, in the six universities and three polytechnics, informal forms of PD were the most widely practised. In addition, Hegarty et al (2005) found that staff sense of self-efficacy in relation to eLearning was tied in with their informal approaches to eLearning rather than the formal PD opportunities. The challenge according to Mitchell, Clayton, Bower, Barr and Bright (2005), is to design formal programmes and facilitate informal forms of PD that account for the wide-range of skills and attitudes of senior leaders and managers. One approach to meeting the challenge is having flexible and responsive staff development (Hegarty et al, 2005a) and support structures. Implicit in this approach is the need for organisations to acknowledge the value of eLearning and its PD and acknowledge the commitment that the staff member must make to engage.

The importance of support structures is reiterated by Marshall (2005) who advocates for "planned intentionality". Planned intentionality is characterised by an institutional-wide approach that involves the availability of support and recognition of developing the skills needed for eLearning. Acknowledgement of staff involvement in eLearning and its associated PD is also seen as an important facet in the success of PD programmes.

Newton (2003) identifies the organisational barriers inhibiting the accelerated adoption of technology, including inadequate infrastructure access, support and training, as well as

staff not having been taught how to apply technology to teaching. He argues that there is a “time-intensive nature to both development and delivery of Web-based learning” (p. 5) that needs to be acknowledged. Beckett and Brine (2003) observe that the time intensive nature of eLearning is often “hidden”. Doughty, Spector and Yonai (2003) conducted a two year study of fully online courses, and found that students spent slightly longer in studying in that mode, while the teachers and support staff spent twice as long teaching in the online course than they did in the face-to-face equivalent.

Success in eLearning is often credited to an institution having a strategy or at least a strategic vision (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005; Ismail, 2002; Blass & Davis, 2003; Greenagel 2002; de Freitas & Oliver, 2005; Bates, 1999, Mansvelt, Suddaby, O’Hara, & Gilbert, 2009). Dooley and Murphrey (2000) point out that the positive impact of any distance technology is highly dependent on institutional policies. A strategic approach is also supported by Macpherson, Homan and Wilkinson (2005) who emphasise that any eLearning initiative needs to be a “strategically lead and supported initiative that integrates with the overall business strategy...” (p.44). However, an institution’s eLearning strategy and associated PD must also take into account the economic, political and technology contexts (Duin & Starke-Meyerring, 2003, Mitchell, 2005). Although Hanna and Latchuem (2002) acknowledge the importance of a strategy, they go further in saying that for organisations to fully engage with eLearning institutional transformation is required. “With regard to professional development, this implies an organisation should be open to and willing to engage with different ways of working and thinking if it wishes to engage extensively with e-learning” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.11).

Milne and Dimock (2005) also believe an institutional strategy is important, but point out the necessity of linking the strategy to practice. Lawless and Pellegrino (2007) argue that a strategy needs to be aligned to changing practice and changing attitudes. When reviewing the literature on effective institutional use of eLearning, the importance of an institutional strategy was the one factor that all researchers believed was essential to create a culture that valued eLearning and its associated PD.

It could, therefore, be argued that an institution's eLearning strategy is the most effective promotional vehicle. So, what role does promotion play in eLearning PD programmes? A partial answer to this question can be found in research undertaken in a corporate university context.

Veldsman (2004) compares the traditional training and development department with the CU and traditional university. He states that "CU delivers education in anytime, anyhow and anyone and anyway manner, using both virtual and blended delivery methods" (p. 27). In contrast, the traditional university is positioned as being less flexible with courses being delivered within a period of time and often restricted to residential delivery, for example face-to-face classes held at the university. The distinction that Veldsman makes in the ways that training/education is organised by the CU and traditional university provides insights into drivers behind the need to promote eLearning initiative in a CU.

The focus for many corporate universities undertaking eLearning training revolves around the "potential cost advantages, borne out of reduced training time and cost savings



in travel and time away from the job” (MacPherson, et al, 2005, p 36). To justify a movement toward eLearning as an efficient and profitable solution, the return on investment (ROI) must be clear. Promotion and specifically the promotional vehicles play an important role in ensuring eLearning success. This is not to say, however, that strategy does not have a part to play, especially in a corporate university context. Henry (2001) states in his assessment of eLearning integration in a corporate environment, that parts of “eLearning implementations must be viewed in the same way that one would view any other mission-critical, organisational-wide initiative. It will require senior-management commitment, change management initiatives, understanding of cultural and technological obstacles, internal marketing and clear ROI metrics” (p. 254). McGraw (2001) also highlights the importance of business and learning strategy in successfully implementing eLearning.

Much of the CU experiences revolve around first-time implementation of eLearning. There are, however, many valuable insights that can be gleaned from the corporate experience, regardless of whether an institution is implementing for the first time or is looking at promoting an established system.

The success of eLearning within an institution is often a complex interplay of culture, management support (Philips, 2005) and day-to-day workload issues (Ford, Quiñones, Sego & Sorra, 1992). As Brown (2003, p. 477) notes “eLearning programs should rely on invitations and marketing rather than forced compliance”. Gilley and Egglund (1994) expand on Brown’s comment, observing that voluntary compliance and clarity in the

articulation of the value of training programmes are paramount to the success of those programmes.

In Ettinger's (2005) account of eLearning implementation in Xerox's corporate university, the promotional message was just as important as creative ways to get the message across. In a further study by Ettinger, Holton and Blass (2006), creative approaches to promotion rather than "hugely expensive" (p. 35) ones were seen as effective. This creative approach to promotion is also reiterated by Heumann and Carr (2003) who highlight the need for promotion to contain "helpful learning messages" (p. 24) and to employ varying communication vehicles. Specific promotional vehicles used at Xerox included cups, pens and mouse pads that were branded with the training programme's details.

Hipwell (2000) goes further and outlines ten effective promotional tactics ranging from using a variety of communication vehicles to strategic approaches that include incorporation of eLearning professional programmes into employee development and performance plans. Gilley and Egglund (1994) take a similar strategic approach in their study of marketing Human Resource Development (HRD) in the United Kingdom. They advocate working closely with specific departments and to form 'ambassador relationships', whereby a person or persons within a department would communicate training opportunities to other people in that department. Although cultivating such relationships can be challenging, the relationships are effective, not just for communicating training opportunities, but also in improving them. It would seem that

the role of communication vehicles in promoting eLearning within institutions needs to be creative, varied, clearly articulated, linked with the institution's strategy, and integrated into employee professional development and performance plans.

The literature shows that eLearning PD takes place within institutional environments that struggle with reconciling the uncertainties of eLearning as a worthwhile and effective teaching and learning practice. Staff awareness of PD that can change practice and lead to enduring cultural change is best achieved through varied, creative and strategic use of communication vehicles. However, without an institutional eLearning strategy that acknowledges the worth of eLearning, the value and awareness of its PD is unlikely to be realised by staff that operate in an increasingly fragmented university environment.

One final comment: What is remarkable about the literature is how uniform the findings are, regardless of which country the study is done in. One reason for this could be that most of the authors work in professional development so they are viewing the material through the same lens, i.e. one that is based on the assumption that there is a need to extend eLearning professional development. Another reason is that the challenges that confront universities, such as the emphasis on research over teaching, exist worldwide. This thesis therefore builds on this literature with the aim of adding to it by focusing on the vehicles used in promoting eLearning professional development.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

To reiterate, the purpose of the research was to analyse the effectiveness of the communication vehicles used to promote eLearning professional development offered by Massey University's academic unit to staff between January 2006 and May 2007. Given my dual role as an employee and researcher, the enquiry can be classified as insider research. A discussion about insider research is included in the section entitled 'Position of the researcher'

As the procedures involved bringing together the experiences of current and prospective e-learners, the methodology was heavily informed by the naturalistic research approach. The nature of naturalistic inquiry was best suited to this research as the topic deals with the perspectives of staff within a work situation. Also, a naturalistic inquiry allows a researcher to observe and to ask questions about a phenomenon in the setting in which it is being played out, thereby allowing for natural accounts of human behaviour in which the researcher does not control the conditions being studied. The setting is important to my research because eLearning at Massey has been greatly influenced by institutional and domestic changes, many of which are not directly related to eLearning but play a part in staff's opinions about it and whether they choose to engage with its associated communication.

The research employed a triangulated method, i.e. collecting information from a variety of participants, settings and methods, and I elicited data from 254 respondents. The triangulated method was chosen to decrease the risk of chance associations and

systematic biases. As part of this strategy, a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions was used in the questionnaires and interviews, to provide both an insight into the participants' behaviour as well as an objective means of assessing the popularity and effectiveness of certain communication vehicles.

As the methods, questionnaires, interviews and observation of web page visitor activity employed in this research were chosen for their ability to ensure respondent anonymity, it is difficult to assess how many of the 254 respondents had participated in one or more of the methods. It is estimated that 146 of the 254 respondents participated in only one of the chosen methods, with the remaining 108 taking part in more than one. Given that I used a convenience sample, i.e. respondents were selected on the basis of availability, and that there were approximately 1500 academic staff at Massey at the time of the research, which makes the ratio of participants to staff approximately 1:5, it is difficult to generalise the results.

The methods I used were primarily semi-structured interviews and online questionnaires. The interviews explored staff opinions on areas such as institutional strategy, perceptions of eLearning PD and the impact of workload on eLearning professional development decision making. Online questionnaires provided baseline data (both qualitative and quantitative) on topics such as the popularity of promotional vehicles, staff attitudes toward eLearning PD and awareness of eLearning PD at the institution. The data from some of the questionnaires were also used to inform the interview questions. In the case of interviews with participants who had completed a questionnaire, the results of the

questionnaire were analysed for common themes and the interview questions created so that the participants could expand on the themes.

To mitigate the potential subjectivity in terms of both respondents' interpretations of questions and the researcher's interpretations of answers, visitor traffic to an eLearning web page was recorded by a specialised tool called Web Trends. This approach provided a comparatively objective means to assess whether certain communication vehicles, such as email, pamphlets and newsletters, were more effective than others in driving visitor traffic to the eLearning web page. The simplest way to gauge the influence of the vehicles was to track and graph visitor numbers every month to an eLearning PD web page and then to plot the promotional activity that happened in or around that time.

A more detailed account of procedures employed in this study is included in the procedures section.

### 3.1 Position of the researcher

One of the key tenets of naturalistic inquiry is the study of phenomena *in situ*. To effectively study people in context “researchers place their bodies in a context and use themselves as the primary instrument to collect data” (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p. 262). The process of embodied practice is particularly relevant given that while undertaking this research, I was also working as a Teaching Consultant at the University. Being part of the environment that I was researching not only allowed me to access people and data that would have otherwise been difficult to obtain, but also assisted in

weaving in an interpretive viewpoint that added to the richness of the research, as well as providing an institutional and cultural context.

However, insider research also has its limitations, in particular the potential for preconceived ideas to influence the direction of the research. A key assumption of insider research is that the researcher's approach is a reflexive one. Pollner (1991) defined reflexivity as "an 'unsettling,' i.e., an insecurity regarding the basic assumptions, discourse and practices used in describing reality" (p. 370).

Prior to undertaking this research I had worked at Massey in 1999 until 2002 as a tutor, a trainer and in an eLearning support position. After a break of three years working for another tertiary education provider, I took up my current role as a Teaching Consultant in 2005. During my time at Massey I had been in contact with a large number of staff and had built-up a substantial network of contacts. In addition, I had built-up institutional knowledge that had been influenced by both central university support viewpoints and College perspectives. My three year employment with another tertiary provider gave me a wider New Zealand tertiary education perspective. These different realities shaped my view of the institution and how it functioned.

Throughout the research process I undertook to check my perspectives against those of other staff. As I was interacting with people who had a wide range of overlapping experiences of the same institution, I was acutely aware that my perspectives could influence theirs and vice versa. Also, having been away from Massey for over three years

I felt that my understanding of the University was somewhat dated. Therefore I positioned myself as a person with institutional knowledge that needed adding to. While my role as a consultant allowed me to access staff and information that would have been difficult to obtain if I had been an ‘outsider’, I was nevertheless focusing on an angle of the research that I knew little about. Having very little knowledge of the efficacy of the vehicles used to promote eLearning, I was free to develop an understanding rather than being confined through being too intimately connected to the subject matter.

Although my position may have influenced the interview results, in the sense that participants may have been inclined to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear, my role helped me to establish rapport with participants and provided deeper insights into the material. To avoid the possible negative impact of researcher interpretations, I took the approach of being a co-constructor of knowledge. I positioned myself, over the 12 month period of data gathering (2006 – 2007), not as a Teaching Consultant but rather as a researcher wishing to better understand the complexities of promoting eLearning PD in the institution. I also avoided asking questions that required participants to rate my eLearning PD, to prevent a situation whereby they would feel obliged to respond positively due to my position.

A number of ethical issues need to be considered when undertaking insider research. These are detailed in the ethics section of this thesis.



### 3.2 Changes to PD activities

Data collected in the research was affected by three changes. The first two changes influenced the amount of data that I was able to obtain from the two eLearning PD course surveys. The third change impacted on the number of staff that were exposed to emails promoting eLearning PD opportunities.

The first change affected the Online Learning and Teaching Programme (OLTP). In 2006 this programme was run twice. During this time questions pertaining to promotion were included in the pre- and post-course questionnaires. However, in 2007 these questions were removed; therefore the data generated from the programme is restricted to one year's offering.

The second change was to the WebCT Experience survey, which was altered between January 2006 and May 2007. In August 2006 two multiple-choice, multiple-response questions pertaining to the types of communication vehicles used to promote eLearning PD were included in the WebCT Experience feedback questionnaire. Prior to this, the three open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analysed for responses relating to professional development. Therefore there was limited data generated from the WebCT Experience that specifically addressed promotion.

The third change revolved around the emails sent to the University community regarding WebCT course creation. Early in 2006 the University's Information Technology

Services (ITS) employed a User Support Analyst (Online Learning). Given that ITS was responsible for WebCT course creation, it was decided by TDU and ITS that email communications regarding the course creation process were best organised and sent by the User Support Analyst. In the course of the research two emails were sent from ITS to one subscriber-based eLearning email list. In the past, these emails were sent by TDU to two email lists. As only one mailing list was used, fewer staff would have been exposed to the message.

### 3.3 Participants and procedures

This research analysed data from seven respondent groups. All respondents were staff members at Massey University and came from a variety of Schools, Institutes and Departments across all three of the University's campuses.

Table 1 provides a summary of the composition and procedures for each group of participants.

Table 1

Respondent Group Number, Composition and Procedures

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
1	25 respondents both general and academic staff members, representing all Colleges except for the College of Creative Arts.	Questions included in the pre- and post-course questionnaires, in the Online Learning and Teaching programme's Introduction to

		eLearning module.
2	20 staff members of which 80% were academics. All had been involved in the Online Learning and Teaching programme's Introduction to eLearning module.	Semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone.
3	25 respondents, 80% were academics who were located on the Palmerston North campus.	Questions included in the feedback survey in the WebCT Experience course.
4	20 respondents. All were academic staff members who had never been involved in any formal eLearning PD run by the TDU.	Semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone.
5	146 respondents 71% academics.	Online questionnaire.
6	12 respondents, all of which were academics and based at the Palmerston North campus.	Semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone or face-to-face.
7	3, 291 visitors to web page. All visitors were from New Zealand.	Web Trends data that recorded visitor numbers to web page.

Group One were participants in the Online Learning and Teaching programme's Introduction to eLearning module, which was run twice in 2006. They were asked to complete pre-course and post-course questionnaires. Of the 28 staff enrolled in the each

offering, 75% were academic staff and the remaining 25% were general staff, for example, administrative staff who support academics in making material available online. All the University Colleges (with the exception of the College of Creative Arts) and campuses were represented, with the College of Science and the Palmerston North campus having the majority of staff members enrolled.

