Learning for Living
Te Ako mo Te Ora

Assessment for foundation learning
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THE IMPORTANCE OF PURPOSEFUL ASSESSMENT IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND LANGUAGE COURSES

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Introduction

The purpose of this research study is to contribute to an understanding of what is required to enhance the assessment capability of tertiary education providers of learning in literacy, numeracy, and language. The research began with the development of six broad principles of good assessment practice in foundation learning settings. These principles were derived from the relevant research literature combined with ideas expressed by key informants in the sector. The principles provided a framework for examining current assessment practice, in terms of initial/diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment, in 12 diverse foundation-learning settings. The case studies include two work-based programmes, courses that provide individualised and group literacy tuition, a cadetship programme, an ESOL course for refugees and migrants, and a TOPS/Youth Training course. Three workshops, attended by practitioners, policy makers, and researchers, constituted the final stage of the research. They provided a forum for feedback on the draft principles and on the initial analysis of the assessment practice within the case study programmes. The workshops also enabled dialogue about possible strategies that could be used to inform and improve assessment practice.

Assessment principles and practice

Principle One

Transparent assessment goals and clarity of purpose
In the case study programmes a comprehensive learner needs analysis is usually undertaken, often using purpose-developed tools designed to reflect the context of the learning programme. There is a common pattern of great care being taken to ensure that the *initial assessment purpose/goal* was made clear to the individual student. Considerable attention is given to avoid potentially negative impacts of early assessment events on learners' confidence and motivation.
The *summative goals* are variable, reflecting the diverse programme purposes. Some take a broad, informal approach to summative assessment while those programmes linked to qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), for example, take a more formal approach. The use of unit standards gained for the National Certificate in Employment Skills (NCES) or for industry-specific national certificates is viewed by some tutors as motivating and contributing to building the personal and social skills needed for successful employment. In other programmes, however, while the motivational impact of achieving unit standards was acknowledged, tutors feel that they do not meet the actual learning needs of the students.
Goals for *formative assessment* are also dependent upon the overall purpose of the programme. In programmes where learners seek support to develop a specific aspect of their

literacy or numeracy skills—to assist them to improve their performance in some other programme—their personal ownership of their learning challenges and goals contributes to clarity for formative assessment as they work to address the issues raised. In some situations, formative assessment goals are related to the successful use of literacy skills in real-life contexts. In other cases it is less clear how tutors and learners identify, share, and measure success against ongoing, formative learning goals as their programmes evolve. It may be that the formal assessment goal setting is mostly focused at the beginning and end of the programme with limited attention given to its formative use.

Principle Two

Assessment aims to improve learning and pays attention to the needs and interest of the learner and to the process of learning

In the case study programmes the greatest focus of the assessment practice is on the *initial/diagnostic* assessment. There is limited use of standardised tools and in most programmes purpose-developed assessment tools are used. These tools are designed to assess competence, for example in language, and in some cases attitudes to learning. The specific and contextualised nature of these initial diagnostic assessment requires tutors to have a thorough working knowledge of the programme context, such as the workplace, skills in diagnosing literacy and numeracy needs, and an understanding of the learners. Consequently the design and use of contextualised initial assessments requires skills in addition to those that would be expected for sound but routine assessment practice.

A common theme was for *formative assessment* to be ongoing through continual monitoring against the learning plan derived from the initial diagnostic assessment. There are examples of planned formative assessment through regular meetings between learners and tutors to discuss progress against the initial plan and through formative feedback on draft assignments. There are also examples of interactive formative assessment such as the work-based embedded tutor model where, in addition to the individual teaching sessions, there are opportunities for everyday exchanges as learners carry out their routine work. Value is given to self-assessment in a number of programmes, with the ultimate aim of developing independent learners who will continue to improve their skills. The case studies do not give a detailed view of what happens during the actual learning interactions, in particular how the tutors anticipate, and hence plan for, formative assessment opportunities. Similarly the methodology used did not allow us to gather evidence concerning ways in which assessment provided shared feedback that teachers and developers might use to improve practice.

Principle Three

Assessment is valid, reliable, ethical, fair, and manageable

Manageability appeared to be acceptable in most programmes as the assessment was integral to the programme and reporting requirements were clearly specified. There is often, however, a tension between assessment reliability and validity, with most programmes giving priority to validity. This is appropriate given that the purpose of most of the case study programmes is to enable learners to begin their learning journey. Emphasising validity usually means working with the students to ensure that the assessment focuses on meeting their goals, in contexts that are authentic for them. The use of a variety of tasks to provide evidence of learning also helps ensure validity. Moderation can be an important tool for achieving validity (in pre-assessment moderation of task and assessment schedules) and reliability (in post-assessment moderation of actual assessment decisions). We found rather patchy evidence of moderation, most commonly in terms of post-assessment moderation for unit standards.

It is the professional conversation between tutors within one institution and between providers that builds a community of practice and the shared view of standards of performance that

contributes to valid and reliable assessment. In some programmes there was evidence of considerable debate about the initial assessment tools. However, the interpretation of the meaning of these assessments for the next learning steps seems to be related to holding deep expertise and not all those involved in teaching are part of this decision-making process. Some workshop participants expressed concerns that only the most experienced tutors are involved in assessment in some programmes within the foundation learning sector and that funding is the driver for these decisions. As a result of these practices some tutors appear to have limited opportunities for the kind of conversations that build the expertise needed to meet learner needs on the basis of the assessment evidence collected.

Principle Four

Assessment is authentic

Assessment focused on the agreed goals of the learning is a strength of the case studies. That is, assessment is integral to, or at least very closely aligned with, learning experiences and, often, actual work or life contexts.

Principle Five

The assessment is credible to all relevant stakeholders

The assessment strength illustrated through Principle One, transparent assessment goals and clarity of purpose, contributes to the credibility of the various programmes for the relevant stakeholders. As already suggested, the assessment approach within the case studies commonly relates to the overall programme purpose and so appears acceptable to those involved. In terms of national *summative assessment*, this typically involves the use of unit standards that can be credited to various NQF courses, most commonly the NCES, but also other industry-specific certificates. The evidence suggests that employers and students value the NQF-related qualifications, adding to the motivation to succeed with learning.

Principle Six

Assessment is undertaken by tutors with experience and assessment practice is supported by ongoing professional development

The tutors within the case study programmes have a range of qualifications and experience. Many are paid, others are voluntary. While practice varies, paid tutors are entitled to up to 10 days of professional development each year. However, some workshop participants noted disincentives in some programmes within the sector. These include a lack of cover for classes when tutors are involved in professional development, and some providers not viewing tutor development as an investment.

The programmes described in the case studies demand authentic and valid assessment tasks. The judgement of the teachers is critical to identifying the learners' current knowledge and skill in literacy, numeracy, and/or language, as well as in knowing how to support the learner to build on these understandings. Both facets of tutors' work—creating and interpreting assessment tools and tasks—demand considerable professional expertise. It is evident that there are tutors with this expertise, many of whom have strong professional links within their respective institutions and nationally via relevant associations and professional groups. However, it is also evident that some tutors are working in relative isolation with few opportunities to share and build their practice. The workshop participants also indicated that while there are signs of a growing will to collaborate within the sector, resources are scarce and there is still competition for learners and so the will to share is limited. The result is

duplication and associated tutor burnout. Some workshop participants thought that qualifications in adult literacy would contribute to building the strength of the sector because at present the marginal nature of the profession, with its lack of relevant advanced qualifications, is limiting its status and so effectiveness.

Purposes of assessment

Three main purposes for assessment can be identified—assessment for accountability and reporting, assessment for teaching and learning, and assessment for lifelong learning.

Assessment for accountability and reporting

All but two of the case study programmes provided were free to the learners. To provide accountability for the public money spent, these organisations participate in quality assurance processes and report to key stakeholders. For this purpose, learner progression is monitored and reported in all programmes. The remaining two, EFTS-funded programmes, are overseen by their institution's academic boards, and they are involved in relevant moderation and monitoring.

Some workshop participants stressed that testing must not be the driver of funding because this can have a distorting effect that is counter to the goals of lifelong learning. They discussed how this plays out with the NCES which was never intended to be a benchmark for literacy, numeracy, and language learning and has led, in some cases, to unit standards assessment having an overbearing influence, driving teaching to the standards rather than to students' needs.

The monitoring organisations of the foundation learning programmes often require a different type of data than that needed to inform the learning goals of individual students. The workshop participants stressed the tension between teaching to the individual learning plan devised with the students and teaching to the outcomes that providers are contracted to deliver.

Assessment for teaching and learning

The case study programmes place a high importance on meeting individual learner needs in the context of the aim of the particular programme. Commonly the aim is to provide a supportive, encouraging learning environment where assessment is integral to the teaching programme. There is also an importance placed on the relationship between learners and tutors and one aim of the initial assessment is often to establish rapport and trust between these two. In terms of assessment, those involved in teaching used information from both informal and formal assessment to focus efforts in relation to individual and group tuition. In the context of the current study it should be noted that assessment did not necessarily focus on literacy, numeracy, and language if the more immediate goal was to achieve certain unit standards for an NQF qualification. This is an issue that bears further investigation. Similarly, this study did not examine the nature of the interactions between tutors and learners and this, too, needs further examination, particularly given that in their study of practice Benseman, Lander, and Sutton (2005) observed tutors highly engaged with their learners, sometimes in situations where pedagogical challenge was less evident.

Assessment for lifelong learning

The goal of most of the case study programmes was to encourage lifelong learning, with assessment for learning intended to help learners become more independent. The assessment approach reinforced this when emphasis was given to self-referral and to self-assessment. The NCES can be one useful vehicle to support this purpose but it is not clear how involved students were in making judgements about how well they had met the

performance criteria for the standards and tasks. This is an important area for further debate given that the research literature on lifelong learning makes it clear that learners do need to be involved in making summative judgements about their learning, not just in making decisions about their progress during the learning (Aikenhead, 1997; Bryce & Withers, 2003).

Recommendations

If tertiary education providers of learning in literacy, numeracy, and language are to enhance their assessment expertise the following is recommended:

- There is an opportunity to build further assessment expertise by supporting professional conversations between tutors who have been involved in designing and using purpose-developed assessment tools. This would enable the sharing and critique of current practice and possibly the dissemination of models of good practice/exemplars.

- It would be helpful to develop a bank of assessment tools, and possibly exemplars and stories of good practice, provided that the introduction of such a resource is supported by professional development. Training would need to cover both use of the tools and their appropriate modification to new settings.

- There is an opportunity to use the data collected in the initial/diagnostic assessments more systematically for formative assessment purposes. Overall, there is a need to develop a greater understanding of the role of formative assessment in supporting learning.

- There is a need to explore how learning outcomes such as motivation and confidence building are valued and assessed alongside the traditional assessment focus on cognitive learning gains. This may require new types of assessment tools, probably self-assessment tools.

- Currently the primary focus of foundation learning programmes appears to be on supporting the individual learner and there is little evidence of the sector working together to build a shared understanding of standards for foundation learning. This is understandable given that such developments need to be co-ordinated and resourced but such linkages would provide greater consistency of assessor judgement across the sector and provide a vehicle for professional growth.

- There is a need to develop a greater shared understanding in the sector of the purposes of assessment—for systems accountability, to support teaching and learning, and to support lifelong learning. From such a shared understanding could come new possibilities for designing assessment tools and processes to meet all three purposes, in a way that places the priority upon assessment that supports the learner and their learning.

- There is a need to further investigate the use of unit standards within the NCES for foundation learning purposes and to explore the development of purpose-designed qualifications.

- National qualifications for tutors working in the foundational learning sector are a priority.

1. Introduction

While there is a significant body of research focused on assessment and learning in the school sector, there is a paucity of studies focused on assessment for literacy, numeracy, and language learning in the tertiary sector. The purpose of this report is to contribute to an understanding of what is required to enhance the assessment capability of tertiary education providers of learning in literacy, numeracy, and language. This sits within the government's overarching goal of lifting the foundation skill levels of learners.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research was contracted to carry out a research study and report on *Exploring assessment in foundation learning settings: Insights into current practices and options for the future.* The Ministry of Education was seeking information:

- about the nature and role of assessment of adult foundation learning in literacy, numeracy, and language;

- as to the different ways providers of foundation education and learning understand, describe, measure, record, and use information about a learner's capability and achievement in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and language (ESOL);

- to gauge whether some of the tools used and their current use are consistent with principles of good use of assessment for learning, to inform policy makers' decisions relating to provider capability in assessment; and

- to provide insights into current provider capability in assessment, that is, using appropriate assessment tools for a range of reasons related to learning, including diagnostic purposes for programme placement or design, formative and summative assessment, and learner progression.

The research involves an exploration and examination of approaches to assessment in selected diverse foundation level programmes in New Zealand. As such, this study is exploratory rather than a national stocktake of assessment instruments. It serves to highlight current assessment practices within the context of a range of tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language programmes. Before describing the research methodology employed (outlined in Chapter 2) it is important to provide the policy context within which this research was undertaken. The research is situated within concurrent initiatives and related to other research in tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language settings. These initiatives and research, detailed below, highlight the challenge faced by New Zealand to ensure people have the foundation skills required to participate in work, education, and the community. Following the overview of related initiatives and research, a description of the National Qualifications Framework and commonly used national qualifications for foundation learners and those available for tutors is provided. The chapter concludes with an outline of the report.

The policy context

In New Zealand the term tertiary education is used to encompass all post-compulsory education and training (Ministry of Education, 2002b). The Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) was set up in 2000 to develop the long-term strategic direction for a tertiary education system to provide all New Zealanders with opportunities for lifelong learning. The TEAC engaged in a series of consultations with the sector, produced four reports, and contributed to the Tertiary Education Strategy and the establishment of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in 2002. The TEC is responsible for implementing the government's Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and its associated priorities. It is also responsible for funding education and training in universities, wänanga, colleges of education, polytechnics, private training establishments (PTEs), industry training organisations, and adult and community education.

The New Zealand tertiary education sector is very diverse (Ministry of Education, 2005b). In 2005 New Zealand has eight universities, three[1] colleges of education, 20 institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), three wänanga, approximately 500 registered private training establishments (PTEs), nine government training organisations, 45 industry training organisations (ITOs), and a number of adult and community education (ACE) providers such as Literacy Aotearoa, Workbase, and ESOL home tutors.

In the same time period other strategy and policy work relevant to the current study took place. Responding to the results of the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), and within the overall aim of lifting adult literacy and numeracy skills, the Adult Literacy Strategy *More than words* was launched (Ministry of Education, 2001). The strategy proposed measures to improve the quality of organisations and people providing literacy education, including through the development of a strong quality assurance system. The strategy signalled initiatives discussed later in this chapter such as the Adult Literacy Achievement Framework (ALAF), the Adult Literacy Quality Mark (ALQM), the Adult Literacy Practitioners Association (ALPA), and the unit standards and qualifications for adult literacy educators. Later, the government released its adult ESOL strategy (Ministry of Education, 2003). The strategy acknowledges the diversity of the ESOL sector, and the variability in types and quality of provision.

The specific context for this current research study is the work programme designed to implement the Tertiary Education Strategy 2004–2007 (TES), and in particular Strategy Three:

Raise foundation skills so that all people can participate in our knowledge society

Objective 14: Significantly improved adult foundation skill levels, achieved through increased access to foundation education in a range of learning contexts
Objective 15: Clearer accountability for quality and outcomes within foundation education, including a greater focus on assessment
Objective 16: A common understanding of the definition of foundation skills and of best practice teaching in this area
Objective 17: Improved linkages between secondary and tertiary education, and improved staircasing for learners within tertiary education.

The TES highlights the importance of foundation education and the expectation that it will grow significantly in the next 3 years:

> …by 2007, foundation education will have grown into a respected and recognised sector and will be given high priority within institutional and employer policy and practices (Ministry of Education, 2002b, p. 39).

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[1] One of the case studies described in this report is based in what was in 2004 one of four colleges of education, that is Auckland College of Education, which is now part of Auckland University.

