



# SET COURSE

Product Validation:  
Secondary and Masters Students

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April 2018

International Education Product development



New  
School  
Thinking

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Two student focus groups were conducted as a follow up to the initial 'Set Course' workshop held at Vodafone Xone in February 2018. During the Xone workshops representatives from South Island's three Universities, Lincoln, Otago and Canterbury co-created five innovative education products and formalised them into a lean canvases. The objective of the student focus groups was to test these product concepts and unlock further insight from the students.

## THE APPROACH

Both students cohorts went through four phased process to uncover insights.

### 1. Empathy / persona maps

Students interviewed each other using a empathy mapping tool to uncover their drivers and motivations.

### 2. Landscape exercise

An abridged version of the landscape map was carried out by the students to compare their thoughts and priorities to the Universities.

### 3. Course evaluation (Paper Prototype)

From the concepts devised in the first workshop, single page course promo pieces were created. Thorough feedback was given.

### 4. Visual moodboard

Due to language barriers a visual exercise was undertaken to compile a visual snapshot of what is currently inspiring them.

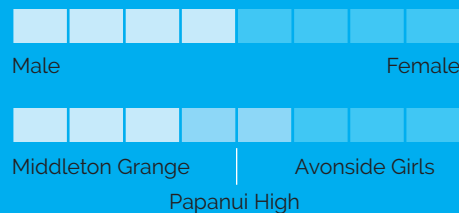
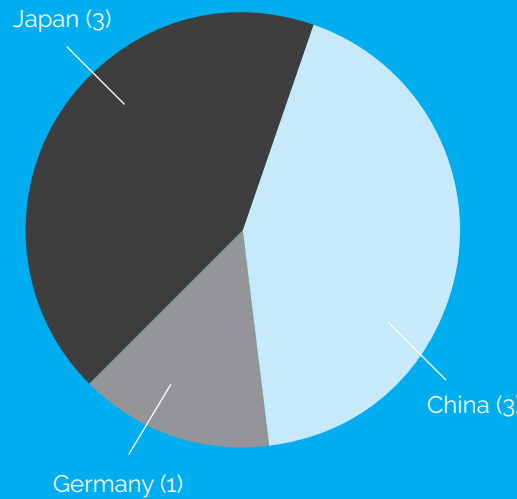
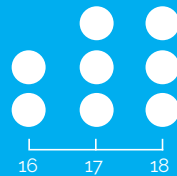
# FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS

The focus groups were curated as a platform for personal insight rather than statistical information. Students attending the focus groups did so voluntarily, therefore there were skews in the diversities of both groups.

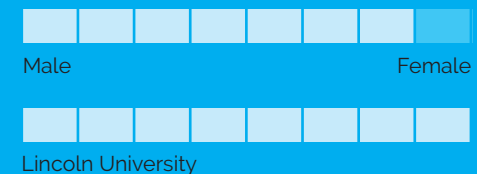
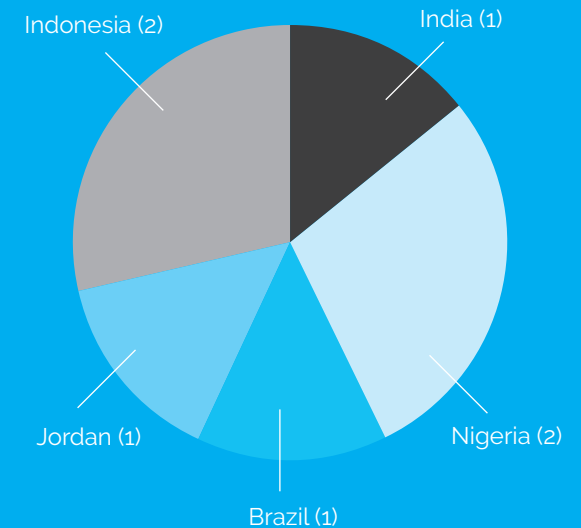
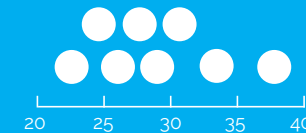
**The main skews to highlight are:**

- The Secondary School group was predominantly Asian
- The Masters group was 100% represented by Lincoln Students
- The Masters group was majority male

## SECONDARY STUDENTS



## MASTERS STUDENTS



# Ambitions

1. What do you want to Achieve?
2. Where do you want to go? What are you passionate about?

1) Get a good job that work with good company  
 2) Get a good time with 4 years abroad (20 NZ2 in Germany)  
 3) Make money, 7 years

# EMPATHY MAPPING

Both student groups conducted one-on-one interviews with each other using an Empathy Map. The objective was for them to get to the bottom of the 'human experience' of studying abroad. They then presented back to the group their key findings for further discussion.