Group Two consisted of 20 participants all of whom were enrolled in the Online Learning and Teaching programme's Introduction to eLearning module. Eighty percent of these respondents were academics, with 60% originating from the Palmerston North campus, 30% from Massey's Albany campus and the remaining 10% were located at the Wellington campus. As a requirement of the eLearning module, participants from Group One had to make contact with the researcher to obtain credit for participation. When the respondents made contact, the researcher asked them if they were willing to provide answers to two semi-structured open ended questions that did not count toward their credit for the eLearning module. Of the 23 participants that contacted the researcher, 20 agreed to answer the questions.

Group Three was made up of participants in the WebCT Experience course. Between February and September 2006, three open-ended questions in this course's feedback questionnaire were analysed for information relating to eLearning PD. In October 2006 two multiple-choice, multiple-response questions were added to the existing open-ended questions to elicit data that was relevant to the promotion of eLearning PD. Three offerings of the WebCT Experience were run from the time these questions were

included in the feedback questionnaire. Eighty percent of participants in the WebCT Experience courses were academics, with the majority of staff employed at the Palmerston North campus.

Group Four consisted of 20 academic staff members who had never been involved in any formal eLearning PD or had previously contacted the researcher. These respondents were based at the Palmerston North campus and had phoned the researcher with questions that were classified as being professional development in nature and were willing for their answers to be used for the purposes of this research.

Groups Five and Six comprised Massey University staff who took part in a New Zealand Ministry of Education funded project on tertiary eLearning PD capability. Group Five had taken part in an online questionnaire ( $n = 146$ ) that focused on the professional development needs of staff members at the University. Fifty seven percent of this group were female, and 43% males. Seventy one percent of respondents were academics and the remaining 29% were general staff.

Respondents in Group Six were a subset of Group Five who participated in a series of semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone and volunteered to be interviewed. There were 12 respondents in this group. All staff were academics located on the Palmerston North campus.

The seventh set of data was gathered using the WebTrends tool, which recorded visitor numbers to the eLearning web page used in all TDU's promotion. Visitor information was limited to basic geographic information, such as visitor location by country. Specific data, such as how many visitors from New Zealand were from the University, was not accessed to avoid identifying the respondents. Between January 2006 and May 2007 the web page recorded 9,975 visitors. Fifty six percent of the visitors originated from the United States, 33% were from New Zealand, and the remaining 11% were from an unknown origin. Although the small number of New Zealand responses decreases the validity of this data, it provides the most objective means of assessing staff behaviour in relation to communication vehicles promoting eLearning PD.

### **3.3.1 Questionnaires:**

Four questionnaires were constructed and were used for Groups One, Three and Five. Three of the four questionnaires contained similar questions but were adapted to the context in which they were delivered. The fourth questionnaire was part of a separate research project, and therefore the questions were designed to elicit different information. See Appendices A and B for the questions Groups One and Three were asked. Appendix E includes the full questionnaire that Group Five was given. The questions delivered to Groups One and Three are also included in this section.

Participants in Group One were given two questionnaires: a pre-course questionnaire and post-course questionnaire that are used in all TDU's online learning and teaching modules. These questionnaires were created and delivered using WebCT's survey tool. An additional two questions were included in the pre-course questionnaire. The first

asked respondents to identify, from five options, which communication vehicle(s) they recalled that promoted the programme. The second question asked respondents to identify, from five options, the motivation for them to enrol in the programme. Another question was added to the feedback questionnaire. This question asked staff to identify which communication vehicles, for example email and pamphlets, they preferred TDU to use to keep them up to date with eLearning PD activities in the University. These three questions were chosen as they addressed key issues associated with the promotion of eLearning PD.

The questions were:

**Pre-course questions:**

Q 1. How did you come to hear of the Introduction to eLearning module? – check as many as apply.

- a. A colleague or a support person gave me the details.
- b. I received an email with the details.
- c. I saw it on the TDU (Training and Development Unit) webpage.
- d. I saw it advertised on a pamphlet.
- e. I read about it in the TDU news.

Q 2. Why did you enrol in the Introduction to eLearning module? – check as many as apply.

- a. I am interested in learning more about online learning.
- b. My students are demanding more and more material online and I need to know how to do it.
- c. My School/Department/Institute strongly suggested that I do this course
- d. It has been recommended to me.

- e. I will be supporting my Schools/ Departments/Institutes' WebCT offerings and I need to know how to use it.

**Post-course question:**

Q.3 What are the most effective ways for you to be kept informed about support and training for online learning at Massey? - check as many as apply

- a. By email.
- b. By pamphlets sent out at the start of each year.
- c. By regularly distributed newsletter - such as the TDU (Training and Development Unit's) news.
- d. Through a College/Institute/Department support contact.
- e. By me making contact with those supporting online learning when I need to.
- f. Through the Training and Development Unit's (TDU's) website.
- g. By being informed when I attend other Training and Development Unit (TDU) run courses.

The questions about communication vehicles were included to address how staff became aware of this professional development opportunity and the vehicles that were most popular with them. Prior to these questions, there was no formal record kept of the ways in which staff came to know of the PD and which vehicles were the most popular for staying in touch.

The second question in the pre-course questionnaire was included to obtain data on staff's reasoning for participating in an optional PD activity. This question helped to ascertain what motivators, whether extrinsic and intrinsic, influence staff to participate in the Introduction to eLearning module.



The questionnaires in the Introduction to eLearning module in the OLTP were optional, and included questions that were self-administering and multiple-response in form. The respondents' answers were anonymous and once collated, frequency tables were produced showing participant responses and their accompanying percentages.

Two multi-choice multi-response and three open-ended questions were used in the WebCT Experience course's feedback questionnaire (Group Three). The questionnaire was delivered to respondents using WebCT's survey tool. These questions were:

**The two multi-choice multi-response questions:**

Q 2. How did you come to hear of the WebCT Experience course? – check as many as apply.

- a. A colleague or a support person gave me the details.
- b. I received an email with the details.
- c. I saw it on the TDU (Training and Development Unit) webpage.
- d. I saw it advertised on a pamphlet.
- e. I read about it in the TDU news.

Q.13. What are the most effective ways for you to be kept informed about support and training for online learning at Massey? - check as many as apply

- a. By email.
- b. By pamphlets sent out at the start of each year.
- c. By regularly distributed newsletter - such as the TDU (Training and Development Unit's) news.
- d. Through a College/Institute/Department support contact.
- e. By me making contact with those supporting online learning when I need to.
- f. Through the Training and Development Unit's (TDU's) website.

- g. By being informed when I attend other Training and Development Unit (TDU) run courses.

**The open-ended questions:**

Q.5. What skills and/or knowledge are you likely to use from your time in this site?

Q.6. What did you enjoy most about the WebCT Experience and why?

Q.14. In what other ways can TDU assist you?

The open-ended questions (Q.5, Q.6. and Q.14.) were analysed for information that indicated that the participants were willing to explore other eLearning professional development opportunities. The two multi-choice multi-response questions (Q.2 and Q 12.) were added to the open-ended question in October 2006. These questions were included to obtain data on how the participants came to hear of the course and their preferred communication vehicles for being kept up-to-date with eLearning PD. All questions were self-administering and like the results from the online learning and teaching programme (Group One), the data from the multi-choice multi-response questions were collated and frequency tables were produced showing participant responses and their accompanying percentages.

The final online questionnaire was part of a New Zealand Ministry of Education funded capability project that was made available to all Massey University staff (participant Group 5). The total number of respondents from this group was 146. The questionnaire was run over a two week period in July 2007 and was made up of a combination of multiple-response, multiple-choice, Likert scale and open-ended questions. The online

survey tool SurveyMonkey, available at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), was mechanism used to deliver the questionnaire. Not all of the questions related specifically to the promotion of eLearning PD. Only those questions that provided insights into staff awareness of and attitudes toward eLearning PD and its associated promotion were used in this thesis.

### **3.3.2 Interviews:**

During 2006 and 2007, 52 interviews were conducted for this research. All interviews were transcribed. Fifty one were conducted by phone and one was face-to-face.

The first set of interviews was conducted with 20 staff members (participant Group Four) who had not been involved with eLearning PD, but had contacted the researcher between May 2006 and May 2007 with an eLearning question. The majority of the staff contacted the researcher in January 2007. The respondents were chosen because they enquired about eLearning and, when asked, expressed a willingness to be interviewed. They were asked general questions on topics concerning awareness of the vehicles used to promote formal eLearning PD, motivation and assistance. As the interviews were semi-structured in form, the researcher had the opportunity to explore responses in more depth where appropriate. On average the interviews took 20 minutes to complete and the responses were transcribed using pen and paper at the time of the interview. See Appendix D for the questions used in the interviews conducted on this group.

Another 20 semi-structured interviews (Group Two), were conducted in May 2006 with participants who were enrolled in and completed the Introduction to eLearning module,

earlier in the year. The two questions were open-ended in form and were designed to allow for more extensive answers. These questions focused on factors pertaining to access, timing and motivation. The responses were recorded, collated and grouped by question. The interviews took 15 minutes to complete and, like the first set of interviews, responses were transcribed using pen and paper at the time of the interview. See Appendix C for the questions used in the interviews conducted on this group.

Finally, a series of 12 semi-structured interviews of participants in Group Five, were conducted as part of the Ministry of Education project. These interviews explored staff opinions on eLearning PD as well as topics relating to institutional support for eLearning and associated PD. The interviews were part of a project that was not intended to assess staff awareness of the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD, and therefore there were a number of questions that had little relevance to this research. Responses pertaining to awareness of eLearning PD as well as factors impacting on the respondents' ability to engage with eLearning PD were used for this study. As the interviews were conducted by another researcher, the amount of time each interview took cannot be determined. Responses were recorded using a voice recorder and then transcribed using Microsoft Word. See Appendix F for the full set of interview questions.

This method had both advantages and limitations. The semi-structured interviews gave participants an opportunity to talk in-depth, especially when a good rapport was established. However, some of the data was time-consuming to interpret as participants

often digressed during the conversation. Additionally, in the phone interviews some respondents had strong accents which made interpretation difficult.

### **3.3.3 Web metrics:**

The final data gathering method used in this research involved the collection of web page statistics over a 16 month period, from January 1st 2006 - May 31<sup>st</sup> 2007. This time frame was chosen as it was the first time that the full suite of TDU professional development was offered to staff. The Web Trends tool was used to track visitor numbers to the eLearning PD web page referenced in TDU's communication vehicles. Activity over the 16 months was analysed to uncover patterns of behaviour, such as increases in visitor numbers, and whether those patterns correlated to particular promotional activity that happened around that time. Overlaying the promotional vehicles used in particular months onto the web trends data highlighted whether certain vehicles were more effective than others at attracting visitors to the web page.

### **3.3.4 Ethical considerations**

The researcher was aware of the importance of considering ethical issues, and the study was carried out in agreement with the 'Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants' of Massey University. The appropriate approval procedures were undertaken. Low-risk ethics applications for the research carried out in the Online Learning and Teaching Programme and WebCT Experience course were submitted and approved by the Massey University Ethics Committee. Respondents were given a low risk ethics statement in both the pre-course, post-course

and feedback questionnaires and they had the option not to have their responses used for research purposes. As the Ministry funded capability project was part of another research project that I was involved in, a separate ethics application for both the questionnaire and interview was submitted and approved in June 2007.

Given this study is classified as insider research, there are a number of ethical considerations that need to be addressed. All respondents in groups Two and Four contacted the researcher in relation to matters other than this research. Therefore I took care to assure them that non-participation in the semi-structured interviews would not impact on them receiving the service they expected from me. In addition, I informed all respondents of the reason for the research and provided them with opportunities to ask me how their data was going to be used. I also informed the respondents that their responses would be treated anonymously. To help with anonymity, in the transcriptions I did not record the person's name; instead I used a coding system i.e. Respondent 1. All transcriptions were locked in a filing cabinet.

As I was conducting the interviews with respondents that worked in the same institution, I needed to ensure that participant responses could not be identified when reporting on them in the findings. While the coding system mentioned above meant that respondents names were not recorded, I also undertook to exclude comments that could have identified participants. In respect to Group Two, the practice of excluding material was particularly important as the participants were part of a cohort of learners involved in an online PD course. Given that these respondents were interacting with one another online

over a period of at least two weeks, they got to learn how their peers communicated and could possibly identify a person based on the responses they gave to certain questions.

Online questionnaires often capture data that can identify the respondents. In regard to the WebCT Experience and the OLTP questionnaires, the system used to administer the questionnaire did not capture respondent details other than those the respondents volunteered. Therefore anonymity in responses was assured. Additionally, all data was stored in a password protected online environment.

As visitors to the TDU web page were not going to be identified, ethics committee approval was not required to obtain this data. Although this method of data collection is unobtrusive, visitors to the web page could be identified through their IP (Internet Protocol) address which was captured by the Web Trends tool. To avoid identifying respondents who were unaware that their actions were being recorded, I chose not to look at the IP address details. Once the data was downloaded and analysed, it was stored in a password protected online storage system.

The interview participants, Groups Three and Four, all consented to having their responses used for research purposes. They were informed prior to the interviews of the nature of the research and that their responses would not be identified. They were given the opportunity at any stage in the interview to decline to answer any question or stop the interview.

All participants were made aware that their responses were to be treated with the utmost respect and that confidentiality and anonymity were assured. All participation was voluntary after informed consent.





## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter is broken into seven sections, which represent the findings for each of the seven groups. To make it easier for the reader, I have included a summary of each group's composition and procedures at the start of each section.

### 4.1 Findings from Group One

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
1	25 respondents both general and academic staff members, representing all Colleges except for the College of Creative Arts.	Questions included in the pre- and post-course questionnaires, in the Online Learning and Teaching programme's Introduction to e-Learning module.

The findings from Group One's pre-course questionnaire (Table 2) suggest that the technology-reliant communication vehicles such as email and the TDU webpage were the most common means that participants came to hear of the introduction to online learning and teaching module. The more traditional communication vehicles such as pamphlets, newsletters and person-to-person contact were less popular.

Table 2

Summary of question one, ways in which participants came to hear of the Introduction to eLearning module: Pre-course questionnaire

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A colleague or support person gave me the details	4	16%
I received an email with the details	16	64%
I saw it on the TDU webpage	7	28%
I saw it advertised on a pamphlet	3	12%
I read about it in the TDU news	4	16%

Note: n=25. Combined percentages do not equal 100% because participants could identify multiple factors.

The pre-course questionnaire also highlighted that the most popular reasons for enrolling in the introduction to online learning and teaching module were associated with intrinsic motivators such as an interest in the topic of online learning (Table 3). In contrast, the extrinsic motivators, such as student demands and/or a requirement by a department/school/institute to take the course were less popular. Although the extrinsic motivators did not rate as highly as the intrinsic motivators, the need to know more about WebCT was the second most identified reason for enrolment.

Table 3

Summary of question two, reasons why participants decided to engage in the Introduction to eLearning module: Pre-course questionnaire

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
I am interested in learning more about online learning	21	85%
My students are demanding more and more material online and I need to know how to do it	3	12%
My School/Department/Institute strongly suggested that I do this course	3	12%
It has been recommended to me	2	8%
I will be supporting my Schools/ Departments/Institutes' WebCT offerings and I need to know how to use it	9	36%

Note: n = 25. Combined percentages do not equal 100% because participants could identify multiple factors

The findings from the post-course questionnaire (Table 4) also identified email as the vehicle of choice. In this case email was the most popular vehicle in keeping staff up-to-date with future eLearning related PD. A relatively even spread of results can be seen across the remaining choices. The forms of communication that were not despatched using technology – newsletters and pamphlets – were just as popular, and in some cases more popular, than the technology-reliant communication vehicles, such as the TDU website.

Table 4

Summary of question three, preferred methods to keep participants informed about support and training for online learning at Massey: Post-course questionnaire

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
By email	21	91%
By pamphlets sent out at the start of each year	4	17%
By regularly distributed newsletter – such as the TDU news	7	30%
Through a College/Institute/Department support contact	3	13%
By me making contact with those supporting online learning when I need to.	2	9%
TDU website	5	21%
Other TDU courses	5	21%

Note: n=23: Combined percentages do not equal 100% because participants could identify multiple factors. Three of these respondents did not complete the pre-course questionnaire and one respondent completed the pre-course questionnaire but did not complete the post-course questionnaire.