Foundation skills and Learning for Living

The TES identified the need for the sector, including policy makers, tertiary education organisations, teachers, and learners, to have a common understanding of what might constitute foundation skills. The TES situated foundation learning as equipping the learner for participation in higher level learning, in employment, and as a citizen. The terms "foundation education" and "foundation learning" encompass "core generic", "essential skills", "key skills", and "bridging education".

Literacy, numeracy, and language learning are important components of foundation learning. In policy discussions and official communications the term "Learning for Living" has superseded "foundation learning":

> Learning for Living is about understanding the key competencies that all New Zealanders need in order to participate, develop and achieve in society. It is about ensuring that all adults are able to gain the practical literacy, numeracy and language they need as a foundation for further learning and development, in a context that is relevant to the tasks they perform in everyday life. It is about collaborating with adult learners, tutors, researchers and employers to gather a robust knowledge and evidence-base about effective ways of building these foundations (Ministry of Education, 2005a).

Similarly there is a need to have common understandings of what might be meant by literacy, numeracy, and language. Currently nationally and internationally there are numerous definitions and understandings of these terms. In the 1990s UK policy referred to "basic skills" as the term that covered lower level adult literacy and numeracy. In the wake of the Moser Report and the Skills for Life strategy there is a greater use of the explicit terms literacy, numeracy, and ESOL Coben, Colwell, Macrae, Boaler, Brown, & Rhodes, (2003). However, the concepts of literacy and numeracy do not have commonly agreed definitions:

> 'Numeracy' is a deeply contested and notoriously slippery concept, the subject of lively debate by commentators concerned with the education of adults (p. 9).

Alice Johnson, in a report to the American Youth Policy Forum, referred to the National Institute for Literacy's definition of literacy, which defines literacy as a functional tool to use in everyday living:

> The ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work, and in the community, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential (Johnson, 2001)

The New Zealand organisation Workbase takes a broader view of literacy which encompasses numeracy, language, and more generic skills. For Workbase, literacy is:

> …a complex web of reading, writing, speaking, listening, problem-solving, creative thinking, and number skills (www.workbase.org.nz).

This broader, situated view of literacy underpins many of the case studies in this report.

Related policy, practice, and research initiatives

The overall goal of this research study is to provide insights that may be used by policy makers and practitioners to enhance the capability of providers in assessment for learning in literacy, language, and numeracy. For these insights to be useful they need to be considered within the context of associated developments and current debates. These are described below.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) 1996

The importance of lifting foundation level skills is starkly demonstrated by the findings from a major international survey. The 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), in which New Zealand participated, assessed the English language literacy of a representative sample of 16–65-year-olds (Benseman et al. 2005; Culligan, Arnold, Noble, & Sligo, n.d.; Ministry of Education, 2001). It should be noted that IALS has been questioned in terms of validity, reliability, and comparability (Coben et al. 2003). Nonetheless it does provide the most available and comprehensive picture of the literacy skill levels of New Zealanders. The purpose of IALS was to provide participating countries with an indication of the skill levels of their citizens in relation to the skills needed to function in a modern economy. The survey used "every-day" activities to assess three types of literacy:

1. Prose literacy (understanding and using information from texts);

2. Document literacy (locating and using information in various formats); and

3. Quantitative (applying arithmetic operations to numbers embedded in documents).

Literacy was ranked into five levels in each of the three types. The results showed a strong correlation between the results in prose literacy and employment status, with 66 percent of the short-term unemployed and 85 percent of the long-term unemployed scoring in the bottom two levels. Overall the results for New Zealand showed that:

• 40 percent (or approximately one million people) did not have the necessary skills to participate in a knowledge society;

• 18 percent had very low levels of literacy;

• Mäori and Pacific Island peoples were over-represented in those with low levels;

• unemployed people, and those working in the primary and manufacturing sectors were over-represented in the group with low levels; and

• there was a relationship between low levels of education and low levels of literacy.

Adult Literacy and Life-Skills Survey (ALL)

New Zealand is now participating in a revamped IALS, the Adult Literacy and Life-Skills Survey (ALL). This is an international study led by Statistics Canada and the OECD, with 15 countries participating. The survey, to be carried out in 2005–2006, will include an assessment of prose, document, numeracy, and problem-solving skill levels. The results from ALL will be able to be compared with the results from IALS and will provide an indication as to whether literacy skills have lifted in New Zealand. The reports from the first five participating countries have recently been released and highlight the problems many people face in coping with the literacy demands of everyday living (Desjardins, Murray, Clermont, & Werquin, 2005).

The Adult Literacy Achievement Framework (ALAF)

The Adult Literacy Achievement Framework (ALAF) is a project that involved a number of providers (20), practitioners (80), learners (approximately 100), and researchers in the adult literacy community, and is referred to in some case studies in the current report.
In 2002 the Ministry of Education commissioned a group of experienced adult literacy practitioners to develop ALAF. Its purpose was to provide a common language for talking about literacy gain, for reporting learner gain in literacy, and to contribute to tutor professional development (Jakob-Hoff, Postlewaite, Stokes, & Talagi, 2003; Sutton, 2004). The ALAF was then trialled with volunteer organisations and tutors to ascertain the capacity of providers to use ALAF and to identify useful ways of reporting and using information with different audiences.

ALAF (which has some similarities with the EFF framework described later in this chapter) consisted of six profiles which each described behaviours, skills, and knowledge related to literacy acquisition, with separate strands for reading and writing. There were no strands for speaking, listening, or numeracy.

The intention was to use the ALAF profiles to map learner progress. For example, a Profile six reader or writer would be performing at the equivalent to NCEA Level 2 (Year 12 in school, or Level 2 of the NQF). Profile one was that of a beginning reader and writer, and like the other profile levels described four literacy roles of code breaking, meaning making, text use, and text analysis.

Each profile has three stages: Beginning; Developing; and Consolidating. For each of these stages there are three progression points. Tutors map learners' progress in terms of a lessening need for support, and an increase in learners' self-correcting behaviours and consistency.

At the time of this report the status of ALAF is uncertain, and it is unclear whether it will be further developed or set aside. However, without a doubt the development of ALAF and its trials will have influenced thinking and practice in the sector in relation to the assessment of literacy gain.

The Quality Mark

In 2003 and 2004 a number of adult literacy providers took part in a demonstration project for a draft quality assurance standard for adult literacy provision (New Zealand Qualifications Authority [NZQA], 2004). This was known as the draft Adult Literacy Quality Mark (dALQM). The Quality Mark initiative is led by NZQA and aims to provide a consistent literacy quality standard for the diverse range of organisations involved in literacy provision. Organisations have been encouraged to undertake their own self-review processes prior to the implementation of the Quality Mark. The Quality Mark is expected to lift provider standards (including in systems and processes for developing, monitoring, and recording assessments, and for staff selection, qualifications, and professional development). There will be the expectation that those teaching literacy and numeracy have achieved the appropriate adult literacy unit standards and qualifications. In the current case studies tutors undertaking professional development were more likely to have focused on unit standards related to their assessment practice (US 4098 and US11551) than on these teaching standards.

Learning for Living work programme

The Learning for Living work programme is the implementation phase of Strategy Three of the TES. As part of this programme two discussion papers have been circulated in 2005. The first, *Key competencies in tertiary education: Developing a New Zealand framework* (Ministry of Education, 2005b), sets out to consider the different ways of thinking about key competencies, which are defined as the skills for everyday living, including those of literacy, language, and numeracy, and to develop a shared understanding of what they mean and how best to teach and to assess them. The second discussion paper is the *Draft descriptive standards: Describing the literacy, language and numeracy competencies that adults need to meet the demands of their everyday lives* (Ministry of Education, 2005a). These draft descriptive standards are outcome descriptors for reading, writing, listening, speaking, and mathematics and are intended as describing the competencies that need to be developed and embedded in all programmes of learning. We will return to look at key competencies in Chapter 3 when describing the development of the principles of assessment.

Other initiatives within the Learning for Living programme include an exploratory projects programme and a research programme. The Learning for Living Exploratory Project started in 2004 with 10 tertiary providers from diverse settings. They are working with a team of researchers and a team of developers to describe effective practice which contributes to learner gain in literacy, language, and numeracy. At the time of writing the Ministry of Education was calling for expressions of interest from providers for participation in a second group of demonstration projects.

Research studies

To date there has been a lack of robust research in the area of teaching, learning, and assessment of adult foundation learning literacy, numeracy, and language (ESOL) in New Zealand (Benseman et al. 2005; McLaughlin, 2003). Much of the research to date has been small-scale and context-specific and consequently the findings do not lend themselves to generalisation. A 2003 review of New Zealand Adult Literacy Research found that a third of the available research at that time was evaluations of specific programmes (Benseman, 2003). The TES explicitly refers to the expectation that by 2007 foundation education providers will be using evidence from research about foundation learner characteristics, and of best practice, to inform their work.

The nature of foundation learning programmes and the diversity of learners and programmes present challenges for research. These include the reality of adult learners' daily lives and work, along with factors such as open enrolment, drop-out rates, staff turnover, diverse programme objectives, and learner goals (Benseman et al. 2005). A recent evaluation of the Adult and Community Learning Fund in the United Kingdom found that sheer variety of learners' starting points, readiness to engage, need for support, programme purposes, values, and resources meant that there were few hard measures that could be meaningfully used (McGivney, 2002). In ESOL settings there are additional complexities, with research instruments and responses requiring translation (McDermott, 2004).

The Ministry of Education, as part of its overall programme to lift foundation learning, has a research work programme that has included:

- a literature review on effective teaching and learning practices in literacy, language, and numeracy (Benseman, Sutton, & Lander, 2005);

- mapping current provision (Sutton, Lander, & Benseman, 2005);

- a study of current instructional practices in adult literacy, numeracy, and language (Benseman et al. 2005); and

- in 2004 the Ministry commissioned John Read and David Hirsh to carry out research on English Language Levels in Tertiary Institutions, and had previously commissioned research on ESOL for refugee and migrant communities (McDermott, 2004).

The Ministry of Education research programme also links to work commissioned by the TEC on the provision of literacy, numeracy, and language (May, Hill, & Donaghy, 2004).

The work underway in New Zealand to understand and address the literacy, numeracy, and language needs of its citizens is not unique. It has similarities to work occurring across the globe (DfEE, 1999; Moser, 1999; National Adult Advisory Group, 2004; OECD, 2004). Two large-scale developments provide lessons for New Zealand. Firstly the work of the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC)[2] which was established to underpin the improvement of teaching and learning in these areas and, secondly, the work in the United States by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), the "Equipped for the Future" (EFF) Initiative.

"Skills for Life" and National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) "Equipped for the Future"

Skills for Life

The NRDC is undertaking a large-scale longitudinal study of the Skills for Life Strategy in the United Kingdom (Giannakakai, 2003). Skills for Life grew from the recommendations of a working party set up to look at ways to lift the basic skills of United Kingdom citizens. The

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[2] The NRDC is a part of the Institute of Education, at the University of London.

working party was responding to findings that 1 in 5 adults in the United Kingdom were operating at an IALS level one, and they were unable to find a plumber in the telephone book (Moser, 1999). The Skills for Life Strategy, introduced in 2001, is similar to Strategy Five of the TES, and aims to lift the consistency of teaching and learning in adult literacy, language, and numeracy. The reforms in the United Kingdom have some similarities with some underway in New Zealand, and research on the reforms may identify some lessons for New Zealand in terms of future initiatives.

Skills for Life has a number of elements including:

- national standards and tests;
- core curricula;
- learning materials and teaching guides;
- initial and diagnostic assessment tools;
- qualifications framework for teachers;
- initial teacher education;
- professional development;
- collaborative partnerships; and
- use of ICT for teaching and learning (Giannakakai, 2003).

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) "Equipped for the Future"

In the United States a similar initiative was undertaken to develop a standards-based assessment system that would both support and give credentials to the basic literacy learning of adult Americans in need of foundation learning. A feature of the project development was the extensive involvement of adult learners and literacy tutors from many different American states and types of learning programmes (both institutional and work-based) over a period of some years. It was felt that shared ownership would be a key to the successful development and uptake of the system. Employers and others in the community who would use the assessment results were seen as important stakeholders, along with tutors and adult learners.

Before standards development began an extensive mapping exercise led to the construction of role maps that describe the **application** of adult literacy in the home and family, in the workplace, and as citizens and community members. The three "role maps" constructed from this analysis—one for each of the three types of settings—then formed the basis for the identification of 16 "Equipped for the Future" (EFF) literacy standards. These standards are organised into four clusters that have some correspondence with key competencies for New Zealand tertiary settings. For example "lifelong learning skills" looks similar to "acting autonomously", and "interpersonal skills" is similar to "operating in social groups" (Ministry of Education, 2005b).

Once described, the EFF standards were used by tutors and adult students from many programmes, and information about the nature of evidence that could be collected for each was solicited and centrally collated. During this process four "key dimensions" of performance were kept in mind:

- structure of knowledge base;
- fluency of performance;
- independence of performance; and
- range of conditions for performance.

The empirical data collected was combined with relevant insights from the research literature to develop three-level judgement statements to support each standard. The 16 resultant EFF draft standards (as of April 2004) are richly detailed because the intention is to support transparency of learning progress and evaluation—for both tutors and students. However they are also sufficiently generic that tutors may use tasks relevant to the contexts and needs of their students.

The standards were designed for assessing literacy learning in the context of authentic tasks of personal relevance to the adult learners. A holistic judgement is made about the overall level reached by the student. Next learning steps are clear because of the descriptive nature of the progressions. There was a specific intention to make the first level sufficiently broad to acknowledge the achievements of any adult who has begun on a literacy learning journey. It was seen as a matter of principle that all learners should see places for themselves on the learning continuum and that they would be supported to continue this learning journey. Self-assessment is also seen as important.

This assessment initiative provides leeway for different programmes to decide how to document and report on student performance. In one early case study portfolios were used to collect evidence of performance levels, and a "career passport" that documented specific achievements and "marketable skills" was presented to students at graduation (Stein, 2000, p. 84).

Assessment and national qualifications

Just as relevant policy, practice, and research provide a necessary background for the current study so too does an understanding of common assessment terminology, and of the learner and tutor national qualifications related to foundation studies.

Assessment terminology

There are assessment terms generic to all sectors but in the context of this study there are additional purposes for assessment that are more sector specific.

Diagnostic assessment is assessment for identifying possible strengths and weaknesses of individual students. It may be specific, to check on a particular skill, understanding, or aptitude, or it may be broad, to indicate general areas that need attention. Diagnostic assessment can take place at any stage during a programme. If it takes place at the beginning of a programme or course, or even before it has begun, it may be referred to as **initial assessment**.

Initial assessment is assessment of a learner's skills either relevant to a programme of learning, or for the purposes of developing an individualised learning plan. The assessment could be a diagnostic assessment to establish what the learner already knows, and what they need to learn in relation to a programme of learning, or it could be part of a workplace training needs analysis. Initial assessments may be used to identify learning and support needs in order to design Individual Learning Plans (ILP) for individual students. Individual Learning Plans are common in Training Opportunities/Youth Training (TOPS/YT) programmes.

In the tertiary sector the initial assessment can be pre-entry and placement assessment for admission to a particular programme. Included in this area are the English Language Proficiency tests, e.g. IELTS or TOEFL (Read & Hayes, 2003). The purpose for initial assessment in this case is to ensure that the intending student is suitable for the course they wish to take.

Some programmes also have processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC). This involves the learning being assessed in terms of prior learning and experience and so being credited with all or part of a course or qualification.

Summative assessment is the measurement of achievement for credit or a result for all or part of a course or programme. It is intended to identify and summarise achievement at a particular time. Summative assessment may take place on one occasion at the end of a course of work, or be continuous (for example, internal assessment throughout the course). In recent years there has been an increasing focus on the use of standards-based assessment within foundation learning. Unit standards specify performance standards that state what a learner needs to demonstrate they know, can do, and understand to meet the specified standard. As the case studies show, they are widely used for summative assessment in this sector.

