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Research on future of e-learning in wānanga

A better understanding of how the Māori tertiary sector is adapting to e-learning is the focus of a joint research project undertaken by a Massey postgraduate student and funded by the Innovation Partnership.

Lindsay Baxter, who is also responsible for Lead Strategy and Performance at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Te Puna Mātauranga, in Te Awamutu, is the inaugural recipient of the Innovation Partnership Fellow, Digital Education, awarded this year.



She will investigate current approaches in New Zealand's wānanga on the role and uptake of digital resources in teaching and learning with the professional focus on how wānanga are strategically adapting and changing at an organisational level to embrace e-learning. Her research question is: *"What are the characteristics of being a wānanga that influence how e-learning strategies are developed and implemented?"*

She wants to find out what has been successful in the sphere of e-learning in Māori immersion contexts, as well as the level of planning and development involved. She says digital innovation in learning has probably been more ad hoc than strategic in terms of responding to rapid technological changes, while learner expectations and needs are shifting towards a life-long learning model.

Ms Baxter gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (e-learning) at Massey University in 2015, and has been employed at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Te Puna Mātauranga for over 10 years.

Dr Maggie Hartnett, a specialist in digital education at Massey's Institute of Education and supervisor for Ms Baxter's research, says the digital education scholarship aims to increase capacity and capability building in New Zealand by addressing gaps in the quality and quantity of research in this area.

The study will examine cultural aspects of digital education and how this might flourish in the digital era, she says. "Digital tools and new trends come and go," she says. "In education it's about creating learning environments that meet the needs of learners."

The completed study will be shared and disseminated through Innovation Partnership's networks as part of its mission to grow and enhance digital education.

The Innovation Partnership is a network of organisations that support digital innovation in New Zealand across education, business and government, and is sponsored by Google, Chorus and InternetNZ.

Caption: Lindsay Baxter

