

Webinar 'The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students in Aotearoa New Zealand'

Organised by [FLANZ](#), presented by Dr Michael Cameron (University of Waikato) on 18 April 2023.

The [recording](#) is available on YouTube.

Kristina Hoepfner 00:11

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Ko Kristina Hoepfner taku ingoa. I'm really pleased to see all of you today here for this webinar with Michael Cameron, and we also have a second co author of the paper that he'll be talking about, Barbara Fogarty-Perry, in the room. And before I kind of go into a little bit of biography about Michael, let's all come together and centre our thinking and have our focus on the session. So I'd like to start with a short karakia. Whāia te mātauranga kia mārama. Kia whai take ngā mahi katoa. Tū māia, tū kaha. Aroha atu, aroha mai. Tātou i a tātou katoa.

Kristina Hoepfner 01:03

So it's my pleasure to be representative here from FLANZ, from the Executive Committee, and welcome Dr Michael Cameron, who is professor of Economics in the School of Accounting, Finance and Economics at the University of Waikato. He's also Research Associate in Te Ngira, the Institute for Population Research at the University. Michael's current research interests include a range of topics in population economics, financial literacy, and also economics education. If you want to learn more about him and see all his research outputs, then please do feel free to go to his profile on the University website.

Kristina Hoepfner 01:56

And today, we are taking a closer look at the article that he co authored with Barbara Fogarty-Perry from Otago Polytechnic, and Gemma Piercy from the University of Waikato that appeared in JOFDL earlier in the - well, a few months ago, last year, entitled 'The impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic on higher education students in New Zealand'. You will find the link in the chat if you haven't had a chance to read that article just yet. But please do feel free and sit back and I'd just like to hand over to Michael so that he can tell us all about that topic. Thank you so much.

Michael Cameron 02:48

Kia ora Kristina. Kia ora tātou. Let me just share my screen.

Michael Cameron 03:00

Alright. Hopefully everybody can see that now.

Kristina Hoepfner 03:04

Yes, thank you, Michael.

Michael Cameron 03:07

So as Kristina mentioned, this is joint work with Barbara Fogarty-Perry, who's here with us today, and Gemma Piercy as well. So they they share all the good things about the paper, and anything stupid that I say today is entirely on me. They bear no responsibility for that. So a little bit of background to start. Hopefully, maybe I should have had a trigger warning on this slide. Hopefully, this doesn't traumatise anybody too much, remembering what happened back in 2020. So we moved to alert level three on the 23rd of March in 2020, and then straight to level four, on the 25th of March. And, and this was not pretty signaled to a great degree. We had about two days notice that the university was going to shift to online teaching because we could no longer do anything that was in person. And so this was a obviously a pretty dramatic shift for us and a pretty dramatic shift for students. And so it's useful for us to think about what those dramatic shifts in the way that teaching and learning taking place, what impact that's going to have on students and of course, New Zealand was not alone in taking this approach. Other countries also closed down or shifted universities online or placed restrictions on in-person classes or had all sorts of responses, some of which were more similar to New Zealand and some which were not.

Michael Cameron 04:44

Then, in May of 2020, we were approached by Alex Aristovnik and his colleagues at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, were asked to join an international study which was looking at the impacts of the pandemic and the lockdowns on students in higher education. And the intention of the study was to be quite comprehensive in terms of its coverage of countries and in terms of sample size. So we undertook to take the New Zealand arm of the study. And I'll talk a little bit more about that shortly. Internationally, the study covered about 62 countries, about 30,000 students. Possibly one of the disappointing things from our perspective, in terms of the international study was it turned out that New Zealand was the only country in our region of Oceania to actually participate. So even though there were some initial conversations with universities in Australia and with the University of South Pacific in Fiji, none of those universities ended up actually following through and completing the study. So if you do follow up through to the international study, you'll find that they report results for Oceania, but those Oceania results are essentially just our results for New Zealand.

Michael Cameron 06:08

So, as Kristina mentioned, our paper was published last year in the Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning. Our research question was, essentially what was the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the life of higher education students in New Zealand? And how did this compare with students in other countries?

Michael Cameron 06:30

So we initially invited all of the New Zealand universities to participate. We did that in two ways. We sent an email to the Pro Vice Chancellor of Teaching and Learning or their equivalent at each university, but we also approached each of the student unions as well and invited them to participate. Sadly, only two universities actually agreed to participate: Victoria University in Wellington and our own University of Waikato, agreed as well. We had some interesting responses from some of the universities saying that they were doing their own survey, which is probably likely, but I haven't seen any other results from any other universities, they certainly haven't been made public. So as far as I know, we are the only ones who have reported on a study like this, that has an international comparative for New Zealand. Nevertheless, we did have some students from other universities who did participate in the survey, I guess they received the link through their friends who were at Victoria or Waikato, but there was only a small number.