Formative assessment is the activities undertaken on an ongoing basis during a course or programme and which is intended to provide feedback on progress to the learner and the teacher. Assessment only becomes formative "when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet the needs" of the learner (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p. 2). Diagnostic and summative assessment events can also be formative assessment if the evidence collected is used in this way.

Some of the elements of effective formative assessment are:

• learning intentions clarified at the planning stage;

• learning intentions shared with students;

• students self-evaluating against the learning intentions;

• students receiving feedback about their progress specifically related to the learning outcomes; and

• students supported to set their own learning goals (Clarke, Timperley, & Hattie, 2003).

Learner and tutor national qualifications

While the achievements of learners in a number of foundation level programmes are not recognised formally, those that are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) can be most commonly recognised this way, contributing to the National Certificate of Employment Skills (NCES). Similarly, tutors working in this sector have a diversity of professional development pathways but the one specifically recognised relates to the teaching and assessment of adult literacy and is composed of a suite of unit standards.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The NQF has eight levels with Level 1 being the entry level with a flexible beginning point, and Level 8 being postgraduate level. The unit standard (US) is the basic assessment building block of the framework and each unit standard is situated within a skills and knowledge domain (e.g. writing) within a subfield (e.g. communications) within a field (e.g. humanities). Each standard has been developed by a standard setting body, and its delivery and assessment are subject to an Accreditation and Moderation Action Plan (AMAP) which has been developed by a standard setting body and/or NZQA. Some qualifications are vocationally specific, e.g. the National Certificate in Travel and Tourism, and an Industry Training Organisation will have the prime role in developing, maintaining, and overseeing accreditation and moderation. Subfields such as core generic, communications, and mathematics are overseen by NZQA.

National Certificate of Employment Skills (NCES)

The NCES, which is standards based, and registered on the NQF, is commonly used for assessment within foundation learning programmes. It is a Level 1 qualification that, depending on options chosen, is valued at 55–69 credits. It was first registered on the NQF in 1996, and at the time of the research was into version 10. A credit roughly equates with taking the average learner 10 hours to achieve competency and includes assessment time. A person who starts with English as a second language may take significantly longer, and a person who has already acquired the skills and knowledge specified could demonstrate that they meet the standard without participating in a programme of learning. This would be through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC). The purpose of the NCES as set out in the NZQA documentation is to award:

> …people who demonstrate competence in literacy, oracy, numeracy and other personal and technical skills. These skills have been identified by a wide range of employers as being

important for the workplace. This qualification accepts credits for both unit standards and achievement standards[3].

This qualification is designed to be flexible so that people are able to demonstrate the required competence in alternative fields as well as exercising open elective choice for part of the credit options (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1998).

The Structure of the NCES

Compulsory

Twenty-two credits, which are made up of specified unit standards in the areas of problem solving, employment-related knowledge, communication, health and safety, and mathematics.

Elective

1. At least one unit standard (2–4 credits) from the domain of measurement.

2. 19–31 credits with one unit standard to be chosen from each of seven sets (core generics, business admin-keyboarding, interpersonal communications, oral skills, listening, reading, and writing). There are options in these sets including unit standards specifically for ESOL learners.

3. At least 12 credits made up of unit standards from anywhere on the framework, or of achievement standards.

Elective three enables those in workplace situations to credit industry-specific units, e.g. furniture unit standards, to their NCES. The NCES also enables learners to credit achievement standards, which would ordinarily be gained in Years 11–13 at high school, and are part of the school qualifications the National Certificates in Educational Achievement (Levels 1–3). There is a schedule to ensure that learners are not credited for the same skills and knowledge twice.

The *National Certificate in Employment Skills assessment guide* (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1998) outlines that the standards in the NCES are mostly assessed by collecting two main sources of evidence: information from observational checklists and from work sheets completed during students' course work. In this way the skills are expected to be explicitly taught. The intention is for students to learn about these skills as part of the assessment procedure and both generic and authentic observational assessment tasks are utilised.

To deal with issues of transferability and reliability, the observational evidence is usually required to be collected on three different occasions or in three different contexts. For example, for *Standard 1304: Communicate with people from other cultures*, candidates are required to communicate with people from three cultures, and for *Standard 3503: Participating in a team or group to complete routine tasks*, candidates organise a witness in a workplace to observe and rate their work in a group on three separate occasions. Evidence is collected by registered assessors and moderated by NZQA. Single standards are reported as a single level of competence using a pass/fail system.

If learners are assessed as meeting the requirements for unit standards registered on the NQF the unit standard is recorded on their individual Record of Learning (ROL).

Adult literacy education qualifications

Unit standards and a qualification for adult literacy educators have been in gestation for a number of years. Progress has been made to the point that the draft unit standards and the documents (accreditation and moderation action plans setting out requirements for providers who seek to

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3   Achievement standards were developed after unit standards and are used in the secondary-school level qualifications, the New Zealand Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA).

deliver and assess those unit standards) are available on the Literacy Portal. There are 10 unit standards for literacy educators, and one for vocational tutors who are integrating literacy into their programmes. One of the unit standards relates to the assessment of adult literacy learning[4].

The structure of the report

The report consists of two parts. Part One includes Chapters 1 to 3, and lays the groundwork for the case studies, analysis, and recommendations. Part Two includes Chapters 4 and 5, beginning with an overview of assessment practices in the 12 case study sites, then providing an analysis of the case study findings in relation to assessment principles and purposes and outlining recommendations for future options.
Chapter 2 of the report outlines the research questions, the research design, and methodology. It identifies the participants and the case study sites. An important component of the research was the development of a set of assessment principles. These were then used to consider the extent to which current practices of assessment in tertiary literacy, language, and numeracy learning settings are consistent with those principles. Chapter 3 provides an overview of principles of good assessment for learning in literacy, numeracy, and language settings as identified through interviews with leading New Zealand researchers and practitioners and via the relevant literature.
Chapter 3 provides an overview of assessment practices in the 12 case study sites (the detail of each case study recorded in the appendices). The case studies include programmes provided through two training establishments (PTES), four polytechnics, one university (was from a College of Education), two Adult and Community Education providers (one ESOL, the other literacy), and three workplace-based programmes.
Chapter 5 begins with an analysis of the case studies in terms of the principles outlined in Chapter 3. It includes a discussion of strengths and weaknesses, barriers and drivers of good practice, and identifies possibilities for development. The final part of this chapter presents recommendations for increasing assessment capability in tertiary programmes which include literacy, numeracy, and language.

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[4] On the National Qualifications Framework this is a Level 5, 10 credit unit which equates with 100 hours of learning.

2. Methodology

Introduction

This chapter sets out the design of the research including the research aims, research questions, and methods employed. The first stage of the research involved a review of the research literature concerning assessment used to enhance literacy, numeracy, and language learning in tertiary education. During this phase interviews were carried out with a wide range of key informants from relevant tertiary settings, as well as researchers in the field and those with specific assessment expertise. The research literature and ideas of the key informants were used to prepare a set of draft assessment principles.

Stage two of the research involved the 12 case studies that were conducted to explore current assessment practices and the drivers of assessment practice in tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language learning settings.

Finally, stage three involved three workshops that were designed to: give an overview of current assessment practice in the sector in terms of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment; identify the gaps and areas that need development; and provide the opportunity for a dialogue between the researchers and members of the sector to help identify strategies to inform and improve practice.

The findings from all three stages are brought together in the analysis (Chapter 5). The principles of assessment generated in the first stage provide the framework for analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of current practices. The analysis includes a critique of current assessment practices in tertiary learning in the areas of numeracy, literacy, and language, and this is used to foreground the recommendations for enhancing assessment capability in tertiary learning.

Research design

The research design was shaped by an awareness of the lack of previous research work in the New Zealand setting concerning tertiary foundation learning in literacy, numeracy, and language, and the diversity of the providers, programmes, and learners (Benseman et al. 2005; McLaughlin, 2003). It builds on and complements recent published work and concurrent research (Benseman et al. 2005; Johnson, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2005a; Read & Hayes, 2003; Sutton et al. forthcoming), to add to our collective "knowing" about teaching and learning in adult foundation learning settings. At the time this work was commissioned there were a number of related research and policy initiatives underway (see Chapter 1) and consultation meetings were held with two of the other projects.

As the Ministry of Education is seeking insights into current practice rather than a representative survey, a qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate. The current study was designed to explore and examine approaches to assessment in selected diverse literacy, numeracy, and language level programmes in New Zealand and so contribute to an understanding of:

- principles of good assessment of learning in foundation education areas of literacy, numeracy, and language (ESOL);

- trends in assessment practices in foundation learning;

- the current picture of assessment in foundation education in New Zealand, including diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment;

- the reliability and validity of assessment approaches;
- the drivers of providers' use of assessment strategies and tools;
- the degree to which assessment is linked to learner progression; and
- identification of approaches with the potential to enhance current assessment practices in foundation learning.

This understanding was to be generated through the investigation of the following questions.

Research questions

1. What are the principles of good assessment in foundation learning areas in relation to literacy, numeracy, and language (ESOL)?
2. What assessment approaches and tools in relation to literacy, numeracy, and language are used in diverse foundation learning settings in New Zealand?
3. What guides the choice of approaches and tools?
4. How is assessment of literacy, numeracy, and language used in diverse foundation learning programmes?
   - At what stages of the programmes are literacy, numeracy, and language assessed?
   - What is assessed?
   - How formalised are providers' assessment procedures and practices?
   - To what extent is assessment of literacy, numeracy, and language documented and shared with others in a programme?
   - What strategies are used to involve the learner in assessment?
   - What factors support the use of assessment to enhance teaching and learning in diverse foundation contexts?
   - What constrains the use of assessment in diverse foundation learning programmes?
   - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation?
5. How consistent are these kinds of assessment approaches and tools with the principles of good assessment in foundation learning?
6. What are the options for increasing assessment capability in foundation learning for literacy, numeracy, and language in particular? What role could an assessment resource bank play?

Research methods

The research was undertaken using a range of approaches, including a review of the literature and interviews with "key informants", including the project leaders of concurrent research. The case study sites were selected in consultation with the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission and interviews were undertaken at each site. An analysis of assessment and other documentation was also undertaken for each of the sites. Finally, workshops were held to provide an overview of current assessment practice in the sector and to give the opportunity for feedback and dialogue between the researchers and the sector.

Literature search

A review of the research literature relating to assessment and learning in tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language (ESOL) was undertaken. Databases searched included Index New Zealand (INNZ), ingenta.com, ERIC, NZCER Library catalogue, and VOCED. Sites for national centres such as the NRDC in the UK (see Chapter 1) were also searched. Key terms used in the search included "Adult Basic Education" or "Adult Education" or "Adult Literacy" or "Adult Learning" or "Adult Language Learning" or "Adult Numeracy" and "Evaluation of Learning" or "Assessment" and "Systematic Reviews" or "Meta-level Reviews" or "Evidence-based". "Assessment principles" was also used as a search term alongside these others. The literature located was then screened to select the studies or reviews that promised to provide research evidence for assessment for learning in the tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language settings, or that were likely to provide robust evidence to guide the drafting of a set of principles.

Interviews with key informants

We are grateful to the following who participated in interviews or discussions on assessment, principles of assessment, teaching, and learning in their various areas of expertise. Prior to interviews the interviewees were sent the semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix 13) and interviews were conducted either at the workplace of the interviewee or at NZCER. John Hattie and Peter Keegan were interviewed together at their suggestion, as were John Benseman and Alison Sutton. The interviews were taped and transcribed.

The key informants were:

- Dr Gill Thomas, independent researcher from NZ Maths Co, who has played a key role in the numeracy progressions framework.

- Associate Professor John Read, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

- Kari Millar, National Qualifications Assessment Centre, who has played a key role in a number of assessment-related projects with NZQA, the Ministry of Education, and the Tertiary Education Commission.

- Maria McDonald, CEO, National Co-ordinator, Literacy-ESOL, National Association of ESOL Home Tutor Schemes (NAESOL). Up until 2003 had been Literacy Manager for NAESOL (telephone interview).

- Mary Roberts, National Co-ordinator, Literacy-NAESOL.

- Judy Nicholl, previously Head of Foundation Studies at Unitec, Training and Development Manager at AFFCO, and currently working for NZ Police in HR and Training and Development, including a foundation skills project with Victoria University.

- Dr John Benseman, Senior Lecturer, Auckland University, and Alison Sutton, Researcher, Critical Insight.

- Katherine Percy, Chief Executive of Workbase.

- Susan Reid, Workbase.

- Professor John Hattie, Auckland University, Project Director of asTTle.

- Dr Peter Keegan, Senior Lecturer, Auckland University.

- Dr Robyn Chandler, Christchurch College of Education and Canterbury Adult Basic Education Research Network.

- Bronwyn Yates, Literacy Aotearoa.

- Dr Linda Leach, Massey University.

- Discussions were also held with Dr Arini, Auckland University College of Education, and Anne Lee, Ministry of Education. These initial interviews and discussions contributed to the development of the draft set of principles of assessment for learning, and to the design and selection of the case studies.

Case studies

A multiple case study approach was taken, with the intention of presenting individual case studies, and of conducting cross case study analysis. Case study has been identified as a useful approach for examining educational practices and informing changes in practice and policy (Merriam, 1997). The case study sites were selected in consultation with the Ministry of Education, with the TEC identifying the two Private Training Establishments (PTEs). The TEC was asked to identify established providers who were either national providers or had a high number of learners, and whose reports demonstrated good results for foundation learners. In order to minimise demands made on individual providers, providers who were already participating in concurrent national research, demonstration, pilot, and trial projects were not included in the sample, except where there were multiple sites within the provider organisation.

One invited provider, the tertiary education institution (TEI) with the highest number of learners enrolled in a literacy programme, declined to participate.

Table 1 **Case study sites**

Provider	Provider type	Focus programme	Special feature
Auckland University	TEI	Diploma Teaching PI-ECE	Scaffolding of assessment in heritage language
BEST training	PTE	Cadetship	Strong links to future employment
CPIT	Polytechnic	1–1 individualised literacy tuition	
Literacy Aotearoa	ACE	1–1 individualised literacy tuition	Focused on individual goals
Literacy Aotearoa: He Waka Mätauranga	ACE	Kainga literacy: Pacific Women's Group	Pacific Island community and family literacy
Literacy Aotearoa	ACE	WINZ contract	12.5 hours of literacy assessment and tuition
MCLaSS	OTEP[*]	ESOL Literacy	Refugees and migrants with very low levels of English language literacy
The Open Polytechnic	Distance	Lifeworks (approx 5000 students in 2005)	Individualised home-based learning supported by coaches
Trade and Commerce	PTE	TOPS/Youth Training	Nationwide provider—with NCES and NCEA units embedded in programmes
WelTec	Polytechnic	Formway Furniture	Work-based training using an embedded tutor
WITT	Polytechnic	Learning Support and Literacy Tuition (Literacy Pool)	Provides course-related support, addresses basic literacy and numeracy skills
Workbase	PTE	Workplace literacy/numeracy/ language	Combination of workplace and individual needs

* OTEP = Other tertiary education provider.

The case study sites were diverse and the research design needed to be flexible enough to adapt to the sites, and to the available time of the site participants and the research budget. In some cases there were a number of preliminary steps in scoping the case study and in gaining access. In all case studies the programme leader or equivalent was interviewed, as were a number of teaching staff in some cases, and where possible interviews were held with learners. Programme and assessment documentation was viewed, and permission sought to obtain copies of instruments and reports. In a small number of cases "classes" were observed. The scope of the project did not allow for structured observation of teaching and learning sessions, so these were brief impressionistic observations.

NZCER

The diversity of providers and learners led to minor changes in the overall approach. Learners were interviewed in some but not all sites. For example, to interview learners in the MCLaSS setting would have required access to interpreters. While some providers were willing to provide the researcher with copies of their assessment tools and records, others declined on the grounds of commercial sensitivity or an unwillingness to place them in a public arena. This limits the analysis we can provide in this report.