## 4.2 Findings from Group Two

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
2	20 staff members of which 80% were academics. All had been involved in the Online Learning and Teaching programme's Introduction to eLearning module.	Semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone.

The popularity of email was also a theme for respondents in Group Two. Participants' comments help explain why, for this group, email was regarded as the most convenient means of way for them to enrol in a programme they knew about:

R1: It was great to get an email that allowed me to just click on a link and enrol. I had decided to do this course a while ago and the email arrived at just the right time.

R4: The email with the enrolment link really made the job of enrolling a lot easier. I don't know why I didn't enrol when I decided to do the course at the end of last year. I guess it doesn't really matter as the email allowed me to do it anyway.

R18: I have been meaning to do this course for some time I just bit the bullet and enrolled this year. I don't think I would have done it if I hadn't received an email earlier in the year; it made it a lot easier.

It is likely that these participants found out about the programme from reading an email, given that Group Two is a subset of Group One in which the majority found out about the course from emails. However, the semi-structured interviews leave open the possibility that participants may have already known about the courses generally, but only found out about the specific offering when they received an email. So while the data suggests that email was a convenient way for respondents to enrol in a course they had prior knowledge of, the effectiveness of email as a method of promoting the eLearning PD to this group should not be discounted.

Respondents in Group Two also noted that they had more time than they usually had, and this contributed to their decision to enrol in the Online Learning and Teaching course. Over 80% of respondents commented they had time to do the course or negotiated time with their manager or colleagues so they could enrol.

R1: I knew I had time in the first semester of this year so it was the best time to do it for me.

R2: The timing played a huge part in my decision to enrol. I couldn't have done it last year as I was just way too busy. I was bought out of teaching time this year which meant I had more time to devote to this course.

R3: I needed to do the course this semester as next semester I have a greater work load.

R4: I was both interested and able to do the course. I had been meaning to do the course for some time, but as my department was short a staff member for over a year many of us had to take on additional work. Now that we have the full complement of staff, I have some time to explore areas of interest.

The combined findings from this group and Group One (the parent group to Group Two) indicate that respondents that were driven by intrinsic motivators were more likely to recall vehicles used to promote eLearning PD. The majority of these respondents also acknowledged the amount of time it would take to satisfy their desire to improve their practice and were therefore willing, and in most cases able, to either set aside time or negotiate time to be successful.



### 4.3 Findings from Group Three

Group No.	Composition	Procedures
3	25 respondents, 80% were academics who were located on the Palmerston North campus.	Questions included in the feedback survey in the WebCT Experience course.

Analysis of the findings (Table 5) from respondent Group Three indicates that, like Group One, technology-enabled vehicles, such as email, were the primary means by which respondents in Group Two came to hear of the WebCT Experience course.

Table 5

Summary of ways in which participants came to hear of the WebCT Experience course: Feedback questionnaire

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A colleague or support person gave me the details	4	16%
I received an email with the details	19	76%
I saw it on the TDU webpage	8	32%
I saw it advertised on a pamphlet	1	4%
I read about it in the TDU news	2	8%

Note: n = 25. Combined percentages do not sum to 100% because participants could identify multiple factors.

The methods to keep respondents informed of the support and training for eLearning (Table 6) was consistent with the findings from Group One, with technology-reliant vehicles the preferred choice for over 60% of respondents.

Table 6

Summary of preferred methods to keep participants informed about support and training for online learning at Massey: Feedback questionnaire.

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
By email	10	40%
By pamphlets sent out at the start of each year	2	8%
By regularly distributed newsletter – such as the TDU news	3	12%
Through a College/Institute/Department support contact	4	16%
By me making contact with those supporting online learning when I need to	4	16%
TDU website	6	24%
Other TDU courses	2	8%

Note: n=25. Combined percentages do not sum to 100% because participants could identify multiple factors.

The data from Group Three did not yield original material, but it lent weight to the findings for Group One that the most common means of finding out about the course was from email.

The findings from the open ended question in the WebCT Experience feedback questionnaire indicate that for a small number of staff this course was a good introduction to eLearning that provided them with the confidence and motivation to progress to other eLearning PD opportunities. The confidence to explore other PD opportunities is reflected in their responses to the question, 'In what other ways might TDU assist you?'

R1: I enjoyed the easy to follow format and the ability to do activities within WebCT. I am definitely going to enrol in the certificate course

R2: I didn't know much about WebCT and I am not that confident with technology, but this course made it all seem very easy. I now feel like I can confidently to do other online courses.

R3: I like the way that you grouped the tools to make the homepage easier to navigate. Is there a chance you can teach me how to do this, or is there a course I can take?

Using PD courses as a means to promote other PD opportunities did not rate highly with this group. Only 8% of respondents identified other TDU run courses as a preferred means of being made aware of additional training and support that the unit offered (see Table 4). For these respondents this method of promotion was less popular than both technology-enabled vehicles and the forms of promotion that did not rely on technology

for despatch purposes, such as newsletters and internal support personnel such as colleagues, administrators or technicians.

#### 4.4 Findings from Group Four

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
4	20 respondents. All were academic staff members who had never been involved in any formal eLearning PD run by the TDU.	Semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone.

Group Four's responses further illustrated the usefulness of colleagues or similar personnel located in departments/schools/institutes. Seventy percent of these respondents relied on their IT support person, secretary or administrator or colleagues to provide them with information and/or solutions to their eLearning-related questions (Figure 1).

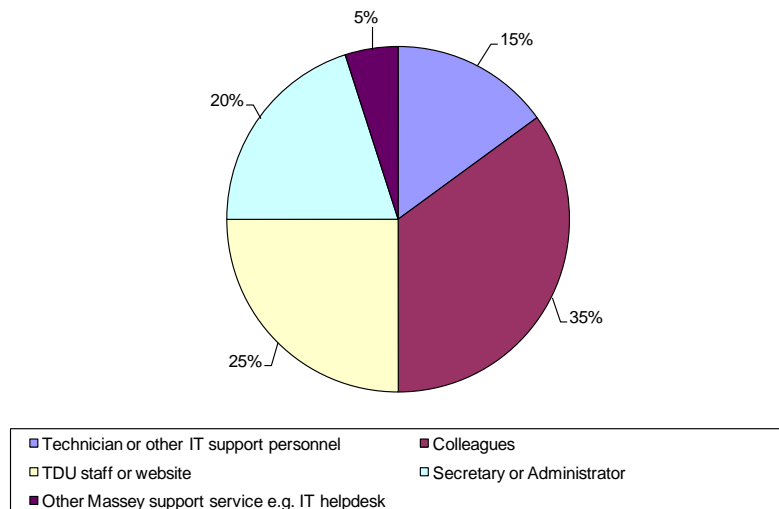


Figure 1. Methods used to obtain researcher contact details  
n = 20

Of the respondents that contacted TDU directly, only one respondent used the TDU website. The remaining four respondents made contact with other staff members at TDU and were in turn directed to contact the researcher.

Only three out of the 20 Group Four participants identified some of the methods used to promote the TDU's eLearning PD. One reason for this may be the group's composition. In contrast to the respondents who had enrolled in the TDU's eLearning PD - Groups One, Two and Three - Group Four was composed of respondents that had not enrolled in any of TDU's eLearning PD programmes or previously contacted the researcher about issues relating to eLearning. The common theme for the majority of these respondents was a requirement to learn how WebCT worked. Their requests can be grouped into three categories: how to create quizzes, deliver learning material, and the mechanics of setting a WebCT environment. Unlike the findings from Group One, Group Four's

respondents did not mention intrinsic motivators as a factor for contacting the researcher. For the majority of these respondents the need to learn about the system was driven by extrinsic motivators. These included: the perceived needs of students, demands from the school/department/institute in which they were working, and a desire to reduce their time in activities like marking or distribution of material to students.

Participants in Groups Two and Four mentioned that time was a factor in whether they engaged in the TDU's eLearning PD. Time also features in the groups' responses to their awareness and recollection of the vehicles used to promote the TDU eLearning PD opportunities.

Although there were no questions about the influence of time, 75% (15 out of 20) of respondents in Group Four volunteered responses that showed time was a factor in their decision making. Of these 15, eight explicitly stated being "too busy" or "not having a lot of time" as reasons for their inability to recall receiving communication about eLearning PD. Four respondents mentioned time as factor in their decision to contact the researcher about how WebCT or its tools worked. Of these four, one respondent stated that due to having "more time" they were able to explore how to meet their students' demands for material to be delivered online. Three respondents either wanted the researcher to explain a process to them, as they "didn't have time" to figure it out, or they needed to know about a particular WebCT function/tool with the expectation that the function/tool would save them time.

Of the five respondents who thought they may have received information, three were confident they were sent something and “could find it” if they looked. Two of the remaining three respondents were aware of vehicles used to communicate TDU’s eLearning PD, but had not used them to contact the researcher. One was able to recall the vehicle used to promote eLearning PD and subsequently used it to contact the researcher.

Group Two and Group Four showed the highest inter-group contrast. Whereas Group Two were generally intrinsically motivated and used technology-reliant vehicles to get their PD information, Group Four were relatively extrinsically motivated and relied heavily on colleagues to get PD information.

#### 4.5 Findings from Group Five

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
5	146 respondents. 71% academics 29% general staff.	Online questionnaire conducted as part of a Ministry of Education funded project.

The relationship between awareness of eLearning PD and communication vehicles promoting TDU’s eLearning PD is most clearly demonstrated when looking at the findings from the Ministry of Education’s research project (respondent Groups Five and Six) and the WebTrends data (respondent Group Seven). Given that Groups Five, Six

(Group Six is a subset of Group Five) and Seven have the largest number of responses, and in the case of Groups Five and Six the data gathering did not rely on convenience sampling, their findings are more likely to be representative of Massey staff as a whole.

As Figure 2 highlights, 83% of respondents in Group Five were aware of the PD available to them.

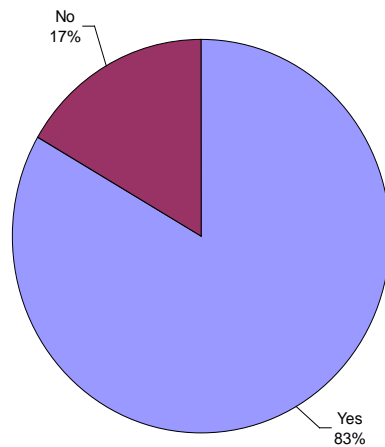


Figure 2. Awareness of eLearning PD courses at Massey  
n = 125

Figure 3 shows that over 70% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their institution values professional development.



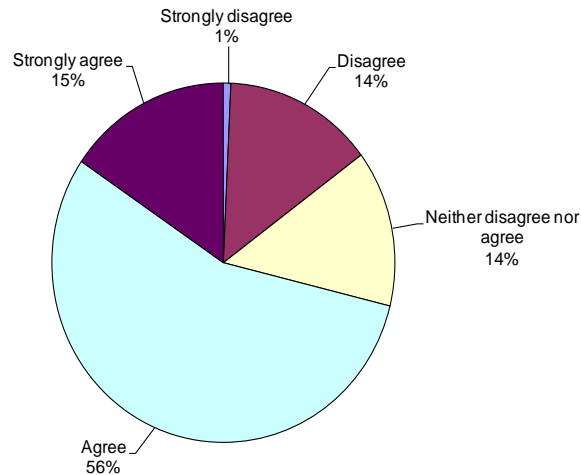


Figure 3. I believe my institution views PD for its staff as important  
n = 142

In addition, over 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that professional development was an important part of their job (Figure 4).

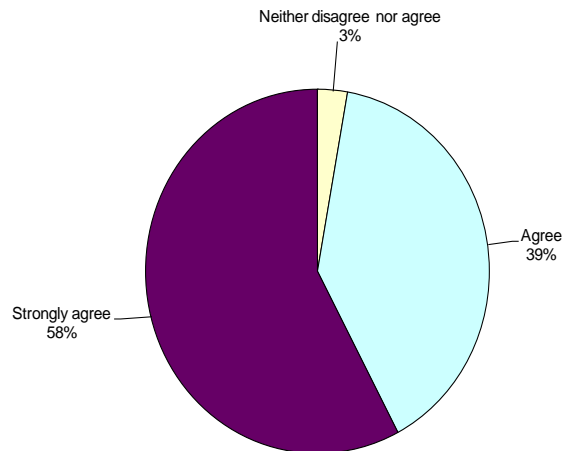


Figure 4. I believe PD is an important part of my job  
n=142

When asked about the types of PD that they had engaged with at Massey, respondents identified informal PD, such as talking to their colleagues and searching for information on the internet, as the PD they engaged with the most (Table 7).

Table 7

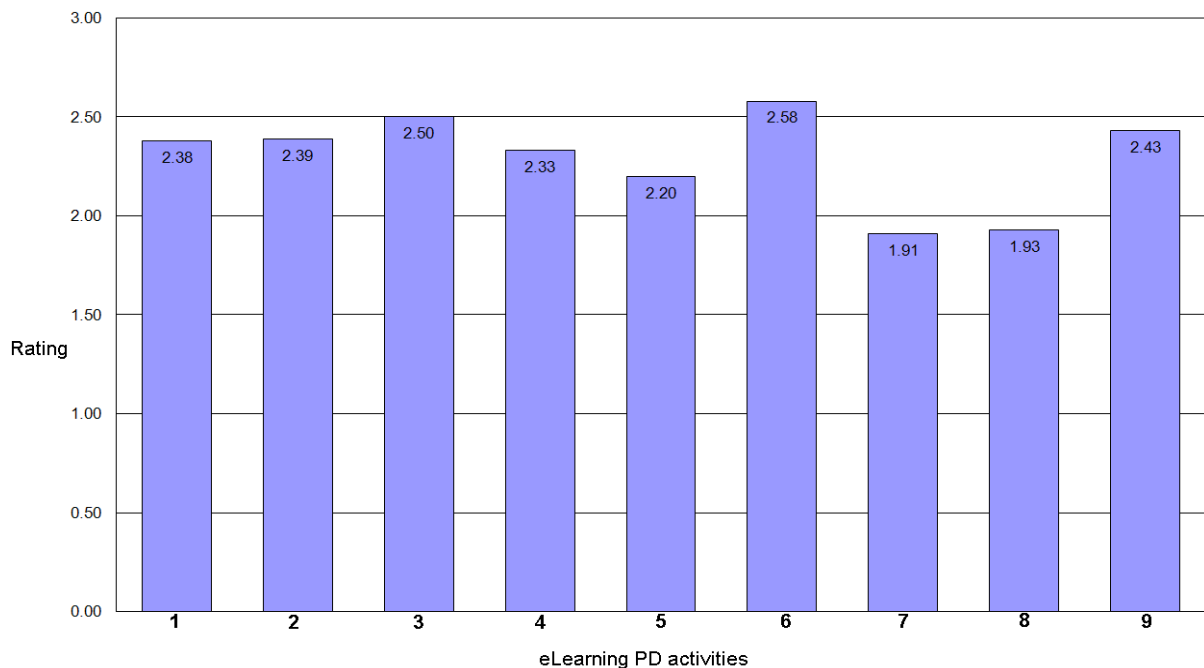
Summary of the forms of PD that respondents had engaged with at Massey.

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Courses and/or papers that count toward a formal qualification	11	14.1%
Technical training courses run by a central unit	37	47.4%
Courses run by a central unit and that focus on non-technical skills (i.e pedagogy)	16	20.5%
Courses that cover both technical and non-technical skills and are run by a central unit	30	38.5%
Courses/activities run by my School/Department/Institute	17	21.8%
Events at my institution (e.g. symposia, conferences etc)	40	51.3%
One-to-one or small group sessions with eLearning staff outside of centrally run courses	29	37.2%
Informal professional development	53	67.9%
Other	2	2.6%

Note: n = 78. Combined percentages do not equal 100% because participants could identify multiple factors.