Michael Cameron 07:43

So there was an online questionnaire. It was administered out of Ljubljana. That was in the field in the last week of May, in the first week of June 2020. And if your memory is not so great, we were still in lockdown at that stage. So the students were still at home, all our classes were being delivered online. So the students were in a space where we could have a look at what it was that they were experiencing while they were stuck at home. The survey asked for - asked questions on the demographic characteristics, but also asked a whole bunch of questions about academic life, about how studying from home, about their social and emotional life and in life circumstances and, and their satisfaction with various aspects of the studying from home experience. And so that's what I'm going to focus most of the presentation on today.

Michael Cameron 08:44

Most of the questions were focused on the period of the pandemic at the time of the survey. And those are the questions that I'm going to focus on. There were some questions that asked retrospectively about the time before the pandemic. We haven't done too much with those questions and those responses. Then there was a final open ended question that all of the students were asked, and that was about the general views or words of reflection about COVID-19.

And so because that was an open ended response, we got from some students, we got nothing, from other students, we got a short essay almost of their experiences. And so we will analyse that data as well.

Michael Cameron 09:29

So, in terms of responses, we had 171 students who started the survey, but we had 147, who did enough of the survey that we could actually do some reasonable analysis of their responses. I'm not going to talk too much about what the outcome variables are because I'll present them as we go. Things like satisfaction with various aspects of teaching and learning. But we looked at whether those differed by demographic characteristics whether they differed by age or gender, or citizenship, domestic students versus international students, whether they were full time or part time students, what level of study that was a Bachelor's degree Master's or PhD, and their field of study, which was a very coarse. very coarse characterisation or categorisation, I should say of what the field of study is in only 24 categories. We also looked at socio economic variables, so whether they had a scholarship or not. Students were also asked to report whether they how well able they were to pay for the studies, that was dichotomised into high ability to pay or low ability to pay, whether the student had moved home during the lockdown. And lastly, for those students who had a job before the pandemic, whether they had lost the job. For that last question that I mentioned earlier, the open ended one we had 80 respondents who provided us with a response to that, and we applied some thematic analysis to those responses.

Michael Cameron 11:12

So what was our sample like? Well, we had a pretty evenish split between students who are aged under 20, those who are aged 20 to 24, and those who are aged 25 and over, about 71% were female. So this is a population that works - is not representative even of the two universities that provided the bulk of the sample. So the sample is older and more female than the underlying student population is. 88% of them were domestic students vs. international, 88% were full time students, that's not a typo, that was the same proportion for both of those. The rest were part time students. Most of them were bachelor's degree students, but we have a substantial sample, you can see who were postgraduate students as well.

Michael Cameron 12:04

The field of study, the majority of students were in social sciences. But that's quite a broad category because it includes things like education and business students as well. So the rest were fairly evenly split between arts and humanities, applied sciences, which has things like engineering and medicine, also engineering and natural life sciences, which also includes medicine. But more than a quarter of students have a scholarship and about half of them reported a high ability to

pay with the rest reporting low ability to pay. About a quarter of students had moved home during the pandemic, and of those who had a job that 21% had lost their job during that lockdown period.

Michael Cameron 12:55

So comparing our sample with the international sample, it is fairly similar. Although it turns out that our sample was somewhat young, even though I said it's kind of older than the underlying student population in New Zealand. Our sample was slightly younger than the sample internationally, more female, much more concentrated in the social sciences, and interestingly, our sample had a substantially lower rate of job loss than the international sample. So about 21% of our students who had jobs before the pandemic had lost their job, but in the international sample that was over 60%. And I think that reflects that New Zealand had the wage subsidy in place, which allowed students to maintain their employment status.

Michael Cameron 13:44

Okay, so hopefully, these slides are readable to you. You may have to turn your head on the side to read some of the text there. But let's start with how satisfied students were with various online teaching and learning approaches. So of course, we couldn't have in person lectures. So there was various things that we could replace in person lectures with, we could have recorded video lectures, we could have video conference lectures, or real time or resume lectures, we could simply put written stuff up, or we could have forums or chats or things, we could send presentations to students, or we could record audio lectures. And of course, there's many other alternatives as well. But those first five are the ones that the survey asked about. Students were asked to rate their satisfaction on a scale of one to five. And so this figure presents the average satisfaction rating that students gave for those different options. And there's not a lot to choose between them. But recorded video lectures came out as the thing that students were most satisfied with. They were least satisfied with recorded audio lectures, but in terms of average, it's a difference between about 3.7 and then about 3.1. So there's, there's not a great amount of difference in terms of how satisfied students were.

Michael Cameron 15:08

And there weren't in the demographic or socio economic differences that were really meaningful there. There are some that show up, and if you read the paper, you can see them, but I think we could easily over interpret the meaning of those differences.