Ethical considerations

The key informants agreed to be listed in the report but we have not named them when quoted. Consent was sought from teachers for participation in the case study, for taping and recording their interview. It was made clear that while they would not be named in the reports it would be difficult to guarantee anonymity to teachers. Learners consenting to participate in the research were guaranteed anonymity in any published reports, and the voluntary nature of their participation was emphasised.

CPIT required an application to be made through their internal institutional procedures for approval for the research including ethical clearance. That process took 2 months. Once the CPIT Academic Research Committee had approved the proposal in relation to CPIT the research was able to commence.

Pasifika research

In educational research there is a growing interest in involving participants in the research process, including decision making. This interest is heightened where there is need to take into account distinct cultural perspectives in New Zealand. This includes those of Pasifika peoples:

> It fits with a model of research in which justice and equality are sought not only in the distribution of predetermined goods but also in the status and voice of the participants (Howe & Moses, 1999).

One unanticipated aspect of the research was the number of Pacific Island people involved in the case study programmes and the impact of Pasifika cultures in a number of the case study sites. A Pasifika perspective had been identified as a central focus for the case study of the Diploma in Teaching—Pacific Island—Early Childhood Education (Dip Tchng PI-ECE). Fluency in spoken and written English is not assessed prior to the programme and students are encouraged to present work for assessment in their strongest language, particularly in their first and second years. During the programme there is a gradual strengthening of English language usage, complemented by an emphasis on the development of ECE knowledge and understanding within the students' heritage languages.

In order to ensure appropriate research protocols were followed (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2002), Diane Mara, a senior researcher at NZCER with expertise in ECE and Pasifika, joined the project team for this case study. Preliminary phone discussions were held with Dr Airini, General Manager, Pasifika Development at then ACE, now Auckland University, Faculty of Education. The NZCER researchers met with Dr Airini and Afamasanga Telesia Alipia, the Director of the PI-ECE Diploma Teaching to seek permission for the case study, and to explore how the research might take place. The discussion focused on how to work in ways which were consistent with Pasifika education research guidelines, that is to empower the researched and the researchers.

The next step was to meet with the teaching team and present the proposal to them and to identify the input they would like to have into the case study and carrying out the research. This meeting began with a prayer, time was taken for introductions and acknowledgements, followed by the formal discussion and a shared meal. It was agreed that the teaching team would act as co-creators of the case study. They would be able to use the case study in their own research and publications. The meeting canvassed the questions that would be useful for informing knowledge of how the assessment approach used in the programme enhanced (or otherwise) student learning. In line with the agreed protocols it was decided that students would be interviewed in a group. It was agreed that the lecturers would be provided with the

opportunity to amend, add, or comment on the draft questions for the interviews (staff) and the group discussion (students). At this point the option of the lecturers facilitating the focus groups with the students was identified as desirable. This would enable students to use heritage languages. This meeting identified teaching staff to be interviewed about their perspectives on assessment in heritage languages within the programme.

The draft interview questions were emailed to the lecturers for comment. Two weeks later the selected lecturers were individually interviewed, and the interviews were taped and transcribed. One lecturer started the group interview by welcoming the researcher and the students with a prayer and introductions, and then she left. Timing and workload issues prevented the lecturers from facilitating the group interview with the students.

The first draft of the case study for inclusion in the report was emailed to the teaching team for editing and comment. As was the case with the emailed draft interview questions, no responses were received. This suggests that email was not an effective tool for engaging the teaching staff in the research, yet the staff had participated actively in the meeting to discuss the conduct of the research. If resourcing had allowed it may have been beneficial to hold additional feedback meetings face-to-face.

Analysis

The process of analysis was iterative. An initial review of the literature informed the research proposal and research design. Following discussions with the Ministry, and within the project team, the interview schedules for the key informant interviews were developed, again informed by the ongoing literature review.

Analysis of the relevant literature and of the ideas of the key informant interviews informed the drafting of six assessment principles and associated descriptors. The principles were later refined as members of the project team drew upon their related work in the area of the assessment of key competencies (Hipkins, Boyd, & Joyce, forthcoming) in the school sector.

The case studies were initially summarised within a framework that covered common items and addressed research questions 2–4. The framework and the initial impressions from the case studies were discussed at the research team meetings, and in a meeting with a Ministry of Education Tertiary Learning Outcomes manager and policy analyst.

Workshops were held in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch in which the research team gave an overview of current assessment practice in the sector in terms of diagnostic/initial assessment, formative assessment, and assessment practice. The workshops were attended by practitioners, policy makers, and researchers and provided a forum for feedback on the draft assessment principles and for dialogue about possible strategies that could be used to inform and improve assessment practice.

The next chapter describes the development of the assessment principles, addressing the research question "What are the principles of good assessment in literacy, numeracy, and language (ESOL) tertiary courses?" It also prepares the framework for analysing the case studies to shed light on the consistency of use of assessment approaches and tools within the case study sites in relation to the identified principles of good assessment in tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language learning (research question 5).

3. Developing the assessment principles

Introduction

A major objective of the research review and key informant interviews was to develop a set of principles of assessment for adult tertiary learning in literacy, numeracy, and language.
A number of research reviews conducted in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have lamented the lack of robust research evidence to inform developments in policy and practice in adult literacy, numeracy, and language, including with regard to assessment (Brooks, Heath, & Pollard, 2004; Carlo, 1996; DEETYA (Department of Employment Training and Youth Affairs), 1996; Falk & Millar, 2001; Snow & Strucker, 2000; Torgerson et al. 2004; Watson, Nicholson, & Sharplin, 2001). Kruidenier (2002) maintained that few carefully controlled studies of the direct effects of assessment in education exist and that there may be none in the field of adult literacy.
A recent review highlighted the variability in quality of work within the sparse body of adult literacy research in New Zealand (Benseman, 2003). Many of the studies included in that review were in-house limited circulation reports characterised by Benseman as *grey* or *feral* literature. That review identified assessment of learning as one of the areas warranting research attention although a number of the listed studies had assessment as the focus or as a component in a study. All were small-scale projects.
Given the scarcity of relevant literature located in the adult tertiary sector, significant school-based assessment studies (such as those carried out by Assessment Reform Group) were also used to inform the development of the assessment principles. Similarly, the semi-structured interviews held with 15 key informants assisted in building a comprehensive picture by reinforcing the areas identified in the research literature, by enriching the overall perspective on assessment-related issues, and by providing a New Zealand-based context. Beginning with the research literature, a set of draft principles and indicators were constructed and then critiqued and revised in light of the ideas of the key informants. While the principles of good assessment have many common features across the sectors there are some specific issues within the foundation learning sector and these are captured in some of the principles, but more explicitly in the indicators. These principles and indicators provide a framework for the analysis of the 12 case studies as do two other important understandings— the characteristics of adult learners (including their diversity) and the purposes for assessment. These are also described in the following sections.

Characteristics of adult learners

The interviews with key informants and the research literature reflected common views about adult learners and adult education. These are underpinned by understandings of the characteristics of adult learners that have grown out of the early work of Knowles (1970). He popularised the concept of andragogy to differentiate from pedagogy, which he saw as pertaining to children. His ideas about adult learning and adult learners have been built on by a number of people (Brookfield, 1991; Cranton, 1994; Darkenwald, 1982; McGivney, 2002). Most would agree that good practices apply to all learning and are not specific to adult learning, but that their degree and the frequency may be more marked in adult learning. Commonly identified characteristics of adult learners include:

- As an individual matures they move from being other-directed to being self-directed.

- With maturity comes a wealth of prior experiences and learning which may be a rich resource for learning.

- As an individual ages their experiences become crucial to their sense of self.

- An individual's readiness to learn is linked closely to their social roles.

- As an individual ages their perspective on time shifts from one with a future orientation to one which emphasises immediate application.

- As individuals mature they come to prefer learning which is problem-centred rather than theoretical or content-centred.

There are two other important factors to consider when thinking about the assessment of programmes designed for adult learners. These are the diversity of learners and the impact their past experiences of learning may have on their confidence and motivation (Benseman, 2001; Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Brookfield, 1991; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991).
A recognition of the diversity of learners and of their aspirations has implications for assessment and learning at all stages of a programme of learning but as Carole Keenan, the Director of Adult Education and Literacy for the US Department of Education, stated:

> If we look at the many different subpopulations in adult education and at the subpopulations within the ESL portion of adult education, we see that not all adult learners are in programs for the same reasons, or for the same outcomes, or at the same places along the way. It is our responsibility to get them to the next step, whatever the next step is for them (National Centre for ESI Literacy Education, 2003).

Some adult learners' earlier experiences of assessment may not have been positive and so providers need to consider assessment approaches that monitor progress but that do not threaten self-esteem (Moran, 2001). Watson et al. (2001) also acknowledge that the fear of testing may serve as a barrier to enrolment and participation for some students and that this poses a considerable challenge given the importance of early identification of literacy and numeracy skills at the start of courses. Other learners, considered by policy makers as the target learners, may not be motivated to learn, may be reluctant to self-identify, or have employers who are not willing to take a constructive approach to upskilling (DfEE, 1999). To maximise participation and access to adult learning opportunities the OECD (2003) suggests that such learning needs to appear attractive to adults and this requires attention to the teaching and learning methods, a flexible approach, and a recognition of prior learning:

> Assessment and giving credit for knowledge and skills acquired in work, home or community settings can ensure adults do not waste time relearning what they already know (p. 11).

These were all issues raised by the key informants and will be discussed further in the section *Principles of assessment.*

Purposes of assessment

Three main purposes for assessment can be described: assessment for accountability, assessment to support teaching and learning—assessment for learning, and assessment to promote lifelong learning. While programmes need to address all three purposes, the balance between them will differ depending on the nature and intent of the programme. Those that lead to the awarding of formal credentials, for example, may need to place more emphasis on their accountability processes. There are tensions for providers when balancing the needs of students against the requirements of institutions and funding bodies who might be seeking proof of learner progress in formats that are not so useful for ongoing learning (Marr, Helme, & Tout, 2003).

In what follows, each of these purposes is described in alignment with related research in the area of assessment, particularly as it links to the tertiary sector and literacy, numeracy, and language. They are also aligned with three assessment paradigms described by Aikenhead (1997). He set out to construct a framework what would make explicit the theoretical orientations that underlie debate about assessment issues. Following Hamermas' analysis of sociological research more generally, Aikenhead described empirical-analytic, interpretive, and critical-theoretic assessment paradigms.

Table 2 **Three purposes of assessment**

Assessment purpose	Most compatible paradigm	Nature of assessment
Systems accountability and reporting	Empirical-analytic	Empirical methods based on psychometric principles, yield "robust" comparative data
Improving teaching and learning	Interpretive	Evidence of achievement against specified standards, may combine descriptive and data-based components. Judgements made by others, not students
Lifelong learning	Critical-theoretic	Extends features of interpretive paradigm—collaborative methods fully involve students and empower them to continue learning

Purpose One: Systems accountability

The specification of key competencies, including literacy, numeracy, and language competencies, supports government-funded agencies to "use the framework in policy and operation work to achieve consistency about desirable learning outcomes across the school and tertiary education sectors" (Ministry of Education, 2005b, p. 4). This is seen as an important policy focus because "there are considerable social and economic benefits for all from a well-educated population" (p. 4). International assessment trends suggest that any new type of assessment system will be expected to provide information for accountability purposes such as monitoring the success of government policies (Broadfoot & Black, 2004). When assessment provides exit-level credentials there is also an issue of accountability to those beyond the institution, including the students themselves and prospective employers. In this case the assessment system that is designed must provide "information about what learners can do that is credible to employers, educational institutions and policy makers, as well as to the learners themselves" (Stein, 2000, p. 57)[5]. Such considerations shaped the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the National Register for Quality Assured Qualification which encompass a range of fields and levels, in contrast to the framework Stein refers to which is focused on generic foundation learning. As quoted here, this is one of three guiding principles in the holistic adult learning framework *Equipped for the Future* developed by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) in the USA and is important for its potential to align aspects of all three purposes for assessment.

The *Equipped for the Future* initiative was undertaken to develop a standards-based assessment system that would both support and credential the basic literacy learning of adult Americans in need of foundation learning. A feature of the project development was the extensive involvement of adult learners and literacy tutors from many different states and types of learning programmes (both institutional and work-based) over a period of some

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[5] In March 2005 Sondra Stein visited New Zealand at the invitation of Workbase and supported by *Learning for Living* and led workshops with adult literacy practitioners and policy makers. The Literacy Portal provides background information on the *Equipped for the Future* initiative and access to associated resources: http://www.workbase.org.nz/Article.aspx?ID=255

years. It was felt that shared ownership would be a key to the successful development and uptake of the system. Employers and others in the community who would use the assessment results were seen as important stakeholders, along with tutors and adult learners. These features distinguish the *Equipped for the Future* framework from the proposed ALAF framework discussed in Chapter 1.

Assessment for the purposes of systems accountability aligns with Aikenhead's empirical-analytic paradigm within which assessment is standardised and summative. It is undertaken for certification purposes, and for national policy development and social control of the provider. In science (which was the focus of his work) the assessment has a focus on fostering elite students, and on the products of learning. This is underpinned by a view of knowledge as an accumulated product, and by behaviourist learning theories. Assessment issues tend to be technical in nature and validity is defined by technical, rational psychometric principles. Within this paradigm the learner is not involved in either setting tasks or evaluating their own performance to create summative statements about, or evidence of, competencies attained.

While there are clear links between this paradigm and the assessment for accountability purpose there are evident incompatibilities with the assessment purpose of improving teaching and learning and particularly with the lifelong learning purpose. Standardised, summative assessment has traditionally served a screening purpose where only some students are allowed to progress to higher levels and others encouraged to try alternative pathways. There are some adult learners who are seeking what McGivney (2002) refers to as "hard outcomes", often assessed is this way, and that lead to qualifications, employment, and upwards progression to more advanced levels of learning. However, McGivney (2002) argues that:

> …adult learners, whether in certificated or uncertificated programs, frequently place most value on 'soft' outcomes such as increased confidence and feelings of greater self-worth. These are not so easily quantified and much of the evidence available is based on qualitative evaluation methods which do not fit readily into official quality assurance systems (p. v).

These different outcomes are not mutually exclusive but symbiotic. Where the focus of the programmes and assessment is on developing new understandings and acquiring new skills within the context of a supportive learning environment (as highlighted below in *Purpose Two: Supporting teaching and learning–assessment for learning*) this creates a heightened sense of self-worth which in turn impacts on the increased confidence learners need in order to progress to higher levels of education, to apply for jobs, or to undertake more demanding skills (McGivney, 2002). That is, to demonstrate the features of being a lifelong learner (refer *Purpose Three: Supporting lifelong learning*).

Purpose Two: Supporting teaching and learning–assessment for learning

The majority of the assessment-related research literature focuses on its role in supporting teaching and learning, that is, assessment for learning. Linn and Miller (2005), for example, define assessment as "an integrated process for determining the nature and extent of student learning and development" (p. 27) and suggest that "assessment is best viewed as a process of obtaining information on which to base educational decisions (p. 29). In the context of the school sector Reinke (1998) argued that assessment is for learning, that assessment practices reflect fundamental beliefs about learning, and that it is a powerful process which involves emotions as well as the intellect. Good assessment is critical to teaching and learning, and is nurtured in an educational culture which values assessment. Reinke proposes 10 assessment principles for best assessment practice for learning:

1. Assessment touches the mind: Assessment touches the heart.

2. Assessment for learning is more a process than a procedure.

3. The teaching profession requires that teachers model good assessment practice.

4. Classroom assessment is primarily an instructional issue.

5. Classroom assessment is not highly technical.

6. The purpose of school is to help students become competent in the curriculum.

7. A positive assessment climate combined with effective assessment practices encourages students to seek assessment information.

8. Creating effective assessment practices requires the involvement of teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community.