Group Five participants also rated highly the effectiveness of informal PD on eLearning activities. Using a scale of one to four, with one being extremely effective and four being extremely ineffective, over 60% of respondents (46 out of 67) rated informal PD as having a positive effect on their eLearning activities. As Figure 5 shows, the TDU-run

PD rated highly but was deemed less effective on eLearning practice when compared to informal forms.



**Activity legend:**

- 1 - Courses and/or papers that count toward a formal qualification
- 2 - Technical training courses run by a central unit
- 3 - Courses focused on non-technical skills (i.e pedagogy), and are run by a central unit
- 4 - Courses that cover both technical and non-technical skills and are run by a central unit
- 5 - PD run by my School/Department/Institute
- 6 - Events such as symposia, planning days, workshops etc
- 7- Working one-to-one or in small groups with e-Learning staff outside of centrally run e-Learning courses
- 8 - Informal professional development
- 9 - Other

Figure 5. Effectiveness of eLearning PD  
n = 78

The findings so far indicate a high degree of awareness of the eLearning PD offered at Massey. This suggests that the methods used to communicate it have been relatively successful, at least with staff in this group. The results also show that professional development was valued by the majority of respondents who in turn believed that the

institution valued it as well. In terms of the types of eLearning PD respondents engaged with, informal PD stands out as the most widely practised. This type of PD was also regarded as one of the forms that had the most significant positive impact on the respondents' eLearning activities.

Regarding the relatively small number of respondents, as reported in this group's data, who had not engaged in any eLearning PD, the findings show that the most common reason was a lack of time (Figure 6). In relation to awareness, 14% of respondents indicated that there were no PD opportunities available at Massey, which indicates that they were unaware of the formal rather informal PD. Most likely these are the same respondents that indicated in the earlier question that they were unaware of the PD courses on offer.

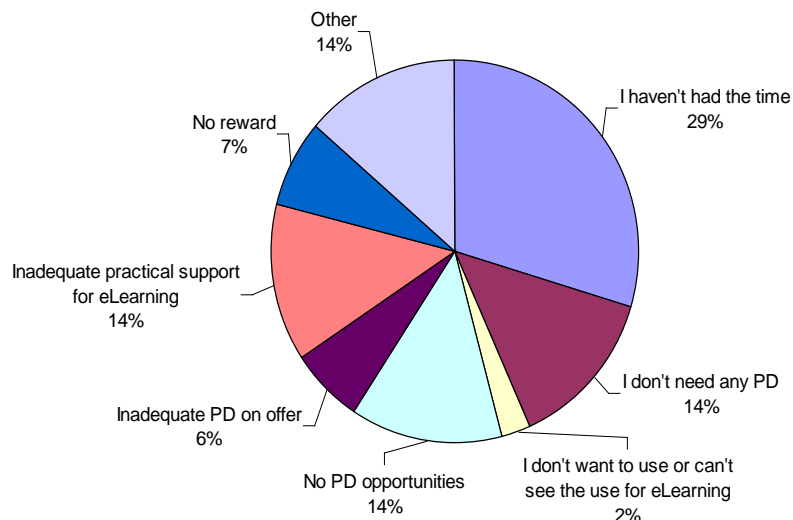


Figure 6. Reasons for lack of engagement in eLearning PD  
n = 48. Note combined percentages do not equal 100% as respondents could identify multiple factors.

Figure 7 further highlights time as the dominant factor. Over 40% of respondents indicated that having insufficient time would constrain their ability to engage in eLearning PD in the future. At 20%, a lack of extrinsic motivators, such as rewards or encouragement, registered as the second most likely factor influencing their ability to undertake PD. Only 1% of respondents identified being unaware of what was on offer as a constraint.

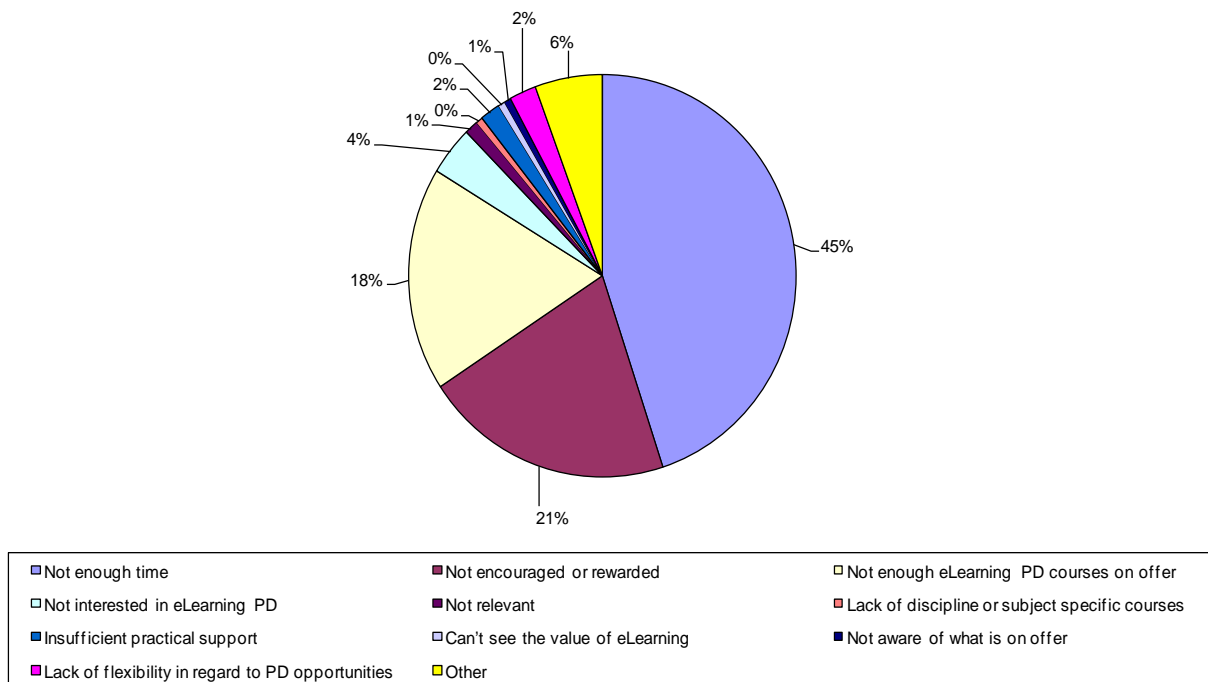


Figure 7. Constraints affecting eLearning PD  
n = 105

Time was also a prevailing theme when analysing the results from the questionnaire's final open ended question. This question invited respondents to comment about eLearning professional development at Massey. Thirty percent of respondents (9 out of 30) made specific mention of time as a factor determining their continued engagement

with eLearning in general and their attitude toward eLearning PD. The following comments are typical.

R1: It needs to be understood that [for] academic staff time is a rare and valuable resource.

R2: Staff with a high teaching load have zero time available to devote to this.

R3:e-Learning professional development [should] be recognised in staff workloads. In this way staff would gain recognition for their time.

R4: Whatever one does has to be slotted in within the rest of one's existing commitments, and in the end it just becomes too hard to keep up.

Further analysis of these open ended questions suggests that the issue of time has its roots in the perceived need of the University to acknowledge the commitment required to help staff to engage with eLearning and its PD. The responses to the semi-structured interviews questions conducted on Group Six are consistent with these findings.

#### 4.6 Findings from Group Six

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
6	12 respondents, all of whom were academics and based at the Palmerston North campus. These respondents had been volunteered to be interviewed after they had completed the online questionnaire as part of Group Five.	Semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone or face-to-face.

Group Six consisted of 12 respondents who volunteered to be interviewed after completing the Ministry of Education's questionnaire. Group Six is therefore a subset of Group Five.

Although there were a number of questions asked as part of the semi-structured interviews, only the responses pertaining to awareness of the eLearning PD, University strategy or policy for eLearning PD, constraints affecting engagement in the PD, and incentives to engage in eLearning PD are included in these findings. The full set of questions is shown in Appendix.

When asked about the eLearning PD opportunities available at Massey, ten of the 12 respondents stated that they knew of the courses offered at TDU. In addition, all but one

of these respondents could recall at least one vehicle used to promote eLearning PD. Two respondents were aware of TDU and what it offered but could not recall receiving information on eLearning PD. One of these two respondents admitted that he had not “actively sought out” information on eLearning PD and felt that he possessed a high level of technology related skill.

When asked whether Massey supported eLearning PD at a strategic or policy level, the majority of respondents stated that Massey did not have a strong policy or strategy. The selection of comments included below indicates that respondents felt as though the University “said they valued” eLearning PD but did not adequately resource it. Several respondents were highly critical of Massey’s strategy or lack thereof.

R3: Most emphatically it does not. Massey has great trouble thinking strategically in a true sense. They are great at coming up with strategies, meaningless waffle. The hardest part of the strategy is the implementation and that’s the part the University crash, burns and dies over.

R4: So there’s a recognition that if you’re a, you know, technologically sophisticated then they tend to like that, but in terms of finances, no. Don’t put the money where their mouth is.

R5: I don’t think so. I think they have it at the level of rhetoric. They have it, I think at the level of expectation, without providing anything.



The perception that the University's strategy or policy does not adequately support eLearning PD provides an additional level of detail to the findings from Group Five. When respondents from Group Five were asked to comment on whether they felt that the institution valued PD, over 70% believed that Massey did. The findings from Group Six suggest that eLearning PD is not as valued by the University as much as PD in general. Like the respondents from Group Five the interviewees from Group Six also identified time as a constraint to engagement in eLearning PD. While a lack of time or finding enough time were seen as possible constraints, the majority of respondents did not directly correlate time with their lack of engagement in eLearning PD or awareness of the vehicles promoting it. The responses below suggest that respondents felt there were other activities that could be prioritised over eLearning and its associated PD.

R1: On the obvious time one that every academic has, and the rival need to publish versus, yeah the amount of time I put in to students.

R2: Part of it is a little bit of conflict about how much of our time we should have to spend because you know I could spend a lot, I could spend half a day every week for a month or so and it would benefit me enormously but other things would slide.

R3: My constraints would be time. Particularly, yeah I think it's the main thing is time. It always goes back to you'll do it when you, when you need to do it, so

you're developing a new paper perhaps or you're having a rehash of what you've done.

R4: Time, money and the things that count to achieve promotion and career development. There's nothing in this for my career development.

R5: I think if I, well it's not so much the constraints it's just sort of I look at the balance of other things. It's not a priority. It's not broken. It could be improved but it's not broken and yeah there are other things that are ahead of it.

R6: It's time and trying to fit it into one's existing commitments, there's no, there aren't and it's the steady incursion, expanding incursion of your time and how it, you know only so many hours in a day

The prioritisation of eLearning and eLearning PD is seemingly connected to the institutional recognition of eLearning PD and the incentives to engage in it. All 12 respondents were involved in delivering eLearning opportunities to their students. Many of the respondents identified a personal interest in eLearning as a factor that determined their continual use of eLearning technologies. In most cases, however, their initial interest in eLearning was influenced by external influences, such as students' needs, department/school/institute desires to have an eLearning presence, or a job that saw them having to support eLearning. Continual development and commitment to eLearning was often associated with the incentives that Massey could provide.

When asked about the institutional incentives for engaging in eLearning PD, over 60% of respondents indicated that their motivation and interest in eLearning and teaching in general was the main incentive and that there were no obvious institutional incentives. For at least one respondent there was the perception that engagement in eLearning may provide some job security and it would be in their “best interest” to be seen to incorporate technology into their teaching activities. Four respondents stated categorically that there were no incentives to engage in eLearning and its associated PD. One respondent went as far as to say that there were disincentives to engagement. For the majority of respondents there was a sense that they saw the value in eLearning and its PD, but that the institution may not have valued it as much as it possibly could. As a result, the majority of respondents felt as if the University did not provide the necessary incentives to encourage better use of eLearning.

#### 4.7 Findings from Group Seven

<b>Group No.</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
7	3,291 visitors to web page. All visitors were from New Zealand.	Web Trends data that recorded visitor numbers to web page.

The final set of data comes from Group Seven. This group consisted of respondents that visited the TDU’s eLearning over a period of 16 months. Only the visitors that accessed a certain webpage and that were within New Zealand were included in these findings.

Figure 8 shows the number of visitors that accessed the most commonly promoted webpage over a period of 16 months and the methods used to promote the page in each month. The findings suggest that there is no correlation between the method used to promote TDU's eLearning PD and the number of visitors accessing the promoted webpage.

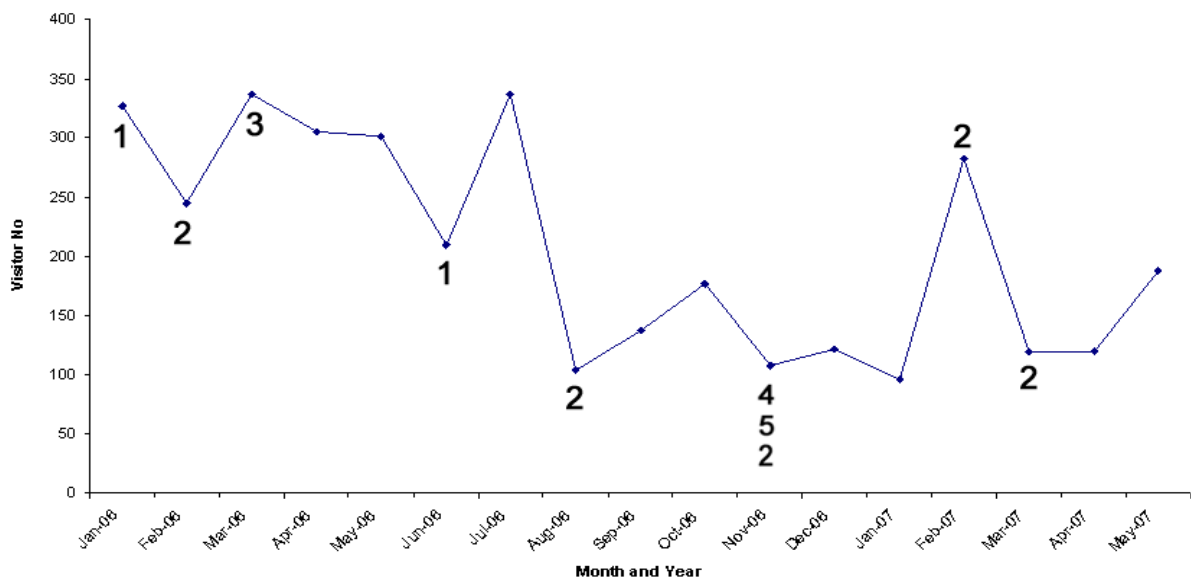


Figure 8. Visitor numbers to the Online Learning and Teaching web page.  
n = 3,291

#### Figure 8: Promotional activity key

The following table outlines the type of promotional activity that took place between January 2006 and May 2007.

Number	Details of the promotional activity including communication vehicle used
1	TDU newsletter sent via mail to all University staff. The newsletter included information on the TDU eLearning PD.

2	Email sent to three secretary email lists. Included in the email was a link to the Online Learning and Teaching web page, or a web page that provided a link to that page.
3	Pamphlets sent to all University staff. A collection of pamphlets describing the TDU run PD were sent to all staff via post.
4	Vice Chancellor's Symposium event held on three campuses.
5	eLearning business card. Magnetised business cards describing the Online Learning and Teaching programme were sent to all staff via post and distributed at the Palmerston North Vice Chancellor's Symposium. The business card was also used as a basis for an online competition.

Comparing the data in January of each year, the findings show an 80% decrease in visitor numbers in January 2007 compared to the same month in 2006. While there was no promotional activity in January 2007, the low visitor numbers was indicative of a trend that saw a decline in visitor numbers that started in August 2006. In November 2006, when three different methods of promotion were used, the numbers of visitors to the associated webpage were the second lowest in the 16 month period. Four months earlier, in July 2006 when there was no promotional activity the visitor numbers were at their highest. In five of the eight months in which promotional activity took place, visitor numbers were lower compared to those months in which there was no promotion.