Michael Cameron 15:25

Similar thing with tutorials, we could replace our tutorials with tutorials that were in real time. Using Zoom or some other video conferencing software, we could pre record tutorials on video, we could pre record them in an audio format, we could replace them with some written forum, whether that be synchronous or asynchronous. We could have tutorial presentations that are simply seek to students and so on there are other options as well. In the case of tutorials, it appeared that the students were most satisfied with real time tutorials. So that's quite different from the lectures, if I just pop back a slide, you can see that students were most satisfied with recorded video lectures, and then real time or video conference lectures came second. With tutorials it was very much the other way around. They much preferred the in person well, not the in person [laughs], the on screen real time, tutorial format, rather than things that were recorded. But again, seemed reasonably satisfied, regardless of what the previously in person tutorials or workshops were being replaced with. Again, no really meaningful differences between different demographic categories or different socio economic characteristics of the students.

Michael Cameron 16:53

If we look at student satisfaction with, with teaching and administrative support, again, students are pretty satisfied with lectures, a little bit less satisfied with supervisions and mentorships, a little bit less satisfied, again, with tutorials or seminars or practicals. Now, this is where the characteristics of our sample becomes kind of important because about a quarter of our sample were postgraduate students. So many of those students would have had supervision or mentorship relationships. If we had a sample that was much much more dominated by undergraduate students, then then these results might not be meaningful. But the supervisions and mentorships was important particularly since we found that full time students were actually least satisfied with those supervisions or mentorships. So students who are full time expecting to be closely supervised by an academic in a project, then suddenly find themselves online and having to engage with that academic through some virtual means appear to be less satisfied overall. Interestingly, for some reason, our female students were less satisfied with tutorials than were male students. So I don't have a good explanation for that, but if anybody else does, I really welcome your insights.

Michael Cameron 18:23

If we expand out to other aspects of teaching and administrative support, students were really satisfied with teaching staff which is good from my perspective, and happy with tutors as well. But then if we rank the other aspects of teaching administrative support, we get down to international office being the lowest ranked and finance and accounting and student counseling as well...

Michael Cameron 18:59

When we look at the demographic and socio economic characteristics, what we find here though, is counseling sort of stands out. Domestic students were more satisfied with counseling than international students. And students who had moved home were less satisfied with counseling services than those who had stayed presumably where they were before the pandemic.

Michael Cameron 19:29

If we look at students' academic work, the academic environment, students here were asked whether they agree or strongly agree or disagree or strongly disagree with a number of statements and here you kind of have to put your head on the side to read these, I'm afraid [laughs. So, the first one there is whether they agreed with it's more difficult to focus during the online teaching in comparison to onsite teaching, and nearly three quarters of the students agreed with this - agreed or strongly agreed with that statement.

Michael Cameron 20:05

More than half of students agreed that the performance as a student was worsened since the on site classes were canceled. Nearly half of them said, in contrast to that they've adapted well to the new teaching and learning experience. Then about 45% said that they could master the skills in class this year even without onsite classes. And about a third of students said that they can figure out how to do the most difficult class work even since onsite classes were canceled. And then, lastly, about a bit less than a quarter of students said that their performance had improved since onsite classes were canceled.

Michael Cameron 20:50

And lastly, we asked students about their workload, whether their workload was significantly smaller, smaller, larger, or significantly larger and about 60% said it was either larger or significantly larger. And I think these results are really telling in terms of how students were experiencing the shift to online teaching and learning. In particular, that more difficult to focus, I think is kind of important in terms of thinking about how do the students adapt to online teaching and learning when they had started out the semester expecting to be in person.

Michael Cameron 21:37

And one of the things when we look at the demographic characteristics, there's nothing that really stands out. But when we look at the socio economic characteristics and how they relate to students' experiences on these dimensions, high ability to pay really stands out. So students who reported a higher ability to pay reported that they had less difficulty focusing. So about 75% of students overall were saying they had difficulty focusing, but significantly less students who had high ability to pay for the study said that than those who had low ability to pay. Students who had

high ability to pay were less likely to say that their performance had worsened. They were more likely to say the performance had improved, and they were more likely to say that they could figure out the difficult classwork. So there was a really strong, I guess, difference there between the students who had resources available to them from those that didn't, in terms of how they were able to adapt to learning in the online environment.

Michael Cameron 22:54

So then, we asked a bunch of questions about the sorts of resources that students actually had access to. And you'd kind of hoped that most students had access to most of these things because these are the sorts of things that we would want them to have access to, to improve their online learning. So having access to a computer, fortunately, nearly all students had access to a computer. Presumably, those who didn't have access to a computer had access to a tablet or a phone or some other way of engaging. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been able to complete our survey. So we know that they had access to something.

Michael Cameron 23:33

Office supplies, most of them had access to their webcam, same thing, headphones and microphone. These are all around 90% or more of students have access to these things. Even required software and programs, most students had access to those things. The things that less students had access to: a desk, study materials, talking about two thirds of students having those; a good internet connection, which when you're moving to video lectures or when you're moving to Zoom, as we as we all know, you need a good internet connection for these things, but about a third of students reported that they didn't have access to a good internet connection.