9. Assessment is for everyone.

10. Everyone has a right to good assessment.

Aikenhead locates this teaching and learning assessment purpose within an interpretive paradigm, where assessment involves the making of formative judgements, with students involved in gathering the evidence needed to make these judgements. It is undertaken to inform students' achievement of knowledge, skills, and values, and to improve learning and teaching. In science there is a focus on "science for all" rather than as an elite achievement. Knowledge is seen as individually constructed, and this aligns with constructivist learning theories. Assessment issues tend to be pedagogical and validity "distils to trustworthiness" of one professional for another.

There are clear links between this interpretive paradigm and the purpose of supporting teaching and learning. In a discussion of assessment for certification as an "expert teacher" Delandshere and Petrosky (1998) assert that if the overall purpose of certification is to improve teaching and learning, then only a *considered discussion of the evidence* will suffice. Like Rychen and Salganik (2003), they note that attributions of competence are "fundamentally inferences" (p. 49) and say that in order to assess a complex performance it is first necessary to determine the nature of the evidence that can be used to infer the competence exists. Addressing the same question, Rychen and Salganik (2003) say that inference is strengthened when the relevant behaviours are observed multiple times, in a range of settings, and the performance takes account of cognitive, motivational, ethical, and emotional aspects. Accordingly, it becomes necessary to integrate evidence from a range of sources. But there is a likelihood that the judgements made and integrated will remain "implicit and invisible" (Delandshere & Petrosky, 1998, p. 15) if they are subsumed into one overall rating. Thus, while aggregated data (as would be gathered within an empirical-analytic paradigm) allows certification, it does not provide a basis for a reflective discussion of what the assessment actually means, and hence provides very little feedback that could allow the teacher to change and grow professionally.

This is an interesting example of the tension between accountability and supporting learning and teaching at work. It suggests that both types of assessment data (empirical and richly descriptive) may need to be generated if the tension is to be resolved. It is particularly apt in the context of assessment in foundation learning because this area, like expert teaching, is envisaged in many cases as the assessment of a holistic performance delivered in an authentic context (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). This critique suggests that such assessments cannot be "one off" events such as the formal examinations that have traditionally been employed in the empirical-analytic paradigm, nor should the judgements made be reduced to simple ratings if the assessment is to inform ongoing learning.

The types of outcomes sought within this paradigm suggest that it will be necessary to develop standards to specify the nature of the achievement to be demonstrated. This was the approach taken by the NIFL initiative where 16 "Equipped for the Future" (EFF) richly detailed literacy standards were developed with the intention to support transparency of learning progress and assessment—for both tutors and students. The standards were designed for assessing literacy learning in the context of authentic tasks of personal relevance to the adult

learners. A holistic judgement is made about the overall level reached by the student. Next learning steps are clear because of the descriptive nature of the progressions. There was a specific intention to make the first level sufficiently broad to acknowledge the achievements of any adult who has begun on a literacy learning journey. It was seen as a matter of principle that all learners should see places for themselves on the learning continuum and that they would be supported to continue this learning journey. Self-assessment is also seen as important.

This assessment initiative provides leeway for different programmes to decide how to document and report on student performance. In one early case study, portfolios were used to collect evidence of performance levels and a "career passport" that documented specific achievements and "marketable skills" was presented to students at graduation (Stein, 2000, p. 84).

As the NIFL developers summarised their approach:

> You build a broad consensus on what results the system should achieve. You develop standards that express that consensus in a clear and measurable form. Then you use those standards as tools for focusing all parts of the system on achieving the desired results. Teachers use the standards to guide teaching and learning. Curriculum and assessment specialists develop new tools that are based on the standards. Professional development focuses on building the knowledge and skills that teachers and other program staff need to implement the standards. Policy makers target resources on building the capacity of programs to prepare students to achieve the standards (Stein, 2000, p. 88).

Purpose Three: Supporting lifelong learning

Lifelong learners manage cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and emotional aspects of their learning (de la Harpe & Radloff, 2000). These include knowing what constitutes good learning in a range of situations, when and how to seek help, when and how to collaborate with peers, and how, when, where, and why they learn best. Lifelong learners have self-knowledge, self-confidence, persistence, positive feelings about self as a learner, and a positive view of the value of learning. They are able to organise and manage their time and to plan, monitor, adapt, and evaluate their own learning.

Weimer (2002) describes five key aspects of teaching practice that need to accompany any shift that supports the development of the independence required to develop these attributes for lifelong learners. These include a shift in the balance of power so that students are actively involved in decision making about their learning and assessment. There is a related shift that allows students to take greater responsibility for their learning. Another shift is from content *coverage* to its *use* in the context of the planned learning. The role of the teacher moves from expert telling to guiding, coaching, modelling, collaborating, and giving feedback. A similar description of changed teacher roles to support greater student autonomy has been provided in recent New Zealand research (Bartlett, 2005). The fifth shift directly concerns assessment practice and is seen as a move from summative assessment to forms of assessment that support students' self-awareness of their own learning processes and that include formative assessment practices, including self- and peer-assessment.

Whereas students are involved in gathering the evidence needed to make judgements in the interpretive paradigm, here, in what Aikenhead (1997) describes as the critical-theoretic paradigm, students are involved in "formative evaluation". That is, they take an active part in the judgement of their own performance. Such assessment is undertaken to empower students as lifelong learners. In science there is a focus on "science for all" but with an "activist orientation". Knowledge is seen as socially constituted, and this aligns with sociocultural learning theories. Accordingly, assessment issues tend to be social, political, and cultural.

The activist orientation suggested by Aikenhead aligns with the idea of "action competence" discussed in the DeSeCo research (Rychen & Salganik, 2003) and translated into the New Zealand key competencies model as "participating and contributing":

> By participating, we gain a sense of achievement that comes from making a contribution to local and global communities (Ministry of Education, 2005c, p. 3).

Another perspective on the link between Aikenhead's framework and the DeSeCo work is provided by Gilomen (2003) who defines the dimensions of a "well-functioning society" as being related to economic productivity, democratic processes, solidarity and social cohesion, human rights and peace, equity, equality and absence of discrimination, and ecological sustainability (pp. 128–132). This powerful list of dimensions can arguably best be achieved if students are educated within the critical-theoretic paradigm that empowers them to take the necessary critical action.

This focus on action competence poses some interesting assessment issues. As Rychen and Salganik (2003) note the relationship between the individual and society is:

> …dialectical and dynamic. Individuals do not operate in a social vacuum. Actions always take place in a social or socio-cultural environment, in a context that is structured into multiple social fields…each consisting of a structured set of social positions dynamically organized around a given set of social interests and challenges. It is within these fields that demands and the criteria for effective performance and action take form and manifest themselves, and individuals act to meet them (pp. 45–46).

If assessment is intended to encourage and support lifelong learning that includes action competence, and it would seem desirable that this is an outcome of foundation learning, then any assessment system that is designed will, at the very least, need to find ways to assess the performance of individuals within the full complexity of social settings. Delandshere and Petrosky (1998) identify another tension between the empirical and the interpretive or critical paradigms. They point out that it is difficult for students to question expertly constructed test scores if they don't have the necessary expert knowledge. At least within the critical paradigm, ownership of the interpretation needs to belong to the student if they are to continue to learn as a result of assessment feedback.

Summary

Three main purposes for assessment can be identified. Each aligns closely to one of three paradigms that can be described for assessment practice.

- *Assessment for accountability and reporting* aligns closely with the familiar empirical-analytic paradigm. Assessment is standardised and psychometric tools may be used to establish validity and reliability. Students are not involved in the assessment process beyond demonstrating their learning in the manner required.

- *Assessment for teaching and learning* aligns with a less familiar interpretive paradigm. Assessment is more closely linked to classroom practice and the strength of the teacher's professional judgement is an important aspect of validity and reliability. Students are involved in collecting evidence of their learning but this evidence is interpreted by expert others.

- *Assessment for lifelong learning* aligns with an unfamiliar (for most teachers) critical-theoretic paradigm. Students are centrally involved in decision making about all aspects of their learning and assessment, including the judgements made about their progress.

Assessment in the area of foundation learning needs to take account of all three purposes of assessment but the actual emphasis given in practice is dependent upon the nature and aims of the particular programme and the needs of the learners. Those programmes providing a

starting point, the beginning of the learning journey, may have very little formal reporting and so a lower level of systems accountability than others where students are seeking more formal credentials. In the context of these purposes of assessment, and acknowledging that there is not a "one-size-fits-all" assessment regime for this sector, the following principles and associated indicators highlight the key factors that have been identified as critical to good assessment practice.

Principles of assessment

There are many lists of principles designed to guide assessment for learning (American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), 2003; Assessment Reform Group (ARG), 2002; Brown, Race, & Smith, 1996; Dodge Assessment Initiative (DAI), n.d.; McMillan, 2000; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2001; Portsmouth Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS), n.d.; Qualifications and Curriculum Authority UK (QCA), n.d.; Reinke, 1998; Stein, 2000; Thier, 2004; Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA), n.d.)[6]. While all have assessment for learning as their central focus the underlying intent differs. Some are generic guides to assessment (Brown et al. 1996; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2001; QCA UK; VCAA;), others are guides for good classroom practice (ARG, 2002), for assessment training and professorial development (McMillian, 2000), for improving tertiary teaching and learning (AAHE, 2003), for assisting teachers, developers, and administrators (Thier, 2004), or have been constructed for a specific purpose (EMAS).

The principles that follow also have assessment for learning as a central focus, aligned with the other two purposes of assessment. The intention here is to describe a set of principles for good assessment for adult tertiary learning in literacy, numeracy, and language in the context of the New Zealand environment. As indicated earlier, the evidence has been drawn from the research and policy-related literature as well as from the interviews from the key informants.

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[6]   A number of these references have been downloaded and do not have a date of publication. Subsequently in this report these are cited in the abbreviated without a date.

Table 3 **Assessment principles and purposes**

Assessment purposes	**Systems accountability**	**Supporting teaching and learning–assessment for learning**	**Supporting lifelong learning**
Assessment principles			
1. **There are transparent assessment goals and clarity of purpose.**	• Programme purpose, goals, prerequisite knowledge and skills, standards, and assessment criteria are clearly articulated. • The students' prior learning and current competencies are recognised. • The assessment is designed to improve student performance (in literacy, numeracy, and/or language), with the focus on both surface and deep knowledge. • There is a shared understanding of the assessment process and criteria. • The purpose of any diagnostic assessment is made clear so that it can be viewed as constructive and not demotivating. • Programme recording and reporting is consistent with the stated goals and purpose and, if appropriate, provides external recognition with a common currency.		
2. **Assessment aims to improve learning and pays attention to the needs and interests of the learner and to the process of learning.**	• The needs of the learner and an understanding of how students learn are central to practice. • The assessment helps students understand what they know and what they don't know and need to learn. • Assessment is designed as a continuum of performance; it is ongoing rather than episodic. • Attention is given to creating and maintaining an environment that supports the learner and their learning and that enhances motivation. • Assessment involves constructive, honest, feedback to the learners; enables reflection by students; and provides teachers with the information needed to plan the next learning steps. • Assessment develops learners' capacity for self-assessment so that they become reflective and self-managing. • Assessment is used to assist learners to identify options for progression. • Assessment provides feedback to teachers and developers that they use collaboratively to improve practice.		

3. **Assessment is valid, reliable, ethical, fair, and manageable.**	▪ Assessment recognises the full range of achievements of all learners and the methods used take account of the diversity of learners. ▪ Assessors use appropriate tools and sources of evidence that are fit for the purpose. ▪ The assessments provide teachers and learners with the evidence needed to make quality interpretations. ▪ A variety of assessment measures are used that are manageable and that provide sufficiency of evidence to establish with confidence that the performance criteria have been met and that ensure no individual or group of learners are disadvantaged. ▪ There are systems to ensure that consistent judgements are made about performance.
4. **Assessment is authentic.**	▪ A contextualised approach is taken where assessment is integral to the learning experiences. ▪ Assessment places an emphasis on both the generic competencies of the area as well as specific competencies of the workplace, community, and everyday life situations.
5. **The assessment is credible to all relevant stakeholders.**	▪ The programme and associated assessment is developed from a consensus building process that, where appropriate, assures portability of credentials. ▪ A systematic approach is taken to accountability and programme improvement based on meeting students' needs and programme goals. ▪ The results of assessment are documented and learners receive recognition for their achievements within the programme. ▪ The teacher and provider participate in ongoing quality assurance processes, such as moderation systems. ▪ The assessment provides useful information to report credibly.
6. **Assessment is undertaken by tutors with experience and assessment practice is supported by ongoing professional development.**	▪ Assessment results are used to improve programme design and teaching approaches. ▪ Teachers are qualified in their area of teaching. ▪ Teachers are experienced in the use and interpretation of the assessment tools and are able to use the information to promote learning. ▪ Teachers share their teaching and assessment practices and undertake regular professional development.

1. Transparent assessment goals and clarity of purpose

A clear message is that within any one programme there needs to be clarity for all those involved (learners, teachers, administrators) about the goals and objectives, the standards to be reached, the criteria by which success will be measured, and the way the results are reported (Brown et al. 1996; VCAA). As important, the assessment used needs to be fit for the purpose:

> The purpose of any type of assessment for me in this area is what is it you're trying to actually do with it. Are you trying to get somebody ready for a particular occupational skill or are you trying to weed out whether they've got the ability to enter into that and I think you need in any type of assessment for this, to be very clear and upfront about what your purpose of the assessment is. I think any best practice around assessment in this area needs to concentrate on being very clear and focused about what your expectations are of a person who is at pre-entry or learning. (KI[7] No 5)

Other common messages include the importance of appropriate procedures for the recognition of prior learning and of current competencies (Carlo, 1996; DfEE, 1999) and that assessment is designed to improve performance (DAI; VCAA) in all the areas of knowledge and skills that have been identified in the programme objectives. As one informant stated, an assessment principle should be to "try to get to some sort of deep kind of understandings rather than just skimming on some facts and recall" (KI No 4).

The transparency of assessment procedures and clarity of purpose need, however, to be viewed in the particular context of the sector. Watson et al. (2001), for example, emphasise the importance of early identification of literacy and numeracy skills at the start of course, but acknowledge that fear of testing may serve as a barrier to enrolment and participation for some students. Further, during the interviews, it was not uncommon to hear the perception that assessment can feel unsafe for learners. Initial and diagnostic assessment of learner skills and knowledge were sometimes seen as labelling the learner as a failure and highlighting deficits rather than focusing on the strengths of learners or opening up learning pathways. Moran (2001) makes a similar point and says that a challenge for teachers is working with learners who may not have had positive earlier experiences and so the tools and approaches utilised needed to be designed to monitor learner progress but not threaten self-esteem. One informant, who was involved in teaching English to second language learners (KI No 4), said that they postponed the assessment process a month, until the learners were feeling more comfortable, but that they made it clear that if the adults wanted literacy assistance they would need to be assessed. Another informant, working in a similar situation, also emphasised the need for non-threatening assessment and suggested that a supportive environment was more important than using traditional assessment measures or providing any formal kind of certification of attainment or attendance (KI No 2). The assessment tool used in this context was a literacy portfolio. Another informant, this time working within a workplace context, highlighted a tension about reporting:

> We have to be a little bit careful in companies how much we reveal about the weaknesses of individual learners as opposed to keeping their company informed of their participation and progress. …we want to be very careful that employers don't become, the kind of information doesn't enable them to kind of marginalise particular individuals with having low skills. (KI No 3)

Reflecting the diversity of this sector, at the other end of the spectrum was an informant, also working in a similar area, but in a much more formal setting, who argued for greater national consensus in approach and standards:

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[7]   KI = Key informants: identified by number 1–15.