The findings show that in the months where promotional activity was undertaken there were no notable increases in visitor numbers. This lends weight to the argument that no

single vehicle is effective in raising awareness of the TDU run PD, and that increases in visitor numbers are just as likely to occur when no vehicle is used.

February 2007 is the only time in which an increase in visitor numbers can be correlated to the use of a particular vehicle. In this month an email was sent to three secretarial email lists promoting the upcoming online learning and teaching programme as well as a competition to win an iPod. The same email was sent via the same email lists in November 2006. In this month there was no increase in visitor numbers. The comparative lack of interest in one month versus another can be partially explained by when the email was sent. November is typically a month in which a large proportion of University staff have less teaching responsibilities. In comparison, February is when the teaching year begins. Given that the email promoted a teaching and learning programme that was due to start in March 2007, it is likely that staff would be receptive to promotion close to the time when they are about to engage in teaching and learning activities. The added incentive of an iPod may have also been a factor in the increase in visitor numbers. However, given the competition was also promoted in the November 2006, a month in which there was a lack of visitors to the TDU webpage, an iPod may not have been incentive enough for people to respond to the vehicles promoting it.

What is clear from these findings is that email was an effective means to promote eLearning PD at an opportune time. What cannot be determined is whether any of the other methods used to promote the eLearning PD would have been as effective as email was at that time.

Timing as a factor that may determine the effectiveness of vehicles promoting eLearning PD can be assessed when looking at the visitor numbers across the months. In the months before the teaching semester started, or when the semester had just started, visitor numbers generally increased. January, February, March and July of 2006 record the highest number of visitors in that year. Similarly, February and March 2007 recorded relatively high visitor numbers for that year. The semesters start in February and July in each year, and around these times there was increased visitor activity regardless of the methods used to promote the PD. These findings, in addition to those from Group Two, support the idea that timing plays an important part in a person's decision to engage in eLearning PD and whether they respond to vehicles promoting it.

#### 4.8 Summary

The results suggest that for intrinsically motivated staff, Groups One, Two and Three, technology-reliant methods of promoting the TDU's eLearning PD are the most popular. The results also suggest that while the technology-reliant methods are preferred, intrinsically motivated staff are likely to respond to a number of different vehicles. In contrast, extrinsically motivated staff, Group Four, are more likely to be unaware of the eLearning PD on offer and rely on their colleagues or similar personnel for the support they require. For both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated staff, time was a factor that determined their engagement with the eLearning PD and the vehicles used to promote it. For the intrinsically motivated respondents, specifically Group Two, timing played a significant part in their decision to engage in the eLearning PD. Having time, or negotiating the time to do the PD, was a common theme for this group. The findings

from Group Seven demonstrate that timing is an important factor that is likely to determine people's ability to engage with the eLearning PD and the vehicles used to promote it.

The results also show that overall there was a high degree of awareness of the eLearning PD on offer at Massey. For the majority of respondents in Groups Five and Six, time was identified as a constraint that was likely to influence their decision to engage with the eLearning PD in the future. In addition, respondents from both groups identified a lack of incentives as a factor that was likely to influence their future decisions as to whether to engage with eLearning PD in the future. For Group Six, the lack of incentives was connected to a lack of institutional strategy or policy that adequately supported and acknowledged eLearning in general.

Overall, the findings can be grouped into three main areas: the differences between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated staff, time as a factor that determines decision making, and the importance of a supportive and responsive working environment.

First, intrinsically motivated staff are likely to have a high degree of awareness of the eLearning PD on offer as well as the vehicles promoting it. Conversely, extrinsically motivated staff who have never engaged with any PD run by a central unit have a low degree of awareness. For both these groups, timing was a factor that determined their engagement and recall. The findings suggest that intrinsically motivated staff are willing to set aside time or negotiate for time in which to do the eLearning PD. Although there is



no evidence to suggest that time determines this group's ability to recall the methods used to promote the eLearning PD, a logical extension of being interested in improving one's practice is actively looking and planning for opportunities to do so. In this case, time is not just a factor that influences these respondents' ability to engage in opportunities to improve practice, but time also influences their motivation to seek out these opportunities and be responsive to the methods used to promote these opportunities.

In contrast, staff who were extrinsically motivated could not recall the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD and in many cases used time as a reason for their lack of recall. For these staff, the main source of information and support came from colleagues or similar personnel rather than the variety of vehicles used to promote the TDU run courses. Their decision to rely on colleagues, and their subsequent lack of recall of the TDU's eLearning PD, seems to reflect a need for just-in-time solutions to their eLearning problem. In seeking out a solution, the majority of these respondents felt their time was best spent communicating with colleagues and not searching for information on the central support services or responding to vehicles promoting the TDU's eLearning PD. In many cases these respondents felt that they were time poor and that their time was best spent on eLearning tasks that were not as time consuming as the eLearning PD was seen to be.

For both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated staff, time determined their ability to engage in the eLearning PD and respond to methods promoting it. For groups Five and Six, the time factor manifested itself in a similar way to that of group four. Like the

respondents in group Four, the participants in groups Five and Six indicated that time was a major factor in their ability to engage with the formal forms of eLearning PD.

However, participants in groups Five and Six, unlike those in group Four, had a high degree of awareness of the eLearning PD offered at Massey.

Time was a common theme for all respondent groups. In relation to the extrinsically and intrinsically motivated staff, time played a significant part in their decisions to engage with particular methods of communication and their subsequent awareness of the TDU eLearning PD. Time was also a determining factor for Groups Five, Six and Seven.

While there was a high degree of awareness of the eLearning PD opportunities for Group Five, these same respondents felt that time was also a constraining factor. For those respondents who were not using eLearning in their teaching, time was identified as the main factor for lack of engagement. Unlike the findings from groups Two and Four, the data from groups Five and Six indicate that time is unlikely to impact on the awareness of the eLearning PD on offer. However, the results from these two respondent groups also indicate that time is likely to have a significant impact on the future effectiveness of eLearning PD within the institution, which in turn is likely to impact on the choice of vehicles used to promote it.



## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

An initial analysis of the findings indicates that no single communication vehicle is effective in promoting eLearning PD in the University. Instead, staff will use a variety of communication vehicles at different times for different purposes, as their engagement with particular methods of communication is influenced by a number of factors. While the research purpose was to ascertain whether certain vehicles were more effective than others in promoting eLearning PD, the findings tell us less about the vehicles and more about the people (argued to be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated) and the institution (incentives, rewards, strategy and policy) in which these vehicles operate. This is not to say that the methods used to communicate the eLearning PD are unimportant. Instead, the findings give some indications on workable strategies for promoting eLearning PD in large, complex organisations.

In this discussion, I will first examine the influence that I suggest intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may have on the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD. Then I will address the impact that the institutional environment has on decisions to use particular methods of communication.

### **5.1 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation**

The findings highlight the existence of two different audiences: those who have engaged with PD due to intrinsic motivations and those who have not engaged and who are influenced by extrinsic motivators in relation to their eLearning activities. These two audiences obtain information in different ways and are influenced by contrasting

motivational factors. While the results clearly show that both groups are likely to respond to a variety of different methods of communication, they also highlight that the vehicles by themselves are unlikely to influence the behaviour and attitudes that largely determine each group's decision making. The effectiveness of the methods used to promote eLearning PD is determined by whether a staff member is influenced by extrinsic or intrinsic motivations, rather than the vehicles themselves.

Time was a factor for all respondent groups, however, the way in which those staff affected by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations viewed time, provides the clearest insights into how time as a factor influences decision making.

## 5.2 Intrinsic motivation

Turning first to the intrinsically motivated group, two profiles emerged. Profile One comprises the majority of respondents. These participants were either able to control their environment and allocate their time to tasks they were interested in, or they worked in an environment that recognised the value of providing staff with time to make autonomous, self-determined decisions. One of the features of Profile One's staff is that they are in a position to control their environment. This finding supports McCluksy's (1963) Theory of Margin, which states that the more power a person has over their load the greater the margin to participate in learning.

Figure 9 illustrates the relationship between the vehicles used to communicate the eLearning PD opportunity and the characteristics of Profile One. When technology-

reliant vehicles provide a convenient means to enrol in the eLearning PD and are made available to staff that are motivated by their interest in eLearning and have time, there is a high likelihood of enrolment into the eLearning PD course.

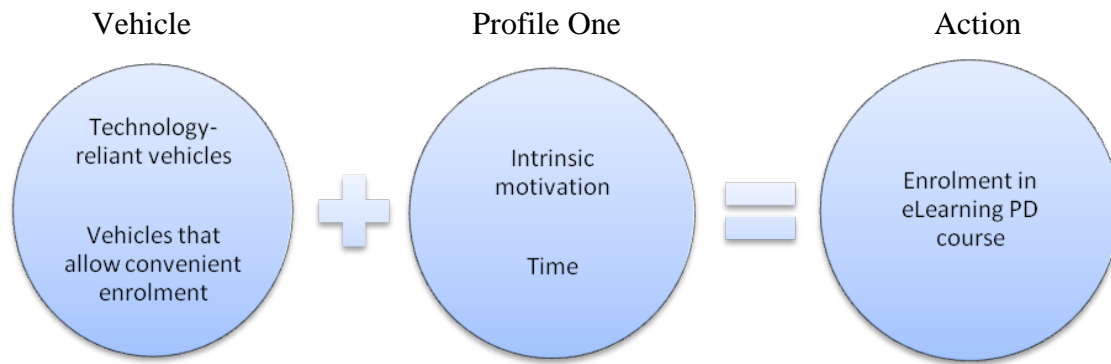


Figure 9. The relationship between vehicles used to promote eLearning PD and Profile One

For those staff that fit into Profile One, intrinsic motivation by itself is insufficient to result in action. However, when intrinsic motivation is combined with time and vehicles that provided a convenient means to enrol in the eLearning PD, there is a high likelihood of engagement.

While the majority of intrinsically motivated staff fitted into Profile One, another group of intrinsically motivated staff emerged from the findings. Although Profile Two was a small sub-group of intrinsically motivated staff, the findings from this group show that time is not always a determining factor. Like those staff in Profile One, Profile Two consisted of staff that were motivated by an inherent interest in eLearning. However, the major difference was that these staff were time poor. As Figure 10 illustrates, even though the staff had less time than those in Profile One and could not negotiate the time in which to enrol in the eLearning course, their interest in the topic resulted in the same

outcome as those participants that made up Profile One. The fact that staff in Profile Two enrolled in the PD course regardless of being time-poor adds weight to the argument by Wolfen (1999) that overloaded adults are just as able to learn as those who have an ideal power to load ratio.

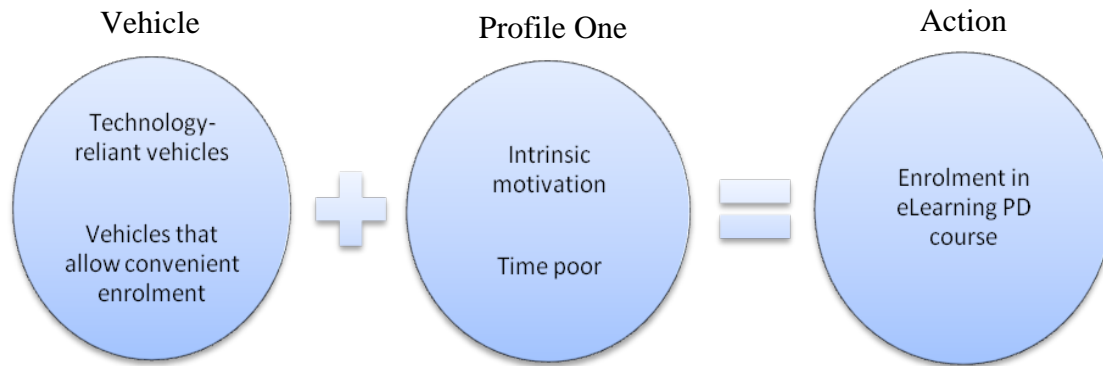


Figure 10. Vehicles used to promote eLearning PD and Profile Two

The characteristics of staff who made up Profile Two provides insights into the importance of the design of the eLearning PD and how the course's subject matter can appeal to the characteristics of intrinsic motivation. The potential of eLearning PD courses as a vehicle to promote other eLearning PD is discussed later in this section. The actions of the staff in Profile Two, however, point to a possible synergistic relationship between the characteristics of intrinsic motivation and effective eLearning PD design.

Participants in both Profiles One and Two preferred the technology-reliant vehicles as they provided a convenient means of enrolling in the eLearning PD. While the popularity of technology-reliant vehicles should not be ignored, both groups' awareness of all the

vehicles used to promote eLearning PD suggests that relying on a variety of methods of communication is likely to yield the best results. Using a variety of methods to promote eLearning PD is an approach endorsed by Ettinger, Holtan and Blass (2006), Heumann and Carr (2003) and Hipwell (2000), who believe a varied and creative approach to promotion is the key to generating interest.

For staff interested in learning about eLearning, an awareness of the PD opportunities is critical, given the influence of time on both profiles. As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, tertiary institutions have undergone significant changes since the early 2000s. Changes to the way the two university core functions, research and education, are funded have influenced the way in which Universities function. The certainties of university life as described by Rowland (2002) and Boud (1999) have been gradually eroded; as a result time now plays a considerable role in staff's decision making. While the vehicles used to promote PD opportunities do not by themselves determine whether people engage in the PD, they do play an important part in raising awareness of the opportunities and converting the awareness and motivation into enrolment when the time is right.

Analysis of the findings further shows that there is the potential to use PD courses themselves as vehicles to promote other PD opportunities. The success of a strategy that uses PD to promote other PD is related to the characteristics of intrinsic motivation and PD course design. To use an analogy with cooking, when two ingredients (1) intrinsic motivation and (2) PD course design that supports intrinsic motivation, are mixed



together in the eLearning PD course, they result in staff who have a desire for future PD engagement, as Figure 11 illustrates.