Michael Cameron 24:14

And perhaps even worse than that, only slightly more than half had a quiet place to study. And it's a point that we'll come back to a little bit later. Having access to a printer, probably the least important of all of these things, but only about 45% of students had access to a printer. And in terms - there were no real strong differences by demographic or socio economic characteristics in access to the most - in access to these things. And I guess that reflects that for most of these items most students had access to them. But but the one thing that did jump out was the students who had moved home were much less likely to have a quiet place available for study. I think that's important for us to recognise as well. I mean, those students who were in situ on campus and then had to move home probably were moving back to an environment that was already very crowded with family and siblings and so on, they were much less likely to have a quiet place available for study.

Michael Cameron 25:26

So what was studying at home like? Well, we asked them about their confidence, their confidence in using different things or finding information and so on. So this was the proportion of students who either agreed or strongly agreed that they're confident in firstly, using online communication platforms. Nearly 100% of students said that they were comfortable with using email and messaging, which I don't think should be a surprise to any of us. Browsing online information, again, more than 90% confident in using the online teaching platforms like Moodle or Blackboard or whatever learning management system the university users.

Michael Cameron 26:08

Most students, again, were confident in that sharing digital content; about 85% of students were confident in that. Using Zoom or Teams or Skype or any of those sort of collaboration or video tools, more than 85%, again were confident with that using software programs that were required for these studies, were getting down to around 75%. And then applying advanced settings to some software and programs, less than half of students were confident, confident with them. There were no strong or consistent differences here by demographics or by socio economic characteristics.

Michael Cameron 26:57

The last thing we asked about was about students' emotional experiences, their emotions during lockdown. And here's we think sort of really jumped out. Because about two thirds of students reported that they were feeling frustrated. And about two thirds of students reported that they were feeling anxious, and nearly half of students were bored. And then all of the other emotions were much less prevalent. So that's hopelessness, hopefulness, anger, pride, relief, joy, and shame. Those were all, less than a third of students were experiencing any of those things.

Michael Cameron 27:41

Interestingly, when we look at the differences by demographic care categories, female students were more likely to be feeling frustrated and anxious, and they were less likely to be feeling proud. And the older students that's those who were aged over 30, they were less likely to report being anxious or bored or hopeless, which presumably means that the younger students were more likely to be feeling anxious or bored or hopeless during lockdowns.

Michael Cameron 28:22

So turning to the qualitative side, I'm not going to label the qualitative side too much. That's in the paper, and I invite you to read it. I could spend a lot of time drilling down into some of the quotes from the paper, but we identified that there were three overarching themes and what the

students were saying. They were about collectivity, about emotions, and about higher education more generally. There were sub themes in each of those themes, and we've given some examples related to those in the paper, so feel to read a little bit more about that there.

Michael Cameron 29:02

But the strongest thematic aspect actually goes back to the last thing I was talking about from the quantitative work, which is the number of comments that actually express different types of emotional responses to COVID-19 or the lockdown. So some examples of quotes that - from the open ended question. Alien, stressful, unreal threat, it's all been quite unknown, it's been incredibly stressful financially and also in terms of future life prospects regarding work, study and travel, in particular. And if we had to sort of generalise across all of the comments that we received, there was a - students were feeling a lot of uncertainty. They were feeling a lot of anxiety. They're feeling a lot of frustration with the university, frustration with the authorities more generally. And all of these things were sort of interrelated to each other, so difficult to disentangle the emotional responses that students were giving us from their responses more generally.

Michael Cameron 30:14

So, how did our students, New Zealand students, compare with the international students? Well, on the whole, the New Zealand students seem to be quite satisfied to the extent that you can be with suddenly been confronted with something that's very different from what you signed up for in the beginning. They seem to be quite satisfied with the change to teaching and learning that's switched to online. And suddenly, they were more satisfied than students from other countries. So if we looked back at some of those quantitative results that I presented earlier, New Zealand students showed a much higher level of satisfaction with teaching and administrative support than the global sample did, generally.

Michael Cameron 30:55

Aside from that, most of the results were kind of similar to the international sample, except when we get to the emotional response. And so New Zealand students reported being much more frustrated than students from other countries. So 66.1% of the New Zealand students reported being frustrated. Internationally, that was 39.1%. And our students reported being more anxious as well. 64.5% of New Zealand students reported being anxious, and that was 39.8% for the international sample.