I think there is a recognition of a real need particularly with students passing from one programme or one institution to another, to have a common currency. So on the one hand people are using IELTS scores for that purpose to some extent, but there's very much a tendency for each institution to develop their own certificate or their own test and I think there's some good elements to that, but certainly problems if what they find is about student proficiency or achievement is supposed to be reported outside of their own school or institution. (KI No 8)

2. Assessment aims to improve learning and pays attention to the needs and interests of the learner and to the process of learning

As indicated earlier a major emphasis in the assessment literature is the role assessment plays in supporting learning. Assessment needs to be based on an understanding of how students learn (QCA; VCAA), be targeted to the needs of the learner (QCA; KI No 12), and be linked to a progressional pathway (refer NIFL; KI No 12). These views are supported by the Assessment Reform Group (2002) which has identified the following 10 research-based assessment for learning principles:

1. is part of effective planning of teaching and learning;

2. should focus on how students learn;

3. should be recognised as central to classroom practice;

4. should be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers;

5. should be sensitive and constructive because any assessment has an emotional impact;

6. should take account of the importance of learner motivation;

7. should promote commitment to learning goals and a shared understanding of the criteria by which they are assessed;

8. should provide learners with constructive guidance about how to improve;

9. develops learners' capacity for self-assessment so that they can become reflective and self-managing; and

10. recognises all educational achievement.

One fundamental idea about assessment for learning is that the principles and practices of assessment need to become habits of the organisations (DAI) or as expressed by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000):

> In addition to being learner centred and knowledge centred, effectively designed learning environments must also be assessment centred. The key principles of assessment are they should provide opportunities for feedback and revision and that what is assessed must be congruent with one's learning goals (p.139).

The way an environment might be assessment centred is illustrated by the emphasis given to assessment being ongoing and not episodic:

> Improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracing the progress of individual students, or cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights (AAHE, p. 1).

So it is not only the way assessment is undertaken within the classroom but also the way it is used to improve practice and inform the ongoing development of the programme that is important (EMAS; Thier, 2004). NIFL believes these activities must be undertaken systematically both for accountability purposes and to ensure programme improvement is based on meeting student needs and national goals.

The integral role assessment plays within the teaching programme was also identified by a number of key informants:

> Even if you had a mediocre assessment tool, if you at least relate it to your teaching closely to whatever it is that you assess then that's got to be better than having a good assessment tool and not carrying it through to your teaching. So that absolute linking I have to see as fundamental. (KI No 7)

as was its potentially positive role:

> I think if assessment is used really well it can be very affirming for people because you can use it to show them just what learning they have done which is often not seen by people. You can use it to build confidence and self-esteem, so there can be some really positive spin-offs from assessment if it's used well, rather than the damning things that sometimes happen. (KI No 9)

The notion of assessment being formative is another fundamental idea associated with assessment for learning. This assessment being "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (ARG, 2002). The formative nature of assessment was discussed at length by the informants:

> Assessment is about feedback information. Quite frankly I don't care if it's a portfolio, a closed item, an essay whatever. I care about the nature of the information that goes back to the teacher and the student or to whomever, that answers the three questions: where am I going and what's the aim, how am I going, and where am I going next? So I think it's a pretty powerful principle. If it doesn't give interpretative information to the teacher or the kid, it's lousy assessment. (KI No 13)

The interactive nature of formative assessment needs to be also modelled within the wider teaching practice. In addition, adults' learning intentions often change during the learning process and so the ongoing negotiation between teacher and learner needs to take account of the fact that the outcomes, and so the expected learning, agreed at the start of the programme could be subject to change (McGivney, 2002).

A few informants raised a caution about the need for continued professional development in the sector concerning feedback. It was felt that often the nature of feedback was focused more on encouraging comments such as "good work" and "excellent first attempt" than on the actual performance.

A recurring point made in the key informant interviews when discussing feedback was the importance of the relationship between the teacher and learner. A trusting relationship was viewed as critical, one where honest feedback could be given clearly, constructively, and sensitively, and where assessment was understood as a learning tool rather than a summative judgement:

> Assessment done well—it's done really sensitively. It takes into account the particular person that you're working with, it takes into account their background and that includes past educational experience, culture, what you know about them as people. So some people can handle feedback given in a particular way and some people can't, you've got to think really carefully about what this person, from what you know of them, is going to be able to handle. So doing it really, really sensitively and lots of clear feedback, lots of positive feedback, looking for the things where you can give really positive feedback and then really

> constructive comments on what to do another time or what to do to make it better or different. (KI No 9)

Integral to the teacher-learner relationship is the nature of the learning environment and the need for assessment to support the learner and to foster motivation by emphasising progress and achievement rather than failure (ARG, 2002; EMAS; QCA).

An important outcome of any programme for adults is that they are motivated to continue learning. The Assessment Reform Group (2002) investigated the effects of different assessment practices on learner motivation in the short term and in the longer term. While its focus was in the school sector it has lessons for adult learning. The factors identified as having a positive effect on learner motivation included the extent to which the students were confident about what was required of them and the nurturing of self-assessment and self-regulation. It also involved feedback that was task-related and that indicated how to build on existing achievement and what was required for improvement. Other positive features identified were learners being informed about the purpose of assessment and what would be expected of them.

The importance of self-assessment has also been highlighted by a number of writers (EMAS; QCA) and was raised by one informant:

> If people can identify for themselves what they'd done well, or gaps they think there are in their work, if they can do that for themselves then they're not relying on somebody else to pass judgement on them and I think there are some real strengths in that. (KI No 9)

For assessment to actually support ongoing learning requires a teaching and learning environment where learners have the opportunity to be independent and self-regulating through setting their own learning goals, engaging in decisions relating to what they learn and how they learn, are where they are able to monitor their own progress, and identify when they need assistance (ARG, 2002; McGivney, 2002).

3. Assessment is valid, reliable, ethical, fair, and manageable

That assessment needs to be valid, reliable, ethical, fair, and manageable seems to be common sense but it is a complex task in practice to achieve these qualities. Validity means that the assessment methods chosen actually measure the intended knowledge and skills (Brown et al. 1996; QCA). In New Zealand, however, an investigation into adult literacy led Johnson (2000) to identify that there is a lack of common standards or widely accepted means of measuring literacy gains (assessment tools). This is evidently not just a local problem as Brooks et al. (2004) found that there was a light research base on assessment instruments for adult literacy and numeracy. One informant, however, emphasised that generic assessment tools have very limited use and that there was really a need for the individual design of assessment tools to fit the particular context and sometimes for an individual learner (KI No 5). Another informant, talking about validity, stated that:

> Validity is all about the quality of the interpretations you make. The more the test can be set up to make the good interpretations, the better the assessment. (KI No 13)

Similarly reliability is a common-sense idea, that any assessment enables consistent judgements to be made about the evidence and hence about the performance of the learner. There are, however, a number of potential sources for inconsistency. Kenyon and Van Duzer (2003) identify the variables as:

> The assessment task itself, the administrator, the rater, the procedure, the conditions under which it is administered, or even the examinee. For example, an examinee might be feeling great the day of the pre-test but facing a family crisis on the day of the post-test (p. 5).

The need for assessment to be fair and ethical is also an important goal. McMillan (2000) builds on the four views of fairness described by the *Standards of educational and psychological testing* (1999)—an absence of bias, equitable treatment, an equality in outcomes, and opportunity to learn—and adds three more:

Student knowledge of learning targets and the nature of assessments prior to instruction;

Student prerequisite knowledge and skills, including test-taking skills; and

Avoiding stereotypes (p. 4).

Given this complexity, multiple assessment methods are desirable (Brown et al. 1996; DAI; VCAA), methods that take account of the diversity of learners (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2001), that use tools fit for the purpose (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2001), and that are integral with the teaching and learning so not cumbersome or unnecessarily intrusive (Brown et al. 1996; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2001). Linn and Miller (2005) also emphasise the need for multiple assessment methods and the need to select assessment procedures that are relevant to the characteristics or performance to be measured. They also warn that proper use of assessment procedures requires an awareness of their limits and it needs to be kept in mind that "the cruder the instrument, the greater the limitations, and consequently the more caution required in its use" (p. 29).

There need to be some cautions, too, in the way notions of validity, reliability, and fairness are applied as their meaning may alter in relation to the ultimate purpose of the programme. "Fairness", for example, has a different meaning when applied to a ranking exercise as compared with recognising achievement. This idea was raised by one informant:

> You're supposed to be objective and blind-marking and all of those kinds of things are the way to go. We've been doing some work that actually challenges that, that says to do a really fair assessment you do actually have to take into account who the person is to some degree and you're trading off then. We talk and write about internal fairness and external fairness. So external fairness is the old reliability stuff, internal fairness challenges that and uses equity as the basis of how fair is this for this person in this situation, how fair is this assessment. And if we make some allowance for this person justifiably how fair is that to others in the group then? So there's a whole lot of thought issues around fairness in assessment and shifting away from some of the older established views of reliability and consistency. (KI No 9)

Another informant thought that working out an adequate balance between reliability and validity was an ongoing issue in assessment:

> So that's part of the reason that I am finding it hard to articulate general principles. I think they are somewhat different depending on the stakes of the assessment so that clearly reliability and equity will play a larger role in a high stakes situation where it makes a difference between the student having the opportunity in New Zealand or not. But I guess if we talk more about lower stakes situations like progression of students through various levels of, say, a year-long certificate course in English language and the principles I guess would be somewhat different. So you'd expect them in that situation to be more standards-based with a stronger input from regular classroom activity and what teachers can do by way of assessment there. But it's more summative in nature or the transition point in their learning or in their education then the stakes change and I think maybe different principles take on more significance. (KI No 8)

Finally, there is also not just one perspective on manageability. The systems devised for the collection and recording evidence of outcomes should be appropriate to a provider's resources and take account of learners' capabilities and levels of engagement, as well as the content and duration of the programme (McGivney, 2002). Other factors to consider are balancing the efficiency of different approaches to assessment, and the skills and knowledge of the teachers (McMillan, 2000).

4.   Assessment is authentic

In a discussion paper on assessment in adult literacy, numeracy, and language Lavender, Derrick, and Brooks (2004) refer to the conceptual debate over the acquisition and the assessment of skills and whether transferability can be assessed. They identify the two main positions as "situated practices" and "generic/autonomous views". Those advocating for situated practices focus on the situation in which learning is acquired. Usually the emphasis is on learning as a social activity and on "authentic" everyday work or living situations. Any assessment would be designed to assess skills, knowledge, and dispositions in the context of a person's work or social life. In contrast those arguing for a generic/autonomous approach emphasise the underlying skills and the knowledge required in a given domain, and usually emphasise that learners should be exposed to diverse examples. Assessment then would focus on general principles and the underlying knowledge of the particular domain. While researchers such as Bransford and Schwartz (1999) do not see these approaches as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary, assessment does need to begin with issues of use and illuminate questions that people really care about (AAHE). It also needs to be integral to the course design (Brown et al. 1996; VCAA) and the learning experiences (EMAS; NIFL) and measure what actually matters (DAI; EMAS).

A number of the informants emphasised the limitation of generic assessment tools that shed little light on what the learner actually knows or that are designed for other types of learners (such as school-age learners). It was maintained that assessment should be conceptualised for the particular sector (such as a workplace). This was a point made by Cumming and Gal (2000, cited in Coben et al. 2003) who advocated that adult numeracy assessment tasks needed to be drawn from a task analysis of work. They also argued that the assessment needed to encompass a range of forms that might include oral reports, group activities, and portfolios. Further, a number of the informants stressed the need for the assessment to be authentic (KI Nos 1, 3, 4, & 5). This was not so easy to achieve given the limited tools available, the lack of expertise in the sector in developing authentic assessment tasks, and the considerable expense in actually developing tasks, something a workplace, for example, may not be willing to pay for. There is a need, too, to examine carefully what "authentic" might actually mean in the context of the programme. One informant explained that an earlier view of authentic language assessment set the tasks within the kind of language the learners would be using in the real world outside the language teaching context. However, this was not always appropriate, as it was not necessarily authentic in terms of the purpose for the learning. For example, in the area of English for academic purposes, for international students coming to study in New Zealand universities, authentic tests need to involve "the kind of tasks that you might expect university students to be engaged in, so simulating the experience of listening to a lecture, or writing an academic paper" (KI No 8).

5.   The assessment is credible to all relevant stakeholders

Programmes need to be seen to be of value by the relevant stakeholders and any evaluation of value is enhanced by an understanding of the goals and objectives of the programme. In this light assessment is enhanced through the inclusion of the relevant stakeholders and through the appropriate use of quality assurance mechanisms. Assessment in the sector need not be viewed as the task for small groups of experts but as a collaborative activity with all parties with a stake having a role in working for improvement (AAHE). This approach was modelled in a large-scale manner in the NIFL initiative in America (discussed earlier, p. 9). Believing that the effectiveness of the programme relied on shared ownership, adult learners and tutors from many states were involved in the development of a standards-based assessment system, and employers and relevant community groups were widely consulted. Associated with inclusive sector involvement are the systems required to ensure that the outcomes of the programme are credible to stakeholders, such as the learners, the teachers, the employers, and relevant community groups. The actual nature of the involvement will depend on the specific programme goals and objectives. For those that are relatively high stakes, where it is important that the credentials are portable, then some kind of national consensus about the assessment used may be required. For those that are lower stakes in

terms of formal credentials, however, recognition of achievement is just as important. One informant noted that the completion of an adult foundation level programme may be a learner's first experience of educational success, so this needs to be recognised with a certificate (KI No 3). Whatever the nature of the programme there need to be mechanisms to ensure consistency of judgements (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2001) and results need to be reported in a way that recognises the learner's achievements and demonstrates what the learner knows and can do (Brown et al. 1996).

6. Assessment is undertaken by tutors with experience and assessment practice is supported by ongoing professional development

Teacher quality is an important variable in effective assessment practice. In this context the following factors have been identified: relevant qualifications in the content area and in teaching, knowledge of assessment and assessment tools, being part of a professional community that supports ongoing learning, and being reflective and so using the assessment results to improve practice and the overall programme (Linn & Miller, 2005). The importance of appropriately skilled teachers who are able to recognise learner need, a key element in assessment, was one factor identified by Benseman et al. (2005) as making a difference to student learning.

The Assessment Reform Group (2002) highlights the important role of the teacher by including "assessment for learning should be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers". They, too, emphasise the need for continued learning through professional development. Given that effective professional assessment practices rely on teacher strengths, co-operative effort, and collegial feedback. (Reinke, 1998)

The diversity of providers and teachers was an issue raised by a number of the key informants. The need for teachers to have the required expertise was emphasised by many, as was the concern about whether some people teaching in foundation areas had the prerequisite knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning to use assessment tools in ways that were conducive to learning. There was a clear call for more professional development opportunities for those working in the sector. One informant claimed that a major obstacle to good assessment practice (in all sectors) was that teachers do not talk to each other about teaching and that any assessment that can promote such talk is good assessment (KI No 13) and another maintained that teachers in the adult learning sector are "hungry for professional development, they want to know more, they just don't know where to look" (KI No 7).

4. Assessment practices in 12 tertiary foundation learning settings

Twelve case studies were conducted to address the following:

Research question 2: What assessment approaches and tools in relation to literacy, numeracy, and language are used in diverse foundation learning settings in New Zealand?

Research question 3: What guides the choice of approaches and tools?

Research question 4: How is assessment of literacy, numeracy, and language used in diverse foundation learning programmes?

- At what stages of the programmes are literacy, numeracy, and language assessed?

- What is assessed?

- How formalised are providers' assessment procedures and practices?

- To what extent is assessment of literacy, numeracy, and language documented and shared with others in a programme?

- What strategies are used to involve the learner in assessment?

- What factors support the use of assessment to enhance teaching and learning in diverse foundation contexts?

- What constrains the use of assessment in diverse foundation learning programmes?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation?

The case studies are reported in the appendices (see pp. 77–173). The findings for each setting are summarised below. The three research questions (see above) provide the frame for examining how each setting addressed diagnostic/initial, formative, and summative assessment. An analysis of the case study findings in relation to the identified assessment principles, practice, and purposes follows in Chapter 5.