# World View

1. How do you think about your decision making? (decisions? attention?)
2. How do you feel about your decision making? (making, I trust my)
3. How do you think about your decision making? (use of)
4. How do you think about your decision making? (uses in cards, rural development, stay)

Barriers  
 1) Extreme weather  
 2) Kiwis are not  
 For away from part of the world  
 2) Information need met  
 3) With the help of NZAID  
 Not be

# Barriers

1. Are you experiencing any Barriers? Do you have the information you need? Can you finance yourself? Do you have access to expert advice?

# Influences

1. What are your influences?
2. What are your friends saying? What are your parents saying? Teachers? And Other influences?

1) friends, families  
 2) friends say I am lucky, they think my decision making is good  
 3) Parents, a bit apprehensive about going to be a far away country  
 4) Other influences - NZaid decisions  
 5) Personal life - Not being married yet

# Feelings

## SECONDARY STUDENTS

## MASTERS STUDENTS

	SECONDARY STUDENTS	MASTERS STUDENTS
AMBITIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have clear career ambitions</li> <li>• Will continue Tertiary study in another country (e.g. UK or Australia)</li> <li>• Continue travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help other people in home country</li> <li>• Raise standard of living</li> <li>• Get a good job in their field of practice</li> </ul>
WORLD VIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World views don't define decision making</li> <li>• Sighted overcrowding and pollution as major issues</li> <li>• Want a full 'systems change'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study aligns strongly to world view</li> <li>• Optimistic the world is transitioning towards a sustainable future</li> </ul>
INFLUENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New friends and people around them</li> <li>• Friends before family</li> <li>• Activities through education providers</li> <li>• Open to exploring all possibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends think they are lucky and successful</li> <li>• Pressure to succeed (family)</li> </ul>
FEELINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong sense of adventure and spontaneity</li> <li>• Feel confident and resilient as result of studying abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident they have made the right decision</li> <li>• Nervous about economic / political issues back home and their ability to have an influence</li> </ul>

# Opportunities

1. Where are the opportunities coming from?
2. Where are the openings? What industries are most attractive?

Handwritten notes on a sticky note, partially visible on the right edge of the page.




## STUDENT PERSONAS

The empathy mapping process uncovered two distinctly different student personas. The Secondary students had become more resilient and independent while studying abroad. While they had clear goals, they still have the desire to embrace new cultures and keep an open mind.

After gaining deep insight into industries that New Zealand excels in (eg Agri-tech), Masters students were driven to use their new knowledge to help their own local communities back home. They can foresee big challenges ahead, but believe that the world needs their skills to improve lives and livelihoods.

### SECONDARY STUDENTS



*"I am open-minded and can back myself to take on anything, anywhere."*

### EXPLORING & MOBILE

### MASTERS STUDENTS



*"I want to take my expertise home to help other people and improve our living standards."*

### GIVING BACK

## LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The landscape exercise carried out with students mirrored the questions raised during the Tertiary Sector workshop.

### GAPS AND CONTRADICTIONS

While the differences between the tertiary stakeholder group and students were not extreme, there were a number of nuances that students considered important. Some of contrasts were further validated in the course evaluation stage.

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## NOTABLE CONTRASTS

### Quality of education vs non-competitive

Both groups felt that the pace of learning in New Zealand was the most attractive feature. Due to limited opportunities in their home countries, the competitive culture in the education space is discouraging. While quality was still highlighted, it wasn't rarely brought up or questioned.

Students mentioned that the non-competitiveness aligned to a more balanced and healthy lifestyle.

### Why New Zealand?

All Masters students apart from one came to study in New Zealand off the back of scholarships such as NZ Aid. They would not have considered, nor had thought of New Zealand as a study abroad option without finding out about the Scholarship. 'New Zealand is just too far away from the rest of the world.'

### The space to explore new ways of thinking

Students from both levels were here to build an awareness of new perspectives and approaches.

Students also showed a dissatisfaction of the socio-political climates in their home countries. In the Secondary Student's workshop, a 'System Rethink' came up at various stages of the workshop. There was a sense of apprehension expressed during the Masters Workshop of their ability to change existing cultures back home to achieve the living standards we have here in New Zealand.

### Expectations not based on academic excellence

Secondary students found the question 'What are your expectations?' difficult to answer. Effectively they felt they didn't have any major expectations. The concept of having expectations contradicted their open-minded outlook and willingness to embrace new and unexplored territories.

While the expectations of Masters students focussed less on academic achievement as it did on personal improvement and their ability to become more culturally aware.

They felt extremely privileged to be given the opportunity to study in New Zealand and felt that domestic students didn't have the same sense of gratitude or awareness.

# COURSE EVALUATION

(PAPER PROTOTYPE)

Students were asked to evaluate four of the five\* ideated courses from the first workshop. These courses were explained to each student in the form of designed 'rack cards'.