Michael Cameron 31:36

One thing that I think really came through strongly in this study was equity, and in particular, the difference between students who had high ability to pay and low ability to pay. So students with a high ability to pay showed much greater resilience. And that wasn't just true for New Zealand as well. When we look at the international sample, we see something similar. Most students with high ability to pay were much different in terms of how well they were able to respond or how badly the shift affected their learning, self reported, of course. So students with low ability to pay, they reported higher levels of difficulty focusing, they were significantly more likely to report that their performance had worsened and much less likely to say that their performance had improved, less likely to report confidence with mastering skills, and figuring out how to do the most difficult classwork. And so that was similar again, with the international sample.

Michael Cameron 32:39

I guess one of the limitations that we faced though in doing this work was that things that we would have been interested in in the New Zealand context, were less important in the international context. And so we missed out on some things that we thought we would really like to know about, and in relation to equity, it would have been really nice for us to know whether there were differences by ethnic group, and whether there were differences by disability status. But those questions weren't asked in the international survey, and we didn't have any control over that. So just to head off any questions. I'm sure I had anticipated your questions about whether Māori and non Māori students in particular, or whether students with disabilities and without, were going to be different. We simply can't answer those questions.

Michael Cameron 33:32

So what do we learn from a study like this? Well, studies of online learning are often problematic. They're problematic because of selection bias. The types of students who sign up for online learning are meaningfully different from students who study in person so a naive comparison of students online to students in person is never really gonna tell us whether online is better than in person or the other way around. On the other hand, our study doesn't really answer that question either because we forced every student online. And while forcing all students online might be one way of getting at some answer to that question, it was the contextual factors. Of course, we did it in an environment where - was incredibly stressful, students were frustrated and anxious, we know as a result of that. So it really, this study doesn't tell us very much at all about whether studying online is better or worse than studying in person. So we need to be very careful about how we interpret the results.

Michael Cameron 34:38

What I say it does show us that most but not all students cope well with online study. And most but not all students are resilient to even dramatic upheavals on their study. And I think both of those things are kind of important because it's not just during pandemics that students' study may be disrupted where everything gets to shift online. We've seen that as well during the earthquakes in Christchurch, where we had similar disruptions to students' study experiences, and our results speak to that to the sense that that students are actually quite resilient when you have to make dramatic changes.

Michael Cameron 35:20

However, a couple of things that we can really take away is that communication is really important, keeping students informed is really important as well. I mean, students were less satisfied with the PR and social media and stuff strategies of the universities than they were with teaching staff, for instance. And to some extent that might be the students were identifying that the teaching staff were also under a lot of pressure. But we also know that students were feeling a great degree of uncertainty. And keeping students informed, keeping these lines of communication open is really important for reducing that uncertainty for students.

Michael Cameron 36:05

And emotional and mental health support is going to be really important when we go through these changes. We know that there's a mental health crisis going on. These sorts of dramatic shifts, of course, just doubled down on that. And when we think about where students were least satisfied with the support they were getting, one of those was counseling services. I think that that speaks to just how much pressure the students and indeed the counselors were under at that time.

Michael Cameron 36:35

So just to finish a little bit of an epilogue, what's happened since then, this is not on the paper, of course, universities have moved back to in person study. Interestingly though, some of the changes got better since. So a lot of lecturers, because of the disruption, they were forced to revisit their assumptions about teaching and learning, whether that's online and in person. Some lecturers have maintained a lot of the things that they shifted to, that they were forced to shift to that at the time, they probably thought was second best, some of them have adopted those and retained them, even though we've now moved mostly back to in person study.

Michael Cameron 37:21

So it's kind of interesting - there was a study a few years ago, which looked at disruptions to commuting patterns in London when some of the public transport was unavailable. And people

who used to take certain routes when they're going to and from work, commuting in the morning and evenings. Of course, they couldn't do that anymore. But then when public transport was restored, some of them continued on the new routes that they've discovered. So there's something to be said for sometimes just disrupting people and allowing them to find better ways of doing things. And I think that if we, if there's one positive thing that's coming out of the pandemic, that's probably been one of the things from the perspective of teaching and learning is that some lecturers have really been forced to adjust their approach and have actually found things that were better for them and for the students.

Michael Cameron 38:15

Interestingly, the students who started their studies in 2020 became kind of socialised to online study. So even when we moved back to in person, those students who started their studies in 2020 appeared to prefer to continue online, even though they could have come to class. And then, the reverse has happened as well. I teach first year economics and I can tell you that the first year cohort has moved back the other way. These are students who would have been in year 11 during the lockdowns in 2020. They haven't been quite so socialised to online study. In their experience, because they were a bit younger, might have not been quite so good. But they certainly seem to prefer in person classes much more so than last year's or the 2020 classes going through.

Michael Cameron 39:14

And that's the presentation. I'm happy to take any questions. Shall I stop sharing, Kristina?

Kristina Hoepfner 39:23

Thank you, Michael. That would be wonderful, so that we can see each other. And thank you so much for this summary of the article, and I'm really happy to actually have all three co-authors of this paper in the room. So not just Michael, but also Barbara and to Gemma, thanks so much for joining us today. And so audience, please still feel free to direct all of your questions to all three of them so that they can also chime in and I see that Simon already has his hand up. So over to you Simon.