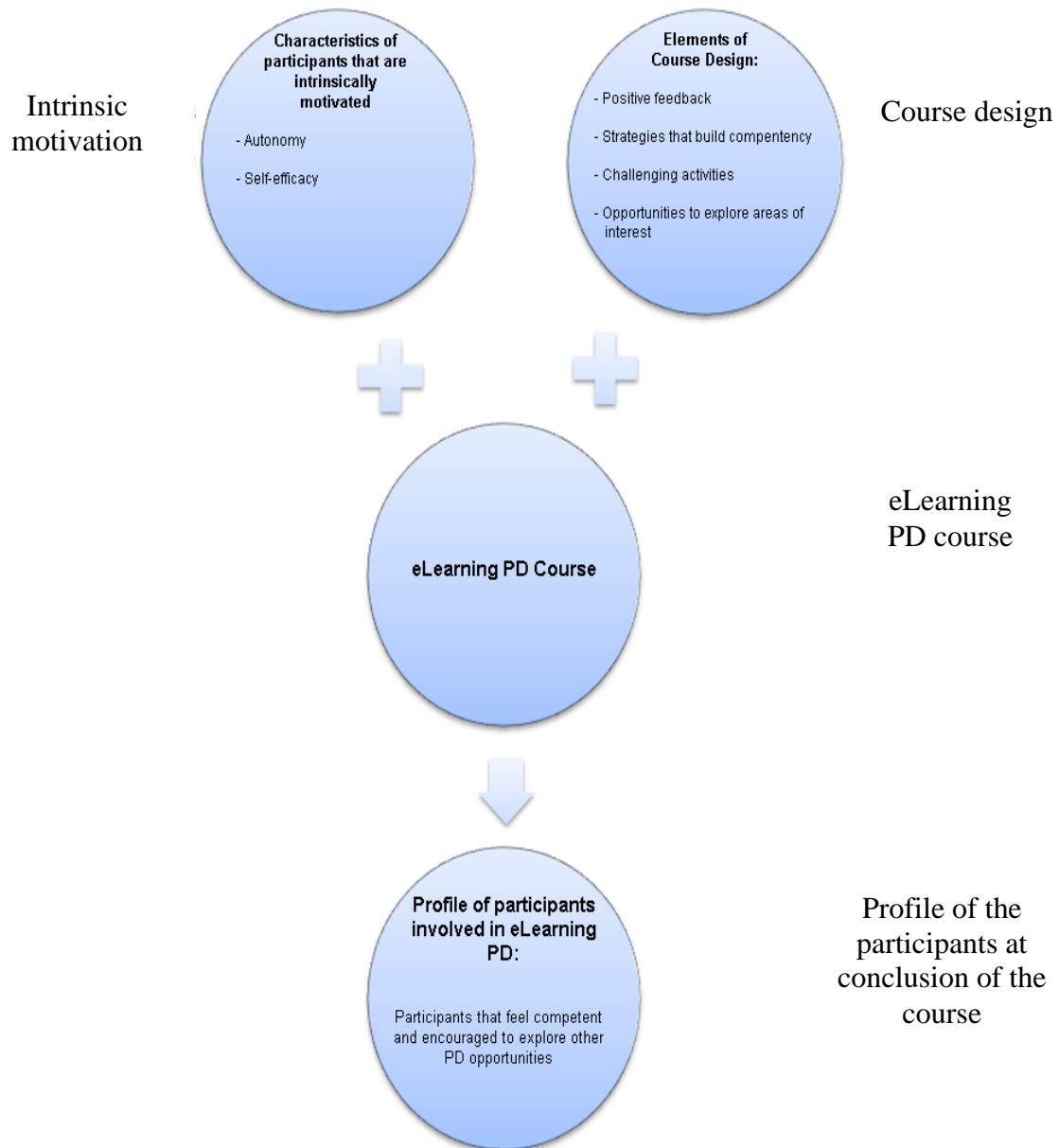


Figure 11. The factors that contribute to an eLearning PD course as a vehicle that has the potential to encourage staff engagement in other eLearning PD

While the findings show that participants would prefer to be informed of PD opportunities by email rather than through PD courses, there is significant potential for PD courses to be vehicles that serve to encourage engagement in other PD by aligning

course design to the characteristics of intrinsic motivation. The idea that eLearning PD courses are an effective means to promote other PD is supported in the findings from Group Three. For a small number of participants in Group Three, the PD provided them with the confidence to ask about other eLearning PD opportunities. While only a small number of staff indicated a desire to continue to engage in other eLearning PD, their responses indicate the potential of eLearning PD as a vehicle to promote other eLearning PD to staff that are motivated initially by intrinsic motivators. This is in keeping with researchers such as O'Neill, Singh and O'Donoghue (2004) and Wilson's (2005) findings that staff's competence and confidence with technology is best achieved when the technology is embedded in all aspect of PD.

The findings from the small number of staff in Group Three are similar to those in Profile Two. In both cases the staff were motivated by an inherent interest in eLearning and both groups had enrolled in PD courses. In addition, both groups of staff were influenced by the PD course itself. In the case of staff in Profile Two the fact that they were time poor and still enrolled, suggests that the PD appealed to their desire to learn and that the mechanism (online) used to deliver the learning suited their busy work schedule. This finding is supported by Wolfin's (1999) extension to his argument against McClusky's Theory of Margin, where Wolfin states that overloaded adults will judge the value of the subject matter and the method of delivering the learning before making a decision to engage.

The findings from both Group Three and Profile Two are similar in that the PD courses were themselves vehicles to promote eLearning PD; however, how the PD functioned as a means of promotion differed for each group. Figure 12 extends the relationship shown in Figure 10 to encompass the idea that the PD courses can be themselves an effective means of promotion. The vehicles (technology-reliant) through which the PD was promoted allowed convenient enrolment that in turn reduced the barriers to engagement.

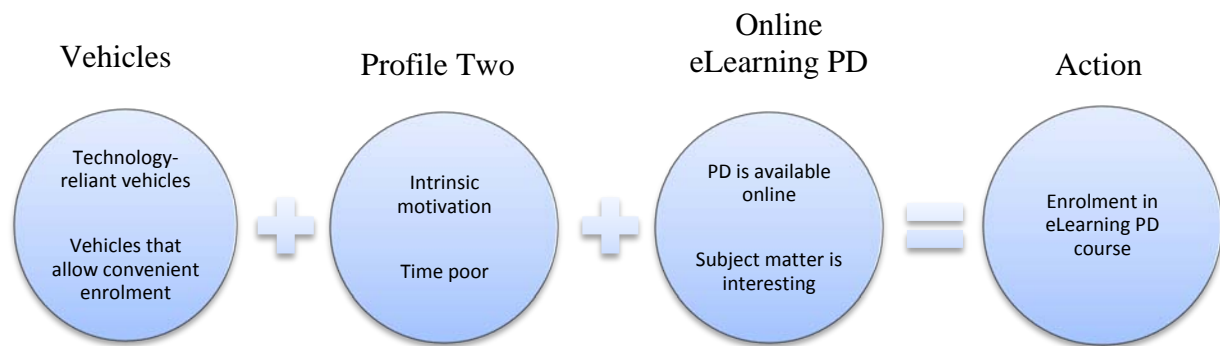


Figure 12. Profile Two extended to encompass eLearning PD delivered online

One could argue that the first circle in Figure 12 – Vehicles – could be removed. The data is inconclusive on this issue because all the questions in this study related to methods of promotion and did not explicitly address the effectiveness of PD courses as promotional vehicles. Therefore there was no opportunity for participants, in Profile Two, to comment on the effectiveness of PD courses as an effective vehicle.

In the case of the small number of staff in Group Three, engagement in the PD was an effective means of promoting other eLearning PD. Through the provision of a course that was designed to facilitate self-efficacy and autonomous decision making, the PD itself then became the method through which engagement in other PD could be encouraged.

### 5.3 Extrinsic motivation

The findings from staff who were not motivated by an inherent interest in eLearning provide insights into the communication strategies that could be used to promote eLearning PD to groups of staff who may have more of an instrumentalist (extrinsically motivated) view of eLearning. Rather than relying on email, pamphlets, newsletters or websites for information about eLearning, the extrinsically motivated group used their colleagues or other personnel in their departments/institutes/schools as primary sources of support. Additionally, extrinsically motivated staff had little awareness of the vehicles used to promote the University's eLearning PD. The lack of awareness of these vehicles seemingly reduces the ability to expose extrinsically motivated staff to forms of PD that are likely to impact practice in a meaningful way. However, when looking at the forms of support that the extrinsically motivated staff relied on, opportunities exist for central-University centres to use the departmental/institute/school personnel to promote the University eLearning PD. One approach is to establish what Gilley and Eggland (2004) call 'ambassador relationships'. These are relationships in which people working within departments/schools/institutes provide support to staff and promote eLearning PD. This support is likely to move staff from a 'surface approach' (Elgort, 2005) to eLearning, which is often characteristic of staff who are extrinsically motivated, to a more considered and thoughtful change in practice.

Although a strategy such as establishing ambassador relationships may prove to be successful in raising awareness of the University's eLearning PD, a general lack of awareness of the PD by the extrinsically motivated staff points to a situation that may

need more than one strategy. One way of understanding what strategies are likely to be effective for extrinsically motivated staff is to look at extrinsic motivation as a factor.

While the findings from the intrinsically motivated participants show that overloaded adults will engage in opportunities to learn when a number of additional conditions are met, the extrinsically motivated staff viewed time as a primary reason for their lack of awareness of the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD and engagement in PD itself.

Theorists have identified time as an influential factor in decisions to adopt online education (Parthasarathy, Smith, 2009; O'Quinn and Corry, 2002) and have observed that eLearning development is time intensive (Newton, 2003), and often hidden (Beckett and Brine, 2003). However, there is no explicit link between staff engagement, communication vehicles promoting eLearning PD and staff workload and time. Although there is no evidence in the literature to suggest that time determines a person's ability to recall the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD, a symptom of having time pressures is being strategic with what information to respond to and what to ignore. This strategic decision making is evident in both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated staff.

However, only the extrinsically motivated staff demonstrated a lack of awareness in regard to the vehicles used to promote the University's centrally-run eLearning PD.

The strategic decision making demonstrated by the extrinsically motivated staff is in many ways tied in with their approach to eLearning in general. All the queries from these staff focused on the surface forms or what Phillips (2005) calls a transmissionist approach to eLearning, such as how to work particular tools or how to make content available

online. While the findings did not explore the degree to which the extrinsically motivated staff's eLearning practice was informed by 'best' practice, the fact that none of the respondents had engaged in any of TDU's formal eLearning and, given the nature of their queries, there is a high likelihood that their eLearning practice lacked 'deep-learning' (Phillips, 2005). This approach, combined with a lack of time, influenced the respondents' awareness of the vehicles promoting eLearning PD.

There is insufficient evidence to state that a lack of time was the sole reason for the surface approach to eLearning. The findings suggest that an extrinsic approach to eLearning combined with a lack of time can lead to surface approaches to eLearning that in turn determine the awareness of the formal eLearning PD within the institution. If a staff member who is engaged in surface forms of eLearning cannot see the value to move beyond such an approach, it is logical to assume that they will not seek out opportunities to change practice and be oblivious to the methods used to communicate such opportunities.

While the extrinsically motivated staff were driven by a need to learn how the application [WebCT] functioned, their decision making was not significantly influenced by external factors, such as student demands. The majority of extrinsically motivated staff, although mindful of the external factors, indicated that their request for support was an autonomous act. This finding is significant as it lends weight to Ryan and Deci's (2000) argument that there is not one type of extrinsic motivation. Their taxonomy of human motivation (Figure 13) shows that a person may move along the continuum of extrinsic

motivation and, depending on where on the continuum they lie, may begin to internalise the values of an activity.

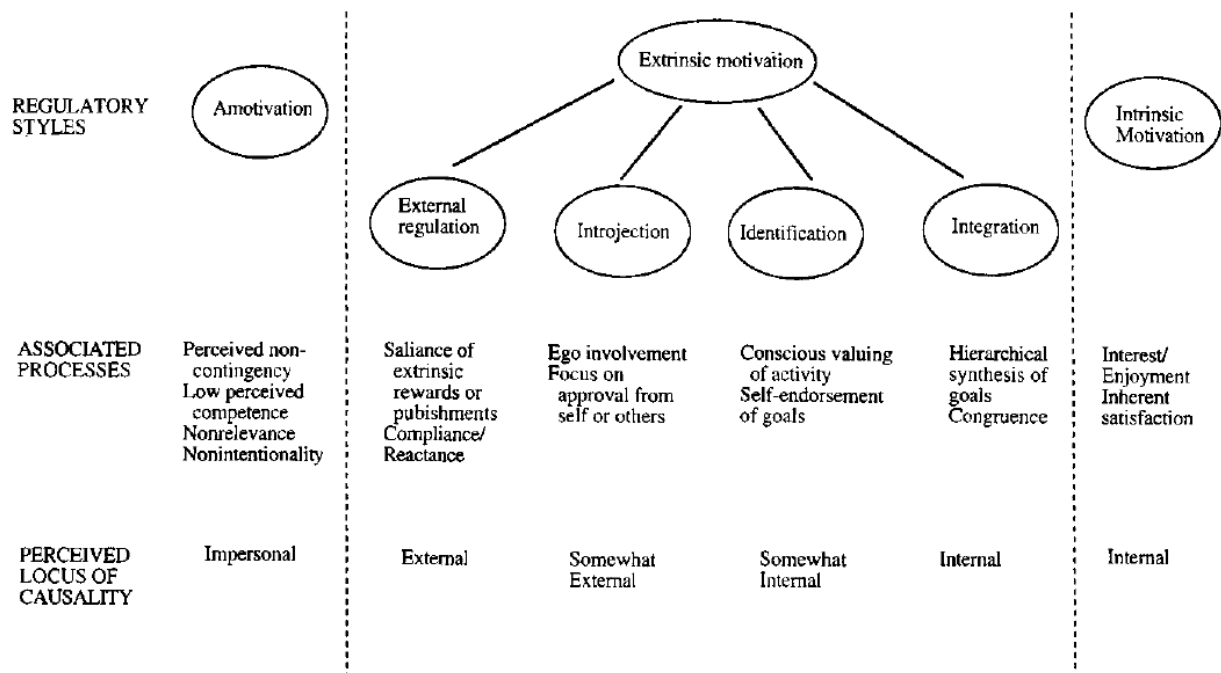


Figure 13. Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.61).

The fact that the majority of extrinsically motivated respondents acted in a self-determined manner in seeking help to achieve their eLearning goals, suggests that their engagement in eLearning has little to do with forced compliance, or as a reaction to rewards or punishments. In addition, their autonomy suggests that an academic development unit can influence their attitude toward eLearning, and as a result move them further towards the right-hand side of the extrinsic motivation continuum. The next step is to look at the institutional factors that affect the extrinsically motivated participants' attitudes toward the vehicles used to promote the eLearning PD opportunities.

## 5.4 Institutional factors

The results show that there is a correlation between lack of time and approach to eLearning and that this is best illustrated by the extrinsically motivated staff, in this research, who were engaged in surface forms of eLearning and were time poor. The approach and attitude toward eLearning and its associated PD do not exist in a vacuum. The findings point to institutional factors, such as a University policy or strategy and an acknowledgement of the time it takes to engage in eLearning activities, as having an impact on the decision making of the majority of University staff, regardless of their motivation.

The impact of institutional factors on the awareness of the vehicles used to promote formal eLearning PD applies to staff regardless of their motivation, however, the way the factors influence awareness is most clearly demonstrated when looking specifically at the different types of motivation. Although the findings did not capture information on the departments/schools/institutes that the intrinsically and extrinsically motivated staff worked in, it is highly likely that some staff from both groups would have worked together. The extent to which the institutional factors influenced the differently motivated staff who worked with each another provides an additional level of detail as to the extent to which the factors affect awareness.

For both groups of staff, their perception of time largely determined their awareness of the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD. Given that participants from both groups could have worked with each other in the same department/school/institute, it would



seem that motivational factors largely determined how time was viewed and used by each group. For the majority of the intrinsically motivated staff their ability to act on their motivation was directly related to them having more time. In comparison, the extrinsically motivated staff's lack of time resulted in a lack of awareness.

While perceptions toward time can be seen as different depending on the motivation, time and to a large extent motivation have their roots in deeper institutional factors. The findings clearly show that institutional factors play a significant role in whether staff are able to engage in the eLearning PD and are aware of the vehicles used to promote the PD. The data from the Ministry of Education funded project (Groups Five and Six) on eLearning PD highlights the institutional factors most likely to influence the awareness of vehicles used to promote eLearning PD to all Massey staff.

Like the extrinsically and intrinsically motivated groups of staff, respondents in the Ministry of Education funded project identified time as a significant consideration in eLearning PD. Respondents viewed time as impeding their ability to engage in all forms of eLearning PD and as the factor that was most likely to constrain their ability to engage in future eLearning PD. Analysis of the interviews (Group Six) indicates that attitudes toward time are embedded in a larger institutional factor: the University's eLearning policy or strategy.

Of the 12 respondents who were interviewed in Group Six only one thought that Massey supported eLearning PD at the strategic or policy levels. A strategic approach to

eLearning in tertiary sector has been advocated by theorists from both the corporate and traditional university sectors. Researchers such as Dooley and Murphrey (2000), MacPherson, Homan and Wilkinson (1995) and Henry (2001) believe that the success of eLearning is highly dependent on the organisation realising its worth. Acknowledgement of the value of eLearning may take the form of the organisation aligning and integrating it with its business strategy (MacPherson, Homan and Wilkinson, 1995). An understanding that such commitments will require senior management commitment and will involve technology and cultural change (Henry, 2001) is also needed.