They were asked to rate each course based on relevance, flexibility, desirability and experience, offer any opinions about whether the course was a good fit and then rank the courses in order of preference.

\*The skilled migrant diploma concept is targeted at retrainers therefore wasn't tested with these groups



**ANYTIME, ONLINE** 6 week carousel

**Need more flexibility on how, where and when you study?**

This programme allows you to choose any unit to build your personalised degree.

With intakes starting every six weeks, all year, you can enroll, adapt and try new classes, giving you the freedom to experiment and explore.

**Benefits**

- Online + physical lectures
- Non-sequential - choose any unit level
- Get advice and support 24/7



**GLOBAL CHALLENGE** 3 years

**Want to study with like-minded people who are creating meaningful solutions to global problems?**

An industry focused degree programme that shows evidence of real-world, experience during study.

**Benefits**

- Apply your study to positive change
- Work on industry submitted problems
- Collaborate with students from other disciplines



**NATIONAL EXCELLENCE** 3 years

**Looking for excellence and striving for the best?**

Align your career with a globally 'elite' qualification.

Gain your Under-graduate Degree from New Zealand's top academics across Otago, Lincoln and Canterbury Universities.

**Benefits**

- Options not limited to any one University
- Blended learning at different campuses
- Become a globally recognised graduate
- Scholarships available



**MICRO DEGREE** 6 months

**Want to fast forward your career?**

Select from a range of short papers that have been selected by leading companies as the most relevant to industry.

Build up your credits as you move between jobs.

**Benefits**

- Work at your own pace
- Choose papers that align with your career ambitions
- Endorsed by leading companies

# COURSE EVALUATION: SECONDARY STUDENTS

## #1

### Anytime, online

In terms of ranking, this course outline was the clear favourite. However, while students highly rated the short course options which allowed them maximum flexibility, the online nature came at the price of human contact.

"If I use online, I will lose relationships, it's lonely."

"I like to be around and learn from people in a 'practiced' way."

What appeared to attract students to this programme was the notion that they could study while experiencing other things or working. Working equates to money to experience more (as highlighted in the empathy mapping phase).

It would follow that the main attraction of this course concept is not the fact it's online, but rather that the papers are short, which allows them to adapt and change the volume of their learning to suit their changing needs or circumstances.

## #2

### National Excellence

The concept behind the National Excellence programme was to offer the students the best academics and learning for their needs from any one of the South Island campuses. It ranked slightly higher than the Global Challenge and Micro Degree option due mainly to the opportunity to experience more from different campuses, which provides "new thinking" and "deeper learning".

One student did comment that she believes it's about "how you learn", rather than learning from "the best". She believed that you learn more if you have a good relationship with your tutor. Some of the Asian students also commented that it was 'competition' between elite students that they were trying to get away from in their home country.

The ability to learn from different places seemed to be the most attractive quality of this course for the undergrad market as it provides a much fuller experience.

## =3

### Micro Degree

The attraction to the Micro Degree was the short time frame - the ability to "fast forward" your career. The empathy process highlighted that although some of the student had an idea of what they wanted from a career, they were still exploring options and keeping an open mind. Therefore this option is more suited to mid-career or post-graduate level students as originally intended.

The fact the papers are endorsed by industry did achieve a high mark in relevance, and the short "fast tracked" time frame provided good flexibility, yet the sample group were still in a stage of discovery, so the extremely specific nature of the micro degree didn't resonate as much as the more 'open-minded' previous options.

## =3

### Global Challenge

Surprisingly, this study package didn't rank well with the Secondary Student sample group as a whole, but independently, the two female Japanese and German students who ranked it highly, loved it. This programme has a very specific target market, which showed through in the results.

A key factor influencing this result was that the majority of the group didn't project a strong 'world view' during the empathy mapping phase, therefore the primary draw to the Global Challenge, which is to solve 'wicked' global and local problems, isn't yet on their radar.



# COURSE EVALUATION: MASTERS STUDENTS

## #1

### Global Challenge

In complete contrast to the Secondary School students, the Global Challenge was ranked, almost unanimously as the clear favourite.

Students commented that the course was 'close to real life'. They liked that you could work with 'like-minded' students, and that the programme felt practical and hands on.

Given that the Masters student cohort was made up of 100% Lincoln University students may have had an influence on their preference. However, this programme shows an ideal fit between predominant persona trait of wanting to 'give back' and help their local community.

## #2

### National Excellence

This programme offered more choice to the student. It was ranked a clear second across the board by most the students.

However there were some conflicting thoughts offered. While most students appreciated the quality of the education that this programme represents, they were split on the concept of working from multiple campuses. Some liked the thought of choosing a campus, while others didn't think it was practical for them.