Simon Atkinson 39:59

I do. I'm sitting in a strange space. So can you hear me okay? Good.

Kristina Hoepfner 40:05

Yes.

Simon Atkinson 40:05

Thank you. So you've also got one of the editors of the journal. So very delighted to have published it. So sort of a two part of questions, sort of for all of you. The first, I don't expect you to be able to give me an answer, but has there been any study of any comparative differences between the two institutions? Have you been sort of sharing your dirty laundry? Although I wouldn't expect it to be shared more publicly than that? And sort of beyond that, is, because it was a large international study, has there been an opportunity to identify which of those institutions are seen perform, take counseling, for example, who performed really well, and whether there's been an opportunity to build off the back of that in terms of identifying good practice or best practice in any of those fields? Hopefully, that makes sense.

Michael Cameron 41:06

Shall I answer those questions, team? Okay, both're both nodding, so I guess that's over to me. Yes, we could compare between the two institutions. So we could have compared Waikato with Victoria. I'm not sure that it would be necessarily fair to make that comparison, though. So we've chosen not to do so. I mean, the other universities chose not to participate. So simply singling out the two that did choose to participate and then saying this one was good and this one was not is probably unfair on both of them because we don't know how they rate relative to the other six who decided not to participate.

Michael Cameron 41:46

As for the second question, looking across countries, in terms of which countries where students more or less satisfied with the different academic and teaching support that they got? I think the International report does that to some extent. But I don't think it really goes as far as answering your question, Simon, as to what is it about those countries that lead to them doing well or less well on particular dimensions. And to be honest, the survey is not going to answer that question for us anyway, right? Surveys are not very well equipped to answer that particular question. But you're right, in particular counseling, it would be good to know which countries were doing well because the students across all countries were all facing the same sort of challenges, and even though it seems like our students were in particular, more frustrated and anxious, I can tell you in some of the other countries, their students were actually angry, as opposed to frustrated or anxious, and then then may well be worse.

Simon Atkinson 43:01

I think it's really difficult, isn't it to work out how the dislocation, social, cultural dislocation was experienced because we didn't, you couldn't pretest for it.

Michael Cameron 43:14

No.

Simon Atkinson 43:14

There's really no benchmarking. So and it's all self reported.

Michael Cameron 43:18

Yeah.

Simon Atkinson 43:19

So it's not impossible, but a large portion of sample just had really crappy domestic arrangements [laughs], when they got home, and another country might have had people who had really great healthy, personal relationships. It's so hard to control those. I think you've done it, you certainly you presented the data very clearly. So it's good article. And the study as a whole, like you say, it's, it feels like it's slightly incomplete, inevitably. There's always other questions that you would like to go back and ask.

Michael Cameron 43:53

If only we could anticipate that these things were gonna happen and field the survey in advance. I think we could pretest the things, you know.

Simon Atkinson 44:02

The next one.

Michael Cameron 44:05

[laughter] Dianne.

Dianne Forbes 44:08

Thanks. Thanks, Michael. I have done a little bit of work in this area, too, and we've cited your study because I really, I have read the article and enjoyed it tremendously. And there's so much coming out of it that we've been able to affirm similar patterns. So my main question is, are you publishing any more in the area?

Michael Cameron 44:30

Not with this particular study. We could have. So the team from Ljubljana did come back to us around fielding a follow up study. But I kind of felt that because we only got 147 students participating the first time around, I wasn't talking that we were going to get a lot the second time around and that it was going to actually add much value. So I chose to chose not to participate the

second time around. Are we doing more in this particular area? Not specific to this, but I have got other research which is looking at students' responses to the flexible environment that we gave them after we came back out of lockdown. So something I probably should have said in the epilogue was that at Waikato, we're giving students or have been giving students sometimes two options for papers. One that's more online and one that's more in person. And I've got some early research related to that based on my own classes in 2021 as to which students choose which options. And so, so there are some follow up work, but it's not, I guess, not directly related to this, but it's not it's sort of Yeah, yeah,

Dianne Forbes 45:51

Nevertheless, likely inspired by this. So that's good to know. I'll keep an eye out for it.

Kristina Hoepfner 45:58

Thank you, Michael. I also have a quick question. The study focuses very much on the students. And often I was like, yeah, and why is that? Why is that? How can we make that even clearer why certain answers were the way they were. And I was completely stoked that more than 50% actually had a printer, when I look around [laughs] where people were carrying the printers from the office home, but hardly any office worker would have actually had the printer. And so that was probably the, in a way, the funniest moment of the survey, if one can say that a survey is funny, especially in this context. But my question, actually, centres a bit more around the lecturers in the university because in your recommendations at the end or looking forward, some of your recommendations are that transparency, kind of being prepared for whatever you can or cannot be prepared, having tools on hand, of course, looking after the students in particular wellbeing and mental wellness, but also, since we are talking especially here about open, online, flexible, and distance learning, have you seen any changes maybe even just at the University of Waikato actually, rather than trying to also encompass Victoria, since we don't have anybody from there here; have you seen any changes where you can say there has been innovation also in in the teaching team or amongst the learning designers so that you can make incremental changes because of course, the emergency remote teaching was very different from what the normal online or flexible learning classroom would look like.