The perception that the University lacks the strategic thinking required to understand the value of eLearning and its associated PD, likely influenced the participants' lack of engagement in eLearning PD and has impacted on the awareness of the vehicles used to promote the PD. In addition, the findings from Group Six highlight the interdependency of the institutional factors on staff engagement with eLearning, as well as the likelihood of further engagement and willingness to undertake PD that could improve eLearning practice.

The majority of respondents in Group Six indicated that their initial forays in eLearning were influenced by external factors, such as, departmental requirements and student demands. Their continued use was largely determined by their interest in it. However, the participants noted that their interest in eLearning was restricted because the institution did not provide the required support to engage in eLearning in a meaningful way. The

respondents also felt that a lack of a reward structure or institutional incentives influenced their future engagement in eLearning included its PD.

While incentives for engagement in activities, such as eLearning PD, can often lead to instrumentalist approaches (Ryan and Deci, 2000), the findings highlight that rewards and incentives to it were important to many of the respondents. Incentives could be as simple as an acknowledgement of the time it takes to engage in eLearning PD, and better integration of such activities into staff workloads (Keast 1997, Alexander and McKenzie 1998 and Ford, Quiñones, Sego & Sorra, 1992). However, rewards or incentives for engagement in eLearning the PD and the resulting awareness of the vehicles used to promote such opportunities are directly influenced by the institution's support of its two key activities – research and learning and teaching. Researchers such as, Mansvelt, et al. (2009) believe that:

alignment of practice and policy is crucial in an environment where staff feel the institutional emphasis is on developing research capability and outputs rather than teaching capability and where policy is frequently not implemented with transparency or parity across institutions (p.11).

Although the findings from Group Five show that there is a high degree of awareness of the eLearning PD at Massey, the findings from Group Six suggest that engagement in the formal types of PD is constrained because there was not an institutional strategy that acknowledged the worth of eLearning PD. Comments relating to time from the respondents can, therefore, be viewed as the manifestation of the lack of an institutional

strategy or policy. Although the findings from the intrinsically motivated respondents suggest that staff can find the time in which to engage in eLearning PD, institutional factors are likely to have a significant impact on staff's future awareness of the eLearning PD that is available at Massey and the vehicles used to promote it.

Given the increasing demands on staff to produce research outputs, the success of the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD will largely depend on the type of PD being promoted. As the findings have clearly shown, time is a critical factor for the majority of respondents. The findings also suggest that timing plays a significant role in staff engagement in all forms of eLearning PD and has the most important impact on decisions regarding the types of vehicles to use to promote the PD.

The findings from Group Seven show a clear pattern of behaviour with respect to visitors to the webpage used in the majority of the TDU's eLearning promotion. In addition, the responses and behaviour of both groups of motivated staff suggest that timing was a consideration in their ability to engage in the TDU-run PD and seek help for eLearning related problems.

The webpage activity reveals that around the start of each semester visitor numbers increase, showing that the interest in the support available rises in relation to the key dates in the university calendar. Even when an incentive (winning an iPod) is used to encourage staff to visit a web page detailing the eLearning PD on offer, the visitor numbers were still clustered around particular times of the year. This pattern of

behaviour is also reflected in the findings from Group Four. The majority of these respondents contacted the researcher in January 2007. The findings from groups Seven and Four show that support is often required at a point of need, thus lending weight to the argument that timing plays a significant role in the choice of vehicles.

The pattern of visitor numbers to the eLearning webpage indicates that the vehicles used to promote the course were relatively successful. However, the conversion of visitors to enrolments into the PD course was poor. While the findings do not provide an explanation for the lack of conversion, the most likely reason is that visitors felt that the support they needed was not found on the webpage.

Returning to Bhola's (1983) classification of professional development, informal PD accounts for the bulk of a person's learning, tends to be unplanned, and is less time consuming than the formal types. The findings point to a situation whereby the eLearning needs of staff are best serviced by the informal types of PD. In addition, respondents in Group Five believed informal PD had the most impact on their eLearning practice. They rated informal forms, such as PD run in the departments/institutes/schools as more effective than the formal TDU-run PD. The findings also show that informal PD is the most widely practised PD at Massey. This result harks back to the earlier point that although this thesis focus is on vehicles their effectiveness is influenced by whether the support promoted is likely meet the needs of the staff.

Several researchers (e.g. Prebble et al. 2005) have noted that formal PD creates enduring changes to teaching practice. However, the respondents' ability to engage in formal eLearning PD is constrained by organisational barriers. The lack of an institutional strategy that rewards and incentivises engagement in eLearning PD, has been the catalyst for a situation whereby staff prioritise other core University activities. This finding supports Zemsky and Massy's (2004) argument that without appropriate strategic visioning, eLearning and its associated PD is restricted to the periphery.

While the vehicles employed to promote the eLearning PD are not immune to the institutional attitude toward eLearning, the exposure that the vehicles give the PD can assist in keeping eLearning and its PD on staff agendas. While the findings show that over 80% of respondents felt that PD was an important part of their job and that Massey valued it, eLearning PD was seemingly not as valued as other forms of PD. For example, courses on how to apply for research funds and courses related to teaching that are seen to be a requirement of employment are more popular. Despite the inequity between different areas of PD, the research confirms that the University environment views PD as an accepted and valued activity.



## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study makes a contribution to the body of research that shows the vehicles used to communicate eLearning PD offered by academic development units are highly dependent on the motivation of staff and institutional support of eLearning PD in general. The most significant finding (and the one with the most potential for eLearning PD) is that a professional development course, when properly designed, can be an effective vehicle for promoting eLearning PD. By appealing to the participants' autonomy and self-efficacy, PD courses can produce confident participants who are interested in exploring more eLearning PD opportunities.

The study has uncovered the different approaches of staff who act on their intrinsic motivations and those who act from a basis of instrumentality. While the number of respondents in both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivated groups is relatively small, the findings gave an indication of their attitudes toward time and eLearning in general and how these may influence their awareness of the vehicles used to promote eLearning PD.

### 6.1 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsically motivated staff had a good awareness of the majority of vehicles used to promote the PD. This indicates that a strategy employing a variety of vehicles is likely to be most successful for them. However, technology-based vehicles are shown to be most effective in providing a convenient way for staff to enrol in eLearning PD courses.

An important practical finding was the effectiveness of eLearning PD as a vehicle to promote other PD opportunities. The research shows that by designing eLearning PD to



appeal to the core characteristics of intrinsic motivation, the PD in itself can be an effective vehicle for promoting other eLearning PD opportunities. The delivery mechanism of eLearning PD can also be an effective means of promoting eLearning PD, especially to those groups of staff who are time poor, but are motivated by an interest in eLearning. Delivering eLearning PD online not only allows the participants to experience eLearning from the learner's perspective, it also removes perceived barriers to engagement for time poor staff.

A strategy that acknowledges the significance of a well designed eLearning PD course as a vehicle to promote other eLearning PD should not be seen to have value only for those people who have an inherent interest in eLearning. PD courses that are designed to build competency, encourage self-determined decision making, provide challenges and positive feedback to participants, and use a convenient method of delivery – online – are likely to be valuable to a wide range of staff. Even so, this finding is based on a limited number of spontaneous comments by participants. Further research into the extent to which the method of delivery and the design of eLearning PD influence a person's likelihood of engagement would be helpful in assessing the effectiveness of this strategy.

## 6.2 Extrinsic motivation

The results of convenience sample research on PD may be slanted because intrinsically motivated people are more likely to become participants. An area that would benefit from further exploration is the behaviour of staff with a more instrumentalist approach to eLearning PD. My initial research plan did not focus on motivational factors, but these became impossible to ignore in the results. Relying solely on vehicles such as

newsletters, email and pamphlets is unlikely to be successful for staff whose engagement in eLearning is largely determined by external factors. Instead, developing relationships with key personnel within departments/schools/institutes is likely to raise the profile of the PD opportunities run by central University units. A strategy that aims to increase awareness of eLearning PD in extrinsically motivated academics should also recognise the range of extrinsic motivation.

Given the ability for people to move along a continuum of extrinsic motivation, staff may internalise the values advocated in eLearning PD, such as experiencing eLearning from a learner's perspective. This process of internalisation may reduce the likelihood of surface forms of practice and ultimately help establish a culture that acknowledges the value of eLearning PD. If academic development units employ a strategy that uses designated personnel in institutes/departments/schools to articulate the worth of eLearning PD, there is a greater likelihood of extrinsically motivated staff internalising the PD values.

### 6.3 Institutional factors

As institutions focus more on research activities than learning, a tension between the two then emerges. Staff engagement with eLearning PD requires an institutional strategy. Without acknowledgement and appropriate integration of eLearning into staff workloads, there are few incentives or rewards for staff to engage with eLearning and its PD, beyond their interest in eLearning in general. Although the institution at which the research took place values PD, an inequity exists between the support provided to eLearning PD and the PD associated with research. While staff awareness of eLearning PD is currently high

it is likely, in the future, to be impacted by whether the institution has a strategic eLearning vision and whether eLearning PD is factored into staff workloads.

Another contribution of this research is that it identifies the importance of looking at what I term 'points of need'. Although, the data from the web page is limited and would benefit from a longitudinal analysis, it does highlight that staff interest in eLearning PD is clustered around particular times of the year. Even when academic development units offer rewards to generate interest in PD, the necessity to have 'point of need' support outweighs the attractiveness of the incentive. As well as outweighing the attractiveness of the incentive, 'point of need' support must by necessity be responsive to superficial immediate needs. The 'point of need' is, in turn, related to the institutional culture whereby eLearning PD may be seen as a peripheral. Formal PD which provides meaningful in-depth eLearning education is unlikely to satisfy the majority of staff needs. To use an analogy, if one were to teach a nurse how to deliver a baby just before labour, it would be inappropriate to provide in-depth knowledge about gestation and obstetrics.

## 6.4 Future research

Several themes emerged from the study that may benefit from further research. First, there was anecdotal evidence that certain campuses are less likely to engage with PD seen to be delivered from other campuses. Second, there is a gatekeeper issue of messages such as email reminders not getting through to staff. Further researchers may like to consider this and other gatekeeper issues. Third, and most important, the message itself, particularly how it is written, is an area worth further exploration.

## 6.5 Recommendations

This thesis demonstrates the fact that institutional awareness of eLearning PD has less to do with the vehicles used to promote it and more to do with motivational factors and institutional support. There are, however, strategies that can be employed when choosing vehicles used to promote eLearning PD. On the basis of the data, five recommendations can be made:

1. Use a variety of communication vehicles. When using technology-based vehicles, such as email, include web page links that allow easy enrolment into eLearning PD courses.
2. Establish relationships with key personnel in departments/schools/institutions, so they can promote the eLearning PD run by academic development units.
3. Design eLearning PD activities that are intended to increase self-efficacy, autonomous decision-making and challenge participants.
4. Design eLearning PD for online delivery. Online delivery can reduce the barriers to engagement in eLearning PD especially for those staff who are time poor and cannot find the time to engage in face-to-face delivery options.
5. Use technology-based vehicles at key times in the year. As staff interest in eLearning peaks at the start of each semester, technology-based vehicles are the best option to promote eLearning PD at 'point of need' times.

Finally, this research has value for staff who see the significance of activities that are on the periphery of the University's core business and want to get these on the University agenda. Technology has progressed so far and is now such an integral part of people's work and home life that eLearning can no longer be seen as a peripheral activity. This study provides a basis to help teaching and learning advisors embed eLearning PD in the University.

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## Appendix A: Questions used in the pre-course and post-course questionnaires – Group One

### **Pre-course questions:**

Q 1. How did you come to hear of the Introduction to eLearning module? – check as many as apply.

- a. A colleague or a support person gave me the details.
- b. I received an email with the details.
- c. I saw it on the TDU (Training and Development Unit) webpage.
- d. I saw it advertised on a pamphlet.
- e. I read about it in the TDU news.

Q 2. Why did you enrol in the Introduction to eLearning module? – check as many as apply.

- a. I am interested in learning more about online learning.
- b. My students are demanding more and more material online and I need to know how to do it.
- c. My School/Department/Institute strongly suggested that I do this course
- d. It has been recommended to me.
- e. I will be supporting my Schools/ Departments/Institutes' WebCT offerings and I need to know how to use it.

### **Post-course question:**

Q.11. What are the most effective ways for you to be kept informed about support and training for online learning at Massey? - check as many as apply

- a. By email.
- b. By pamphlets sent out at the start of each year.
- c. By regularly distributed newsletter - such as the TDU (Training and Development Unit's) news.

- d. Through a College/Institute/Department support contact.
- e. By me making contact with those supporting online learning when I need to.
- f. Through the Training and Development Unit's (TDU's) website.
- g. By being informed when I attend other Training and Development Unit (TDU) run courses.

## Appendix B: Questions used in the WebCT Experience feedback questionnaire – Group Three

### **The two multi-choice multi-response questions:**

Q 2. How did you come to hear of the WebCT Experience course? – check as many as apply.

- a. A colleague or a support person gave me the details.
- b. I received an email with the details.
- c. I saw it on the TDU (Training and Development Unit) webpage.
- d. I saw it advertised on a pamphlet.
- e. I read about it in the TDU news.

Q.13. What are the most effective ways for you to be kept informed about support and training for online learning at Massey? - check as many as apply

- a. By email.
- b. By pamphlets sent out at the start of each year.
- c. By regularly distributed newsletter - such as the TDU (Training and Development Unit's) news.
- d. Through a College/Institute/Department support contact.
- e. By me making contact with those supporting online learning when I need to.
- f. Through the Training and Development Unit's (TDU's) website.
- g. By being informed when I attend other Training and Development Unit (TDU) run courses.

### **The open-ended questions:**

Q.5. What skills and/or knowledge are you likely to use from your time in this site?

Q.6. What did you enjoy most about the WebCT Experience and why?

Q.14. In what other ways can TDU assist you?

## Appendix C: Questions used in the semi-structured interviews - Group Two

Q 1 – In what ways did the current range of promotional material influence your decision to engage with the eLearning programme?

Q2 – To what extent did your work situation play a part in your decision to enrol?



## Appendix D - Questions used in the semi-structured interviews - Group Four

Q1 – How did you come to know of my contact details?

Q2 – Can you remember having received other communications about eLearning PD run by the TDU?

Q3 – What motivated you to call?

## Appendix E: Ministry of Education funded project questionnaire – Group Six

TeLRF e-Learning Professional Development
<b>1. About this survey</b>
<p>The aim of the research project is to develop a framework for the delivery of professional development in relation to e-learning which can be utilized by New Zealand tertiary teaching institutions. The project is concerned with staff delivery/teaching of electronic learning practices and mediums, and the forms of professional development they engage in, or require, in order undertake this.</p> <p>All responses are anonymous.</p> <p>The survey will be closed at 3 pm on the 26 May 2007.</p> <p>If you have any questions or queries about this survey then please don't hesitate to contact...</p> <p>Thanks, Juliana Mansvelt</p>
<b>2. Institutional and demographic details</b>
<p>The following questions are concerned with obtaining demographic and institutional information.</p>
<b>3. Professional details</b>
<p><b>1. Please indicate your gender</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Male</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Female</p>
<p><b>2. Please indicate which age bracket you fall into</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> &lt; 20</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 20 - 29</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 30 - 39</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 40 - 49</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 50+</p>
<p><b>3. Please indicate which ethnicity you most closely identify with</b></p> <p>_____</p>

#### 4. Institutional details

##### 4. I am employed at my institution as

- ☐ an Academic staff member (includes staff that are employed in academic administration i.e. Head of Department/School/Institute)
- ☐ a General staff member
- ☐ Other (please specify)

##### 5. How long have you been employed at your institution?

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 - 5 years
- ☐ 5 - 10 years
- ☐ 10 - 15 years
- ☐ 15+ years

#### 5. Institutional professional development

The following questions pertain to professional development in general. They are **not** related to e-Learning professional development.

Professional development is defined as:

Engagement in formal or informal training and/or learning in order to enhance skills, knowledge, and the ability to practise (one's occupation).