This pan-university approach could be more attractive if the student located themselves at their primary University, but had access to other participating Universities (phyically of virtually) only when necessary.

## #3

### Micro Degree

The Micro Degree did receive a lot of positive feedback due to it being flexible, practical and market oriented.

The reduced time was also cited as a benefit, in that students can have a global impact sooner.

However, the reason it wasn't ranked as highly was down to having 'less student and academic experience'. There was a sense from the Masters students that you wouldn't recieve the depth of knowledge within such a short window.

Therefore, this programme is more suited to the undergraduate level aimed at retrainers seeking to fast track a career change. This would need further validation with the retrainers market.

## #4

### Anytime, online

Most the students were skeptical of the efficiency of online courses. A number commented that they need real life people and places to keep them motivated and engaged.

It was commented by one that this programme was better suited to domestic students rather than internationals. This is understandable given they choose to study aboard to be immersed in new cultures and people.

The flexibilitly of the course didn't make up for the lack of human contact.

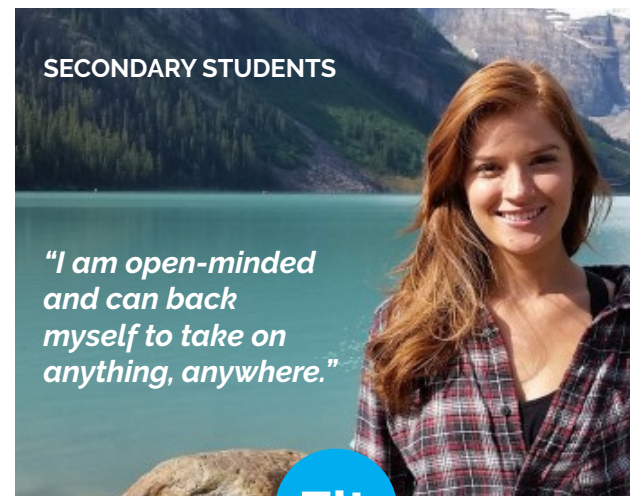
# COURSE EVALUATION ANALYSIS

When the two group personas are mapped against their preferred study packages, the fit becomes clear.

At an undergraduate level, students are still exploring options. They haven't developed a strong world view and prize flexibility so they can enjoy a wide scope of experience to unlock their passion.

Whereas the post-graduate students have recognised that through higher education they have the opportunity to improve living standards back home, having a direct impact within their own community.

## Creative Flexibility



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## Creating Opportunity



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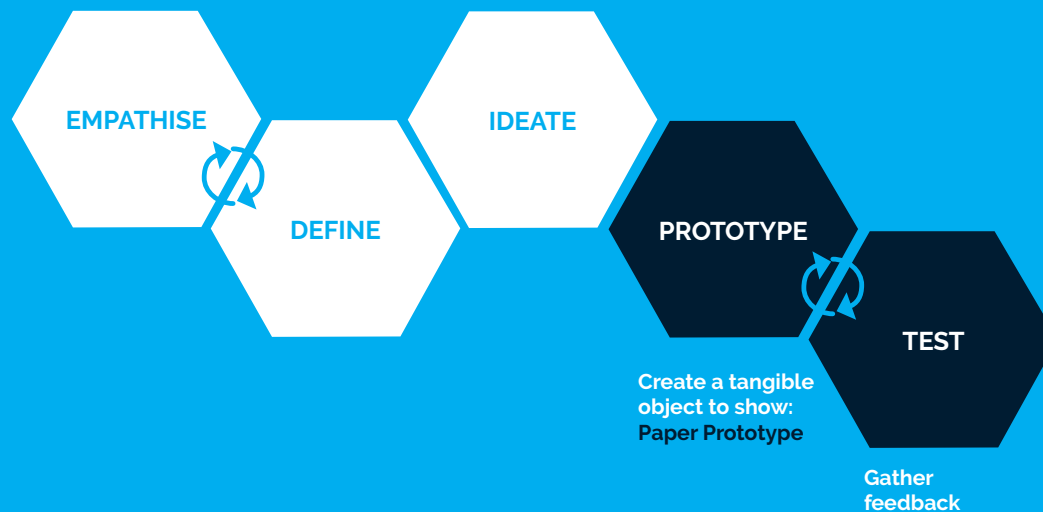
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# NEXT STEPS

3x DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC GROUPS

PRODUCT VALIDATION



Education NZ have identified three discipline specific areas to engage with. Further product ideation with both academics and industry leaders will be conducted and validated with students.

Further validation will be carried out with the retrainee market as both Skilled Migrant Diploma and Micro Masters are directed at this market segment.

**Carl Pavletich**  
carl@fabriko.org.nz  
021 388 245

Fab Lab Chch  
149 Madras Street  
Christchurch Central  
[www.fabriko.org.nz](http://www.fabriko.org.nz)