Michael Cameron 47:46

So I think there's there's a couple of aspects to your question, Kristina. Firstly, we - and this is probably not what you were asking, but I'm gonna answer it anyway. We didn't ask about teaching staffs experiences. So while we talked a little bit about the emotional impact on students, we don't know anything about the emotional impact on teachers or indeed, administration support staff, either. They were all facing the same things as what students were. But setting that aside, there's

sort of two two aspects to the way things have changed since then, I think. There's how the institution has responded, and there's how individual teaching staff have responded. And so the institution's response has been a little bit top down, at least in at least in my experience. And my experience is, of course, coloured by the fact that I'm in the Management Faculty here in the Management School has put in place a policy that we have to be - that all of our papers have to be taught in such a way that students don't have to be on campus. And that's been pushed down heavily from above. I know that that that that approach is unique to our particular faculty and isn't the same across the university as a whole.

Michael Cameron 49:06

But individual staff have responded as I said, they were forced to do things that they wouldn't necessarily have done. In other circumstances, some staff had gone back pretty much to doing the same thing that they were doing before the pandemic. Other staff have changed entirely. I have colleagues here who, prior to the pandemic, were doing all teaching in person, found that teaching online worked really well for them during the pandemic to the extent that it could, but then even coming back afterwards, they've retained the online elements that they developed because it worked so well for them and they feel like it worked well for their students as well. So there's been a whole range of responses. Gemma, Barbara, do you want to add anything to that?

Gemma Piercy 50:01

One of the things that really has, I think that's been incredibly useful is our professional development team has a twice daily drop in session. And we - you can, it's called 'Ask me Anything'. And it is. It's all built around dealing with the online teaching tools like our platform Moodle and things like that. And it's really interesting, it's been quite an important session for them as a team, as well as for the wider staff. Like it was an absolute lifeline when the changes were happening, but yeah, it's still highly used. And I think it's been really key in ensuring that their team is utilised much more widely. You know, our teaching professional development team is often - you sort of, you'd kind of see the same people at the workshops, you know, just the whereas, though the universal nature of this experience has meant that a lot of people have been really, really engaged with their pedagogy in a deep way, in a sustained way, which is, I think, pretty wonderful. But yeah, I just wanted to add that that 'Ask Me Anything' session is I think quite fundamental.

Barbara Fogarty-Perry 51:27

I think if I could add to that, at Otago Polytech, which is not the University of Waikato, I have to say, but our experience was the School of Community Health and Wellbeing and we were training counselors in disability and mental health workers, so very much hands on. The staff only had one

hour training on Teams before we went into lockdown, and then it was extremely rushed and difficult. So a lot of them really struggled because of that two day period that you talked about Michael, which is true was such a rush to go when, and a lot of them were learning by doing and what you're saying Gemma, we had a weekly, well first start, they started daily, but then it was sort of weekly for people who didn't know what they were doing, it's lecturers.

Barbara Fogarty-Perry 52:16

So I think there was initially a lot of dissatisfaction from students. And the other factor I would like to add is I did actually request the New Zealand polytechs to join in the survey, but they had decided around the same time to actually do their own survey. Which I did see the results, but it was a four question survey. It was quite different to ours, and it was very, I'd shown it to Michael, but it was very brief and quite particular to polytechs. The other study that's probably good to alert people to is the Akuhata-Huntington study from Otago University that we found it really interesting and our review, because it was the Otago Māori Students Association. And that's one if you want to delve into that area a little bit more, that was one that we came across, it was very interesting. And they had 300 students. So this was quite a big survey compared to ours.

Barbara Fogarty-Perry 53:19

But yeah, it's just interesting. I think since going back at the polytech, some people like you're saying have actually really adopted things. Some other people have gone back to what they're doing but else is probably a lot more hands on and going out into the community in terms of the course and you know, placements really essential and all that so that supervision and mentoring is really important, so yeah, I think that some the challenge for us in online.

Kristina Hoepfner 53:52

Thank you so much for sharing that aspect and also taking us beyond the survey, Michael, with the the epilogue and also Barbara and Gemma for chiming in and talking about your experiences since that survey. And it's definitely good to have other instruments there as well. And Dianne, I will make sure to include the link in our resources when we send out the video so that others can also read your paper. So thanks so much for sharing. Now - Malcolm, last question.

Malcolm Roberts 54:27

Just a question. The students showed like - they're very anxious and frustrated over the lockdown period with their online learning. Were you able to find out why? Like was it the social isolation at home or was it their lack of social learning?