##### 6. I believe my institution views professional development for its staff as important.

- ☐ I strongly agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I neither disagree nor agree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I strongly disagree

##### 7. I believe that professional development is an important part of my job.

- ☐ I strongly agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I neither disagree nor agree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I strongly disagree

**8. Please indicate the types of professional development you engage with (select as many as applicable).**

- ☐ Regular reading of journals and books relevant to my profession
- ☐ Sharing knowledge with colleagues
- ☐ Acquiring generic transferable skills and competencies related to my job
- ☐ Spontaneous learning arising from work or personal activities
- ☐ Practising the rules and procedures of my institution
- ☐ Learning through informal discussions in the workplace
- ☐ Action learning: learning from development projects
- ☐ Acquiring knowledge through browsing websites or 'surfing the net'
- ☐ Keeping a portfolio record of professional development activities that I have undertaken
- ☐ External courses my employer has paid for
- ☐ Membership of committees at my place of work; eg quality; health and safety
- ☐ Internal training courses
- ☐ Learning professional knowledge: e.g professional codes of practice
- ☐ Learning that is carefully planned in advance
- ☐ Technical training: e.g. courses where I am learning how to use new computer software or technologies
- ☐ Undertaking academic study that isn't necessarily related to my job or profession
- ☐ Exchanging emails on professional topics with other members within your institution
- ☐ Keeping a reflexive diary over an extended period
- ☐ Working toward a qualification that is paid by my employer
- ☐ Working toward a qualification which I am paying for myself
- ☐ Taking part in an online discussion forum relevant to my profession
- ☐ Membership of committees relevant my professional development
- ☐ Attending conferences, seminars, symposia and or workshops
- ☐ Engaging with professional interest groups
- ☐ Other (please specify)



## 6. e-Learning

The next set of questions requires you to indicate if you have or are currently engaged with e-Learning in either a teaching or support capacity.

e-Learning is defined as:

"learning that is enabled or supported by the use of digital tools and content. It typically involves some form of interactivity, which may include online interaction between the learner and their teacher or peers. e-Learning opportunities are usually accessed via the internet, though other technologies such as CD-ROM are also used in e-learning."

Ministry of Education Interim Tertiary e-Learning Framework 1994

### 9. Have you used, or are you currently using e-Learning in your teaching?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (i.e. a staff member that supports e-Learning)
- ☐ N/A Not Applicable (i.e. a staff member involved in research only activities or does not use e-Learning for teaching purposes)

## 7. e-Learning in teaching

### 10. How long have you been involved with e-Learning in teaching?

### 11. What were the main reasons for your decision to use e-Learning in your teaching (select as many as applicable)

- ☐ My School/Department/Institute required me to have an e-Learning presence
- ☐ Increased demand from students to have an e-Learning presence
- ☐ My colleagues were engaged with e-Learning so I thought I should too
- ☐ e-Learning allowed me to do things that I couldn't do using other methods
- ☐ Other (please specify)

### 12. Please indicate the types of e-Learning activities/tools you have used, or are currently using in your teaching (select as many as applicable)

- ☐ Discussion boards

## TeLRF e-Learning Professional Development

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Use an LMS (Learning Management System such as Blackboard, Moodle or WebCT)
- ☐ Providing content online that is in any one of the following types: Word documents, Excel documents, PDF documents, PowerPoint documents
- ☐ Providing content online that is in HTML (web page) form
- ☐ Providing content online that is in Flash form
- ☐ ePortfolios
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Blogs
- ☐ Online image databases
- ☐ Podcasting (Podcasting most commonly entails audio or video content that is delivered via an RSS feed presenting a downloadable or streaming file (e.g. a mp3))
- ☐ Online audio files (that do not use podcast technology)
- ☐ Online video files (that do not use podcast technology)
- ☐ Audio files delivered via CD or DVD
- ☐ Video files delivered via CD or DVD
- ☐ Providing clickable links to websites
- ☐ Providing clickable links to online journal articles (this includes journal articles in a library database)
- ☐ Online quizzes
- ☐ Online surveys
- ☐ Chat rooms
- ☐ Electronic whiteboards
- ☐ Electronic assignment submission
- ☐ Scenarios delivered either online or through a CD or DVD
- ☐ Web based conferencing (i.e. Breeze, Elluminate, Live Classroom)
- ☐ Voice over IP (i.e. Skype)
- ☐ RSS feeds
- ☐ Social bookmarking websites (e.g. Furl, del.icio.us)
- ☐ Digital stories
- ☐ Interactive content delivered via CD or DVD
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## 8. Supporting e-Learning

These questions are for staff that support e-Learning.

### 13. How long have you been involved in supporting e-Learning?

### 14. Please indicate the types of e-Learning activities/tools you have supported. 'Supported' is used to describe both assistance with and creation of. (Select as many as applicable).

- ☐ Discussion boards
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Use an LMS (Learning Management System such as Blackboard, Moodle, WebCT)
- ☐ Providing content online that is in any one of the following types: Word documents, Excel documents, PDF documents, PowerPoint documents
- ☐ Providing content online that is in HTML (web page) form
- ☐ Providing content online that is in Flash form
- ☐ ePortfolios
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Blogs
- ☐ Online image databases
- ☐ Podcasting (Podcasting most commonly entails audio or video content that is delivered via an RSS feed presenting a downloadable or streaming file (e.g. a mp3))
- ☐ Online audio files (that do not use podcast technology)
- ☐ Online video files (that do not use podcast technology)
- ☐ Audio files delivered via CD or DVD
- ☐ Video files delivered via CD or DVD
- ☐ Providing clickable links to websites
- ☐ Providing clickable links to online journal articles (this includes journal articles in a library database)
- ☐ Online quizzes
- ☐ Online surveys
- ☐ Chat rooms
- ☐ Electronic whiteboards
- ☐ Electronic assignment submission
- ☐ Scenarios delivered either online or through a CD or DVD
- ☐ Web based conferencing (i.e. Breeze, Elluminate, Live Classroom)
- ☐ Voice over IP (i.e. Skype)

## TeLRF e-Learning Professional Development

- ☐ RSS feeds
- ☐ Social bookmarking websites (e.g. Furl, del.icio.us)
- ☐ Digital stories
- ☐ Interactive content delivered via CD or DVD
- ☐ Other (please specify)



### 9. Non-use of e-Learning

The following question asks you to describe why you don't use e-Learning in a teaching or support capacity.

#### 15. Why do you not use e-Learning in your job?





## 10. e-Learning professional development

The following questions pertain to e-Learning professional development **at your institution**.

Professional development is categorised as being either formal and informal.

**Formal** professional development includes:

Programmes or courses that either have an assessment or attendance requirement in order to obtain credit. Examples include attendance at training courses, study toward a formal qualifications etc.

**Informal** professional development includes:

All activities that you undertake that increase your knowledge in a particular area but which are not formally acknowledged. Examples include discussions with colleagues, reading articles, searching on the internet etc.

### 16. Are you aware of e-Learning professional development courses run in your institution?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### 17. Have you participated in any e-Learning professional development within your institution? This includes both formal and informal professional development.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**11. e-Learning professional development at your institution**

The following questions pertain to e-Learning professional development available **in your institution**.

**18. Please choose the examples of e-Learning professional development that you have engaged with, in your institution (select as many as applicable).**

- ☐ Courses and/or papers that are run within my institution and that count toward a formal qualification (i.e. a Degree, Diploma, Certificate or some other NZQA approved qualification)
- ☐ Technical training courses run by a central unit within my institution
- ☐ Courses that focus on non-technical skills (i.e pedagogy), and are run by a central unit within my institution
- ☐ e-Learning courses that cover both technical and non-technical skills and are run by a central unit within my institution
- ☐ e-Learning courses/activities run by my School/Department/Institute
- ☐ Attended e-Learning events at my institution (examples include symposia, planning days, conferences, workshops, and/or conferences)
- ☐ Have worked one-to-one or in small groups with e-Learning staff outside of centrally run e-Learning courses
- ☐ Informal professional development (this type of professional development includes all activities that are undertaken outside of formal professional development. This might include discussions with colleagues, or searching out information by oneself).
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**19. On a scale of 1 - 4 please indicate the effectiveness of e-Learning professional development on your e-Learning activities.**

**1 = Extremely effective**

**4 = Completely ineffective**

	<b>1</b> Extremely effective	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Completely ineffective	<b>N/A Not Applicable</b>
Courses and/or papers that are run within my institution and that count toward a formal qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical training courses run by a central unit within my institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courses that are focused on non-technical skills (i.e pedagogy), and are run by a central unit within my institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e-Learning courses that cover both technical and non-technical skills and are run by a central unit within my institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e-Learning professional development run by my School/Department/Institute	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e-Learning events at my institution (examples include symposia, planning days, workshops, conferences etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## TeLRF e-Learning Professional Development

Working one-to-one or in small groups with e-Learning staff outside of centrally run e-Learning courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal professional development (this type of professional development includes all activities that are undertaken outside of formal professional development. This might include discussions with colleagues, or searching out information by oneself).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 12. e-Learning professional development non-engagement

The following statements are concerned with non-engagement with e-Learning professional development offered in your **institution**

**20. In relation to your non-engagement with e-Learning professional development (both formal and informal), please indicate the reasons for your non-engagement (select as many as applicable).**

- ☐ I haven't had the time to engage with e-Learning professional development
- ☐ I haven't needed to do any professional development
- ☐ I don't want to use or can't see the use for e-Learning and therefore have not engaged with the professional development
- ☐ My institution doesn't offer any e-Learning professional development opportunities
- ☐ The e-Learning professional development that is on offer is inadequate
- ☐ My institution provides inadequate practical support for e-Learning
- ☐ I am not rewarded for engaging in e-Learning professional development
- ☐ Other (please specify)



### 13. External e-Learning professional development

**21. Have you been an online student?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**22. Have you ever participated in any e-Learning professional development outside of your institution? This includes both formal and informal professional development.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

### 14. External professional development detail

These questions refer to the professional development that you have engaged with **outside** of your institution.

**23. Please choose the examples of e-Learning professional development that you have engaged with, outside of your institution (select as many as applicable).**

- ☐ Courses and/or papers that count toward a formal qualification (i.e. a Degree, Diploma, Certificate or some other NZQA approved qualification)  
☐ Technical training courses  
☐ Courses that focus on non-technical skills (i.e pedagogy)  
☐ e-Learning courses that cover both technical and non-technical skills  
☐ e-Learning events (examples include symposia, planning days, conferences, workshops, and/or conferences)  
☐ Informal professional development undertaken in your own time out side of your institution. (Informal professional development includes all activities that are undertaken outside of formal professional development. This might include discussions with peers, or searching out information by oneself).  
☐ Other (please specify)



**24. On a scale of 1 - 4 please indicate the effectiveness of e-Learning professional development on your e-Learning activities.**

## TeLRF e-Learning Professional Development

**1 = Extremely effective**

**4 = Completely ineffective**

	1 Extremely effective	2	3	4 Completely Ineffective	N/A Not Applicable
Courses and/or papers that count toward a formal qualification (i.e. a Degree, Diploma, Certificate or some other NZQA approved qualification)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical training courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courses that focus on non-technical skills (i.e pedagogy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e-Learning courses that cover both technical and non-technical skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e-Learning events (examples include symposia, planning days, workshops, conferences etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal professional development undertaken in your own time outside of your institution. (Informal professional development includes all activities that are undertaken outside of formal professional development. This might include discussions with peers, or searching out information by oneself).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 15. Non-engagement with external professional development

**25. What were your reasons for not engaging in e-Learning professional development offered outside of your institution?**

## 16. Future e-Learning professional development

The following questions ask you to identify what you would like in regard to e-Learning professional development.

### 26. From the following list please indicate the types of e-Learning professional development that you currently don't engage with but would like to.

- ☐ Technical courses run by my institution
- ☐ Non-technical courses (i.e. courses that focus on pedagogy) run by my institution
- ☐ Courses that combine technical and non-technical aspects of e-Learning run by my institution
- ☐ Courses/papers that count toward a qualification
- ☐ Courses that are run by my School/Department/Institute
- ☐ Informal e-Learning professional development
- ☐ Technical courses run outside of my institution
- ☐ Non-technical courses (i.e. courses that focus on pedagogy) run outside of my institution
- ☐ Courses that combine technical and non-technical aspects of e-Learning and are run outside of my institution
- ☐ e-Learning events (i.e. conferences, workshops, planning days, symposia)
- ☐ Other (please specify)



### 27. Please indicate which constraints affect your ability to engage with e-Learning professional development. (Select as many as applicable).

- ☐ I don't have enough time
- ☐ I am not encouraged or rewarded
- ☐ There is not enough professional development courses on offer
- ☐ I am not interested in e-Learning professional development
- ☐ Other (please specify)



### 28. Please add any comments that you would like to make about undertaking e-Learning professional development.



## 17. Thank you

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you are interested in taking part in a phone interview to discuss the competencies and capabilities staff need in order to engage in e-Learning then please use the email link below to acknowledge your willingness to participate.

You will then be contacted to confirm your selection for participation in the study, and to discuss possible interview times and to arrange for the return of the consent form available on this website.

To acknowledge your willingness to participate please use the clickable email link below. Include in your email message your contact details and a brief 2-3 sentence synopsis of your position and/or experience in relation to e-learning and/or professional development.

[Email link](#)

If you want to know more about the interview including consent form, then please follow the links below:

Information sheet on the interview (Word doc 39.5kb)

Consent form (Word doc 31kb. Note you don't need to fill in the consent form until you have been selected for the interview)

## Appendix F - Interview questions used in the Ministry of Education funded project – Group Six

Q.1. How long you've been involved in supporting and or using e-learning methods and tools?

Q.2. Why have you chosen to use e-learning?

Q.3. How does your use of e-Learning enhance your face-to-face teaching, or your paper based teaching?

Q.4. How would you describe your technical ability?

Q.5. Do you think professional development is necessary or not to prepare teachers for using e-learning methods?

Q.6. Do you think it is necessary to have continuing professional development?

Q.7. What sort of professional development would you prefer or suits you best?

Q.8. So what do you think professional development activities should actually enable you to do in relation to e-learning?

Q.9. Can you tell me a little bit about what professional development activities you've engaged in and why you chose those?

Q.10. In terms of professional development activities you've been engaged in, do you prefer face to face or online?

Q.11. What would your ideal mix of professional development activities available for enhancing the delivery of e-learning look like?

Q.12. And what about the content of those sort of professional development courses that you're talking about. What sorts of things is it helpful for them to cover?

Q.13. Can you tell me how suitable you've found the different kinds of professional development activities you've engaged in, in helping you in your practice and your teaching.

Q.14. So have you found the professional development flexible or easy to access for, for yourself at Massey.

Q.15. How do you actually measure that it's been effective or assess the effectiveness?

Q.16. Are you aware of opportunities to engage in professional development both in and outside Massey?



Q.17. Do you think Massey supports professional development for e-learning at a strategic level?

Q.18. What about at departmental level, sort of the level of your institute or school?

Q.19. What sort of incentive is there for you to engage in professional development related to e-learning?

Q.20. How is the infrastructure is set up to support professional development for e-learning, in terms of resourcing?

Q.21. How does the institution support you in terms of expertise or personal assistance available to you?

Q.22. Based on your experience, if you had an ideal scenario for an organisational infrastructure to support you in your delivery of e-learning, what would it be?

Q.23. Does the infrastructure available at Massey work well for you?

Q.24. Are the forms of professional development available to you sufficient for what you need in terms of your teaching and your practice?

Q.25. Are there any constraints on your current or continued involvement in professional development?

Q.26. Are there any forms of professional development not currently available to you which you would like to access?

Q.27. Is anything you'd like to do or to be involved in, in order to improve your teaching and or support of e-learning methods?

Q.28. Is there anything further you'd like to add about professional development and e-learning?

Q.29. Is there anything you thought I might have asked you which I haven't?