Table 4 **MCLaSS**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
MCLaSS Diagnostic/initial	Initial informal interview and self-assessment (literacy needs, pastoral care needs)	Teacher's personal knowledge of ESOL learners (TPPK)	Filter for eligibility and specific placement in programme
	Use of adapted AELLPA[+]		Diagnosis of literacy needs
Formative	Continuous teacher observation	TPPK	Adapting tasks to learner's needs and allowing for rapid progression as required
	Monitoring sheets that describe competencies	Used at teacher's discretion	
	Written records/portfolios kept	Programme expectations that learning intentions are clearly identified	Tracking progress
	Feedback conversation in own language	Culturally appropriate vehicle for feedback	To familiarise students with interactive pedagogy and adopt it if appropriate
Summative	Written record of assessed skills	Published standards at four levels for each competency (not apparent, beginning, consolidated, established)	Promotion to next level
	Portfolio of work		ROL[++] for other organisations

Factors: * Rationale for use of assessment approach/tool.
      * What happens/enhances the use of the selected tool/approach?

[+] Australian English Language and Literacy Proficiency Assessment

[++] Record of Learning

(Case study Appendix 1, pp. 77–84)

Table 5 **Literacy Aotearoa**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Literacy Aotearoa (main) and WINZ Diagnostic/initial	12-page structured assessment (personal details, verbal, reading, writing, maths, competencies)	Observation checklist ↕ TPPK (only most experienced tutors)	Construction of a negotiated learning plan
	Combines self-assessment of confidence, competencies, self-identified needs, and learning strategies (TPPK) with tutor observation		
	Writing, texts read etc attached to records	Maximising learner ownership/protecting learners' emotional wellbeing	
Formative (main) not WINZ	Self-evaluation against learning plan	Maximising learner ownership/protecting learners' emotional wellbeing Emphasis on student learning to learn	Construction of student profile record Informs next steps
	Tutor evaluation against learning plan	TPPK of overseeing tutors	Accountability → checking and supporting tutor's implementation of learning plan
Literacy Aotearoa (main) and WINZ Summative	Varied but external tool course • Driver's licence theory • NCES unit standards	Student's personal goals	Certification to selected goal
		NQF compliance protocols	Accountability (funding, QA procedures)

(Case study Appendix 2, pp. 85–92)

Table 6 **Literacy Aotearoa & Tongan**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Literacy Aotearoa & Tongan Diagnostic/initial	Adaptation of LA tool		To plan programme
	Group assessment	Cultural appropriateness	Address **group** and individual literacy needs
Literacy Aotearoa & Tongan Formative	Fono to gather feedback on learning, feed forward	Contextualisation – applicability of learning to everyday life (home, community)	To evaluate and assess ongoing community learning priorities
	Notes kept of learning in sessions	Assumption that learning challenges are shared by group	
Summative	**None** for learners (in addition to above)		Reports for accountability (QA/funding)

(Case study Appendix 3 & 4 pp. 93–101)

Table 7 **Trade and Commerce**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	Reading and writing assessed as students complete personal records that focus on achievements and interests	Making the assessment a positive experience for the learner Maximising flexibility Not time-bound	Learner literacy profile created Used as a learning baseline
	Analysis of ROL[++] from earlier NQF summative assessments	1–5 rating scale with guidelines for interpretation	Used to provide individual focus for literacy development
	In-house contextualised diagnostic tools (literacy, numeracy)		Set short-, medium-, long-term goals
Formative	Regular meetings between programme manager and students	Assessment seen as a constant never-ending cycle	Goals are reviewed and new ones set as necessary
	Targeted feedback with opportunity to revisit work	Builds confidence by focusing on one thing at a time for improvement, and develops sense of achievement	Supports students to achieve next learning step
	Informal conversations with students	TPPK	Adapting programme as necessary
	Record of achievement kept	Students have access to these	Identification of emerging patterns in student's learning
	Samples of student work internally moderated	Builds TPPK	Guidance for tutors
Summative	A range of nationally recognised qualifications	Students' personal goals	Certification to selected goal
	Profile recording achievement of specific goals	NQF compliance protocols	Accountability

(Case study Appendix 5, pp. 103–106)

Table 8 **BEST Training Pacific Institute for Education and Development**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	Interview (both 1-1) interview with panel interview Observation of how individual works in team	Gruelling selection process leads to sense of achievement and builds high expectations	Filter
	Students complete written profile	Element of self-selection—a number drop out at each point	Gain an idea of literacy level
	Generic learning needs analysis linked to NCES	Element of self-assessment and involvement in own learning	Develop individual career training plan Provide baseline data
Formative	Continuous observations (both in-class and in the workplace)	TPPK Contextualised assessment	Identification of next learning steps and goal setting
	Meeting with course director	Holistic approach (course director accesses assessment information across courses)	
	Daily journals	Self-assessment/ director evaluation	Monitoring progress/identifies barriers to learning
	Staff discussion of student progress and curriculum, assessment links	Build TPPK	
Summative	NCES unit standards	Requirements of NZQA for accredited providers	NCES
	Student profile including individual training plan, and progression		Accountability

(Case study Appendix 6, pp. 107–120)

Table 9 **Workbase**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	Informal interview (approximately 20 minutes)	Needs of individual mapped against needs of organisation and to Plastic unit standards	Diagnosis of oral language skills and individual learning goals
		Assessment data aggregated to protect individuals	Learning plan developed
	Workplace-generated literacy assessment items, e.g. reading safety signage, filling in forms	Intent of this is to increase learners' confidence, motivation to learn, and to develop the language of learning	
	Math diagnosis where students do some calculations and explain strategies used		
	Feedback given as soon as possible from initial assessment	Plastic qualifications include two maths units	Identifies specific needs
Formative	Tutor observations as students are encouraged to "think aloud". Immediate 1-1 feedback	TPPK	Identify next learning steps
	Ongoing record of student's work kept for individual		Tracking progress, determining support needed
	Tutor has monthly meetings with company		Identifying emerging issues
			Accountability
	Internal moderation system including weekly meetings for tutors	Building TPPK	Quality assurance
Summative	Unit standards	Individual only assessed for qualification when tutor feels they are ready. NQF compliance	Certification – Plastics qualification
		Tension between motivational aspects of unit standards and their tendency to shape programme rather than programme being driven by learner needs	

(Case study Appendix 7, pp. 121–127)

Table 10   **WelTec and Formway Furniture**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	An hour-long initial assessment tailored to the individual. Items drawn from the workplace, e.g. instructions for operating machines, leave applications	Only Workbase personnel and individual learners saw assessment data. Company received team results. Contextualised literacy/numeracy tasks	Diagnosis of needs. Design individual programmes
Formative	Tutor observation and feedback both in individual learning programmes and in the workplace	TPPK Minimising distinction between learning and work	Adapting tasks to meet learners' needs
	Workbooks internally moderated	Building TPPK	Quality assurance
Summative	NQF unit standards—ESOL, generic, furniture specific	Evidence for unit standards gathered from authentic activities as much as possible	Certification
	ALAF reading and writing assessments six months apart	Provided snapshot of progress—progression within steps but not between	Accountability

(Case study Appendix 8, pp. 129–137)

Table 11 **Pacific Island Early Childhood Education (PI-ECE)**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	Interview and written account of themselves in either English or their heritage language	A student who has good literacy skills in a Pasifika language and demonstrates ability to cope with tertiary level study may be accepted even if lack effective communication skills in English	Filter Access to learning support Development of individual learning plans
Formative	Students actively encouraged to talk through assignments	Peer support. Use of student's strongest language	
	Some assignments can be presented for "formative assessment"	Scaffolding students to demonstrate mastery	Student has opportunity to rework assignment, responding to feedback
	Peer-assessment is an integral part of most modules		Students have opportunity to respond to peer feedback to improve their work
	Self-assessment—regular reflections on learning	Aims to develop reflective practitioners	Identifies what has been learnt and possible next steps
	Staff share information on students at regular staff meetings	Holistic approach	Identifies where additional support is needed
Summative	Assignments with explicit learning outcomes, performance criteria, and marking schedules attached	Opportunities for re-assessment or alternative assessment where appropriate Exemplars of A, B, & C level assignments provided for heritage language assessors	Certification—Diploma in Teaching PI-ECE
	Moderation—internal and external	New lecturers provided with handbook on moderation practices Building TPPK	Quality assurance Accountability

(Case study Appendix 9, pp. 139–147)

Table 12 **Lifeworks**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	Almost no assessment prior to enrolment		
	Initial visit from coach to student to assess literacy, numeracy, computing skills, and ability to manage distance learning and persistency	Coaches provided with guide including examples of skills and knowledge at different levels	
		Coaches have been introduced to persistency/non-persistency model	Ascertain level of support needed
		TPPK	Develop learning plan
Formative	Each kit provides "practice" activities that students are advised to complete before undertaking formal assessment tasks	Within the distance learning context timely, specific feedback to learners is a challenge	Help students monitor their own progress. To prepare for summative assessment
		Coaches play a vital role in helping students make meaning from pre-prepared learning and assessment tasks	
		TPPK	
	Self-assessment—regular reflections on learning	Aims to scaffold learners into taking increasing responsibility for their learning	Identifies what has been learnt and possible next steps
Summative	NCES unit standards	NQF compliance	NCES
			Open Polytechnic Certificate in Personal and Vocational Development
	Moderation—internal and external	Regional meetings of coaches to develop TPPK— consistency of judgements	Quality assurance Accountability

(Case study Appendix 10, pp. 149–158)

Table 13   **Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT)**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	ILETS results or a placement test on language competency	Test well known to staff so it is easy to interpret scores	Placement
	Interview in week four or five	By this stage students more confident and aware of demands of course	Areas of weakness identified and actions agreed upon
Formative	Opportunities to resubmit work; specific feedback	Scaffolding to mastery; learning intentions and success criteria shared with learners	Students act on feedback to improve performance
	Tutor observation	TPPK	Identifies area for improvement
	Portfolio system	Weekly tasks	Tracking progress
	Moderation	Building TPPK	Quality assurance
Summative	Exams and portfolio	Foundation programme concurrent with other courses so students' degrees not unduly delayed	

(Case study Appendix 11, pp. 161–165)

Table 14   **WITT – The Learning Centre**

Programme	Assessment tools and approaches	Factors that guide use of the assessment	Use made of assessment information
Diagnostic/initial	Initial diagnostic interview		Establish rapport, identify learning goals
	Selection of standardised tools: • Marie Neale Reading Assessment • Schonell Special Assessment • Aston Index Vocabulary Assessment • Wepman Auditory Discrimination Assessment	TPPK to decide which tests to use	Identify areas of difficulty
Formative	Learning log maintained by tutor		Open and debrief learners at beginning and end of each session
	Observations	TPPK	Learners respond to feedback
	Self-assessment	Encourages learner responsibility	Goal setting, next steps
Summative	Student goes back to "normal" programme of study and passes	Little emphasis on summative assessment	

(Case study Appendix 12, pp. 167–175)

5. An analysis of case study findings in relation to assessment principles, practice, and purposes

Introduction

This section of the report presents an analysis of the case studies in relation to:

1. the match to the principles derived from the literature and the interviews from key informants; and

2. features of good practice in diagnostic/initial, formative, and summative assessment as we found these in relation to each of the principles.

The section concludes with a brief review of this analysis in relation to the three broad purposes of assessment, with their matching assessment paradigms, first outlined in Chapter 3. Insights from the workshop participants have been used to frame the comments made in this final section.

Following this analysis, the report makes recommendations for future strengthening of assessment practice for foundation learning in the tertiary sector.

The assessment principles in action

Chapter 3 outlined six broad principles for good assessment practice in foundation learning settings. These principles were derived from the combination of interviews with key informants in the sector and relevant research literature. In this section we revisit those principles to see how they were exemplified in the various case studies, and to identify obvious gaps or points of tension in current practice. The discussion of most principles is organised into subsections on initial/diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment. It will be evident that each of these has more implications for good practice of some principles than of others.

Transparent assessment goals and clarity of purpose

The case study *programmes* all have clearly articulated goals. For example, one provider aims to "develop accessible quality literacy services to ensure the people of Aotearoa are critically literate" (Literacy Aotearoa, n.d.). Some providers target specific subgroups of the population, as expressed in the mission statement of BEST: "To work with Pacific people to fulfil the educational, vocational and business aspirations of the Pacific Island communities by providing quality educational programmes that responsively and effectively meet their learning and career needs."

It is important in the context of this research to distinguish between broad programme goals and more specific assessment goals. Clarity of one does not necessarily translate to clarity of the other in action. How well did the assessment goals match the programme goals, and were they clear to the learners?

Goals for initial/diagnostic assessment

A common theme of the case studies is the provision of learning programmes that are consistent with the stated programme aims and that are designed to meet the needs of individual students. The assessment approach taken in the early stages of each programme tends to mirror this learner-centred emphasis.

In the BEST programme, for example, a comprehensive learner needs analysis is undertaken by the course director and the student with the aim of building high expectations and linking these to the requirements of work. Similarly, in the two case studies where learning takes place within the actual workplace (WelTec and Workbase), purpose developed workplace generated items are used as the basis of initial assessment of learner needs. The design of assessment tools that require the use of daily (or nightly) work skills must underscore for these learners that the goals for their learning do have direct and immediate value for them. While there was some variation in the strategies used, we found a common pattern of great care being taken to ensure that the *initial assessment* purpose/goal was made clear to the individual student. Indeed several of the research informants stressed the considerable care needed to avoid potentially negative impacts of early assessment events on learners' confidence and motivation (see, for example, the advice provided to Literacy Aotearoa tutors).

Goals for summative assessment

The diverse nature of the summative assessment activities used to provide recognition of programme achievement also highlights the importance given to meeting these more specific goals of the learners, within the overall framework of programme goals. In the context of this first assessment principle, the key question for analysis is whether these summative assessment goals (presumably totally clear to the tutors) were also clear for the learners themselves.

Some summative goals have *apparently* low-key stakes in terms of consequences. For example, within the Literacy Aotearoa group of case studies, the Pacific Women's Literacy Group, did not use formal summative assessment and no qualifications were at stake. However this was not to say there was no formal recognition of achievement – just that the major focus was on addressing and meeting the evolving needs of the group as a whole. Because the programme was so responsive to learners' needs the goals were clear to everyone, including the collective desire of the learners for assessment to be group and not individual focused. In this context a fono held to celebrate learning achievements, or a successful field trip to Rotorua, act as summative celebrations. A benefit of this broad, informal approach to summative assessment is that ripples of encouragement may spread wider in the learners' communities, as we have seen. Arguably, then, we should revise our judgement that the summative "assessment", such as it was, had low-key consequences, when the effects were so widely felt.

Some students of Literacy Aotearoa and other programmes had the gaining of a New Zealand driver's licence as a summative goal. Obviously this high-stakes goal is very clear to them, and LTSA assessment practice also makes very clear what they need to do to achieve that goal. Learners have considerable opportunity to practice the literacies involved in integrating small diagrams with simple written text as they practise the freely-available multiple choice tests, one of which they will then be assigned to sit.

In other programmes, ones linked to qualifications registered on the NQF for example, summative achievement was more formally recognised. In a number of the case studies the unit standards gained for the NCES or for industry-specific National Certificates were viewed as not only providing a vehicle for switching participants into learning but also as contributing to building the personal and social skills needed for successful employment. In other programmes, while the learning recognised through some of the unit standards achieved may not have been as directly useful as other learning, the gaining of unit standards was viewed as motivational and as providing an encouraging platform from which to continue learning. In all these cases, because unit standards specify "performance criteria" to be met, the goals of the summative assessment are again very clear.

Goals for formative assessment

In programmes where learners sought temporary support to develop a specific aspect of their literacy or numeracy skills (as at WITT and CPIT for example), summative assessment was part of some other course or programme for which they were also enrolled. In these cases self-referral meant that learners came with their formative goals, at least in mind if not fully shaped, and tutors helped them clarify these through the initial assessment. In these cases learners' ownership of their learning challenges and goals contributed to clarity for formative assessment as they worked to address the issues raised.

In some situations formative assessment goals related to the successful use of literacy skills in real-life contexts. For example, the Tongan women demonstrated their growing skills when they could open a bank account or read a bank statement. Literacy Aotearoa tutors kept brief notes of their success in such sessions.