Michael Cameron 54:57

Yeah thanks, Malcolm. I think this comes back to Simon's point as well. We don't know why they reported being frustrated or anxious. We also don't know how frustrated or anxious they were feeling before the pandemic. So we can't actually even answer the question of whether they were more frustrated or anxious during than before or indeed after. So that's that's just a limitation that we've got to live with with the survey nature. I mean, if we were doing this ourselves, rather than as part of the international study, we probably would have done a little bit more qualitative work, which would have helped us to really understand the reasons why people were feeling the way that they were feeling, particularly when it came out so strongly in the survey. But yeah, I appreciate the question. Certainly can't really answer it, Malcolm.

Simon Atkinson 55:50

Even so. Sorry, go...

Malcolm Roberts 55:54

Over the COVID lockdown, my - our programme is delivered 100% online. And for our students, it made no difference to their online learning. But we noticed a very high increase in the need for pastoral care...

Dianne Forbes 56:14

Yeah.

Malcolm Roberts 56:14

... from the tutor's perspective, and that being flexible, difficulty meeting assignment dates, personal circumstances, things like that. So and the students reported satisfaction with being able to get an immediate response from the tutors, and also the fact that the tutors cared for their learning. And that's what they kind of craved for was that someone was betting on their side as far as the learning goes.

Michael Cameron 56:48

Yeah, and I think that probably accords with the results that we found where they were most satisfied with teaching staff and with tutors than they were with the with the other sources of support from the university.

Gemma Piercy 57:02

It also correlates really well with general literature on online learning - that relationship with the tutor is kind of core to making online learning experiences. But I just wanted to add, while we can't definitively say anything about the frustration, the sense of frustration and anxiety, the long

answer that one long answer that was given, there were some things, there were some patterns, because some people wrote quite a, you know, quite a bit and you know, there were things like dealing with being a parent and how difficult that was because the kids were at home, and the other partner were having to work and they're studying and working. So that pattern came up. And yeah, so those are the sorts of things. So there were frustrations that were kind of triggered from being at home in this environment being locked down. So yeah, but yeah, we can't, they weren't - obviously not everyone wrote down things like that. They're not everyone shared that sense of frustration.

Barbara Fogarty-Perry 58:19

[speaking on top of each other] I think the whole equity factored there true, Gemma, came through quite strongly driven as well.

Gemma Piercy 58:30

Yeah.

Barbara Fogarty-Perry 58:31

Access to resources. And if you don't have what you need to study, very difficult for people.

Gemma Piercy 58:36

Yeah, no definitely.

Kristina Hoeppe 58:38

I think that is a good point for us to stop and remind everybody if they haven't already read the article in the Journal to take it and hand and dissect it a bit more. And, yes, not just focus so much on the why, because we can or the article and survey couldn't enter that necessarily, but see, kind of what you can make with the data, how it compares to your own experience because I think all of you have actually been teaching through that period. And so all of us have that lived experience of having gone through the lockdown. And then maybe it does encouraged you to have some of those conversations with students. Now, of course, it's very different because it's very much hindsight two years, three years afterwards, but there, it's close by that people will remember it and so we'll see what comes out. There's the study that Dianne pointed to and I also look forward to a webinar that we are going to have with Dianne later in the year on some topic of flexible and online and distance learning. And so I'd really just encourage you to engage with the article, with a survey but also, I guess, contact Michael, Barbara, and Gemma, if you have any follow-up questions, or maybe want to rope them into another study or see what they have planned more concretely.

Kristina Hoepfner 1:00:09

Before I let you go, I do want to point you to our next webinar that we are organising, actually in exactly a month on the 18th of May. It is in conjunction with EdTech New Zealand. And since its TechWeek, everything revolves around AI, Artificial Intelligence, not academic integrity, though that might play a role as well. But yes, have looked a little bit at AI both for the schooling sector and also the tertiary sector. So I look forward toward this panel of experts and growing experts. And I'm really stoked to have a colleague from Australia on the panel who has been researching in that area as an early career researcher in a lab that is led by George Siemens. In June, we will be looking at bicultural principles of online learning, that is a book you might have already heard about it where Arapera Card and Rosina Merry are editors. And it is a book that shares the experiences and the research from Te Rito Maioha in particular, but I think is very applicable also to the wider tertiary sector. So the information about that webinar will be shared shortly on the FLANZ website, and if you're subscribed to any updates, also through Humanitix, you will get a notification immediately. And before we go, just to round us up, I'd like to thank all of you very much for having been here and would like to close with a karakia so that we can then leave the space and move forward and outside again to returning to our activities. Kia whakairia te tapu. Kia wātea ai te ara. Kia turuki whakataha ai. Kia turuki whakataha ai. Haumi e. Hui e. Tāiki e! Kia ora.