In other cases it is less clear how tutors and learners identified, shaped, and measured success against ongoing, formative learning goals as their programmes evolved. It may be that the focus of formal assessment goal setting has been more on both ends of the programme – that is, on initial assessment and then on summative assessment. This could be a point of discussion for ongoing professional learning.

Assessment aims to improve learning and pays attention to the needs and interests of the learner and to the process of learning

The case study programmes place a high importance on meeting individual learner needs in the context of the aim of the particular programme. The aim is to provide a supportive, encouraging learning environment where assessment is integral to the teaching programme. There is also an importance placed on the relationship between learners and tutors and one aim of the initial assessment is often to establish rapport and trust between these two.

Initial/diagnostic assessments for learning

Some of the case studies describe the use of *standardised* tests to diagnose specific learning needs at the initial stages of a programme. CPIT, for example, uses the internationally recognised IELTS tests of ESOL skills, and delays the initial interview for several weeks so that students have time to evaluate their needs in relation to the courses they are taking. WITT uses a wide range of assessment tools for spelling, reading, and vocabulary. While recognising the limitations of some of these tools, the tutors say they are the only tools they have available and they do give a useful starting point. MCLaSS follows up an initial interview by assessing the general level of a student's needs by using an adaptation of the Australian English Language and Literacy Proficiency Assessment, which assesses listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

It is interesting to note that in these cases quite different tools are used to do essentially the same type of initial assessment. One tutor who took part in the ALAF trials would have liked more work undertaken on these reading and writing tools in the belief that they would be useful for diagnostic purposes.

In other cases initial assessment tools have been *purpose developed*. CPIT, for example, has developed its own language competency tools, to assess reading, writing, and vocabulary. Literacy Aotearoa's comprehensive initial assessment tools include assessment related to verbal communication (self-assessment of confidence), reading skills (assessors observe strategies used), writing skills (again assessor watches how the tasks are undertaken and an observation checklist is completed), and maths skills (open-ended questions and a self-assessment). These tools can be flexibly adapted to different types of situations—as in the case of the Tongan women's group, where the initial assessment was modified to a group-based assessment.

While it does not initially diagnose literacy learning needs, LifeWorks is in the process of developing an initial assessment of *persistency*, which will be very important if learners are to succeed in a distance-learning setting. The Open Polytechnic tailors plans for ongoing

support from the assigned learning coach according to results from this initial assessment, demonstrating another way of meeting anticipated learning needs.

Continuing the theme that learning needs can be *motivational* as well as skill-related, the initial assessment process in the BEST programme is used to develop a picture of the skills, experience, and aspirations of prospective cadets, and to build a desire to be one of the chosen learners on the programme. It is food for thought that, unlike many of the other case studies, BEST cadets learn as a group, with no specific initial diagnosis of their individual learning needs, yet almost all of them succeed in reaching their learning and employment goals. The apparent assumption that their learning needs may be as much motivational as skill-specific seems to be well founded in this case.

In some cases the use of *motivating contexts* is a feature of purpose developed assessment tools. This may be as simple as asking prospective students to write about themselves in their most proficient language (PI-ECE). Obviously, assessing tutors need skills in a range of Pacific Islands heritage languages, or access to those with such skills. In other cases initial assessment may involve the use of workplace documentation and processes (such as instructions for machines and processes, health and safety instruction, leave application forms) to provide a meaningful and motivating context for literacy, language, and numeracy assessments. In these cases the tutors who design the initial assessments need a thorough working knowledge of the demands of the specific workplace, in addition to skills in diagnosing literacy and numeracy needs. Clearly, the design and use of contextualised initial assessments requires skills in addition to those that would be expected for sound but routine assessment practice.

It is common practice for individual learning plans to be devised as an outcome of initial assessment of learning needs. For example the LifeWorks coach and Literacy Aotearoa tutors work with each student to develop a learning contract for personal development, vocational development, and action planning. In some cases discretion concerning the outcome of initial assessments is very important if prospective learners are to have confidence to become involved. For example, in the workplace case studies (WelTec, Workbase) only the individual and the tutor see the actual results, with the company receiving a team-based report for accountability purposes.

Formative assessment of learning progress

A common theme was for assessment to be ongoing through continual monitoring against the initial learning plan (for example Literacy Aotearoa, Workbase, LifeWorks). There are examples of this occurring in very systematic ways with regular meetings between learners and their tutors to discuss progress against the initial plan (WITT and Workbase). Another approach is assessment against specified competencies undertaken in a continuous manner through observation (MCLaSS). The embedded tutor model (WelTec) allowed this *interactive* monitoring to occur both within the individual teaching sessions and as part of the everyday exchanges as learners carried out their routine work. The learning log forms the basis of a kind of "running record" with an emphasis on its use for "learning to learn".

There are opportunities in some programmes for learning through formative feedback on a first draft of an assignment that is then reworked for either resubmission (CPIT) or for the summative assessment (PI-ECE). Such planned formative assessment motivates students by building towards summative assessment in a very purposeful way and, typically, marking schedules are given out to guide students as they complete a task.

Value is given to self-assessment in a number of programmes, with the ultimate aim of developing independent learners who will continue to improve their skills. This may be achieved through the completion of a learning journal (see LifeWorks and BEST). Continuity in the monitoring of journals encourages students to take them seriously as part of their learning. Such continuity is typically achieved by having one specified tutor/coach who has responsibility for reading and discussing journal entries, regardless of the number of tutors who are actually interacting with the students in other ways. There are both benefits and drawbacks for this. While the students' overall progress is clearer, there may be a cost in terms of missed opportunities to identify further learning that would be more evident to tutors within specific subjects.

Self- and peer-assessment did pose some challenges for those working with international students or recent immigrants when the requirement to monitor their own learning was interpreted as a failure of the teacher to fulfil their role properly (CPIT, MCLaSS).

The case studies do not give a detailed view of what happens during the actual learning interactions. How do tutors *anticipate*—and hence *plan for*—formative assessment opportunities? The nature of the planned formative interactions is implied rather than being explicit. Without opportunities for direct observation of interactions (which would obviously pose difficulties of their own in sensitive situations), with follow-up learning-focused conversations, we are reliant on tutor assurances that feedback is both planned for and used for the purpose of shaping next learning steps.

Similarly the methodology used did not allow us to gather evidence concerning ways in which assessment provided shared feedback that teachers and developers might use to collaboratively improve practice. While current practice obviously works very well for experienced tutors and their students, it does not provide a basis for sharing and discussing good formative assessment practice with less experienced tutors. Without such a formative assessment knowledge base, it is not possible to anticipate learning needs, but only to react to them when (if) they are recognised.

Summative assessment and learning needs

In the workplace programmes a learner is only assessed for the qualification (for unit standards) when the tutor identifies that they are ready and can do what is required. This is manageable because the specific assessment evidence is generated in the context of the ongoing employment tasks, and the tutor is embedded in the workplace. We note, however, that some tutors saw a tension between the motivation provided by the possibility of being assessed for unit standards and the actual learning needs of the workers. If what is being assessed is not actually what it would be most productive for students to learn, there is an obvious need for debate about how to solve this complex issue.

Assessment is valid, reliable, ethical, fair, and manageable

Manageability appeared to be acceptable in most programmes as the assessment was integral to the programme and reporting requirements were clearly specified.

Many tutors see validity as a priority over reliability. This is appropriate given that the purpose of most of the documented programmes is to enable the learners to begin their learning journey. However where reliability assumes more importance—as in summative assessment for qualifications—ways to balance validity and reliability tensions have been discussed if not resolved. Because tensions within this principle are most at issue when the stakes are highest, we begin with a discussion of summative assessment.

Tensions between validity and reliability in summative assessment

Emphasising validity usually means working with the students to ensure that the assessment focuses on meeting their goals, in contexts that are authentic for them. In the PI-ECE case study this meant allowing students to initially use the language that would best allow them to demonstrate their learning, and employing assessors as necessary with fluency in these various languages. However, because these students were also embarked on seeking a qualification, reliability issues did have to be taken into account. Reliability was sought by the use of clear standards and exemplars of work to meet these standards, so that assessors, whatever the language they were reading in, would be more likely to achieve shared understandings of the quality of learning to be demonstrated. The PI-ECE tutors did note, however, that some heritage language assessors' lack of knowledge of the ECE learning context might compromise their ability to make good assessment decisions. This is clearly a tricky situation in which competing needs of validity and reliability must be carefully balanced. Validity may be achieved by working with learners "on the job" to assess their skills in the context of their regular work, as in the Workbase and WelTec case studies (plastics factory, Formway factory). The NCES unit standards applicable to these job-related skills are then

used when students are ready. The well-established assessment and moderation procedures that accompany the unit standards help to ensure that reliability is also a feature of the assessment at this point. Again we see that the need for reliability, in contexts where validity is the primary concern, is addressed by the development of a more open assessment process where decisions are, at least in principle, available for public scrutiny and discussion. The use of a variety of tasks to provide evidence of learning also helps ensure validity. The LifeWorks course, through its use of both the NCES and The Open Polytechnic Certificate in Personal and Vocational Development, provides an interesting example of the provision of multiple opportunities and types of tasks for demonstrating summative learning.

Moderation can be an important tool for achieving validity (in pre-assessment moderation of tasks and assessment schedules) and reliability (in post-assessment moderation of actual assessment decisions). We found rather patchy evidence of moderation. Post-assessment moderation was more likely to be discussed when students were being assessed for formal qualifications on NQF —for example for the NCES.

Regional meetings of LifeWorks coaches provided them an avenue for ensuring consistency in assessment decision making. The programme has been revised in light of feedback from moderators, coaches, and LifeWorks staff so there were clear elements of both pre- and post-assessment moderation at work here. In some case studies tutors had access to established post-assessment moderation procedures through ITOs (e.g. PaMPITO) or as a requirement of their workplace quality assurance measures (e.g. PI-ECE's use of an external moderator). However in some instances it was not clear that regular, organised pre- and post-assessment moderation took place. In fact, there was some recognition of a possible lack of consistency in interpretation of assessments between tutors at different locations (for example, in the MCLaSS case study), with tutors working to improve this through organised contact meetings. Again, this seems to be an area that could benefit from further scrutiny and debate.

Increasing the validity of formative assessment

For the Tongan women's group, showing their learning in community contexts, often working together, was a feature of valid assessment. Both these practices could be seen as problematic within traditional empirical assessment paradigms, but they are clearly appropriately motivating and supportive of success in these foundation learning settings. In fact other recent research has called for more attention to be paid to developing assessment of group learning, since so much importance is attached to processes of collaborative knowledge creation in the "knowledge economy" (Gilbert, 2005). This is an area that could be worth a more thorough exploration.

In several of the cases the focus was on formative assessment after the initial diagnostic process and this was entirely appropriate to the learner's goals. For example, in the WITT case study feedback was provided in a 1–1 situation and there was no formal summative assessment, as the focus was on improving student capabilities, not on "passing". Their other course work provided evidence of whether they had reached the appropriate standard and so could be seen as a check on the validity of their skills development in the foundation programme. Prospective students would, presumably, "vote with their feet" if the formative assessment was not seen as being valid for their needs.

Validity and reliability in initial assessment

As we have seen, validity and reliability in diagnostic and initial assessment are often achieved through the use of standardised tests. While some are widely used and have well-established shared standards and assessment practice (for example the IELTS language tests) others have been purpose developed by the institutions that use them. Some, such as the persistency measure being used by LifeWorks, are not yet shared with other providers. Others, such as Literacy Aotearoa's initial assessment tools, are more widely known and discussed. However the interpretation of the *meaning* of these assessments for next learning steps seems to be related to holding deep expertise in the sector, and may often draw on tutors' tacit knowledge. (We note that several case studies emphasised that initial diagnostic work is carried out by the most experienced tutors.) While commercial sensitivity is an issue

in a competitive sector, we note again the key role played by public sharing of assessment practice for the establishment of validity and reliability. It is of concern that we found little evidence of the use of shared standards between providers, or even between sites for the same provider.

Assessment is authentic

The manner in which authenticity is achieved has already been illustrated under Principle 3 above. In most case studies assessment was integral to, or at least very closely aligned with, learning experiences and, often, actual work or life contexts.

For many Pacific Islands students the manner of learning and of assessment is an important aspect of authenticity. The case studies provide rich examples of contexts in which practices such as initial prayers and the valuing of other cultural contexts, along with opportunities for collaborative effort, provide conditions in which many Pacific peoples feel more comfortable both to learn, and to show that they have learned.

The range of ways in which this principle is being met is a strength of the case studies.

The assessment is credible to all relevant stakeholders

The case studies suggest that assessment is seen as credible by most stakeholders, including learners, tutors, and employers. Because summative assessment has the highest credibility stakes, we again begin the discussion there.

Credibility of national summative assessment instruments

Most case studies had programmes that prepared learners for some sort of external recognition of their learning. As we have seen, summative assessment typically involves the use of unit standards that can be credited to various NQF courses, most commonly the National Certificate in Employment Skills (NCES), but also other industry-specific certificates. Where unit standards were not typically used (for example by Literacy Aotearoa[8] or MCLaSS) there could be other qualifications related to gaols such as gaining a driver's licence.

The evidence suggests that employers and students value NQF-related qualifications, adding to the motivation to succeed with learning. For example all the BEST cadets worked hard to achieve their NCES in the first months of their programme. Their success in doing so, and in their ongoing cadetships, attests to the effectiveness of this study course in preparing them for the workplace (along with the support they received from both their tutors and their workplace mentors of course).

In some cases, for example WelTec, formal recognition of and celebration of achievement took place in the actual workplace, emphasising the value placed on this evidence of learning success and of the improved ability of learners to complete their work. We have, however, already noted the tensions in this practice for those learners with high literacy, numeracy, or language needs. To get ITO funding a learner needs to be signed up for at least 20 credits. Then there will be a tension between working to pass the unit standards relevant to the workplace and developing basic literacy skills.

Credibility attached to other assessments

With other types of summative assessment, as with initial and formative assessment, there is a "proof of the pudding" quality to credibility measures. Does the assessment provide information that is demonstrably helpful for its intended purpose? MCLaSS provides a Certificate of Skills as a result of assessment of learning, and with permission of the learners, this information can be passed to other educational providers. The eagerness with which places are sought on MCLaSS courses attests to the value learners attach to gaining such certificates.

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[8] Literacy Aotearoa does have accreditation for NCES, where this is appropriate.

As we have already seen, the usefulness of initial and formative assessment in guiding ongoing learning decisions, and for monitoring progress towards learning goals, is a good measure of assessment credibility.

Assessment is undertaken by tutors with experience and assessment practice is supported by ongoing professional development

The tutors have a range of qualifications and experience. Some have primary teaching qualifications, and this is required for some programmes (for example BEST, Workbase). Some tutors have postgraduate qualifications in adult education, or special education. Some have specialist training in, for example, SPELD. MCLaSS tutors typically have TESOL qualifications and are at least bilingual, with a range of languages between them. Being bilingual is especially important where tutors work with students in their strongest language and build on this to develop their English. With the exception of the Samoan language there are limited assessors who are fluent in the heritage language and also experts in ECE which, as we have seen, has created some challenges in the PI-ECE programme.

The programmes described in the case studies demand authentic and valid assessment tasks. The development of these requires considerable professional expertise. The judgement of the teachers is critical to identifying the learners' current knowledge and skill in the literacy, numeracy, and/or language, as well as in knowing how to support the learner to build on these understandings. Both facets of their work demand considerable professional expertise. The critical importance of such expertise was one factor identified by Benseman et al. (2005) as enhancing learner gain.

Many tutors are paid, others are voluntary. There are issues where voluntary tutors are required to undertake considerable professional training in their own time. For example Literacy Aotearoa's volunteers are expected to take a training programme of 100 hours. Where these teachers have specialist qualifications related to the NQF, they are most likely to have gained US 4098: "Assess candidate performance using supplied assessment activities" and US 11551: "Moderate assessment". Literacy Aotearoa paid tutors, BEST, and LifeWorks tutors all mentioned gaining these unit standards.

While practice varies, paid tutors are entitled to up to 10 days of professional development each year. For example Workbase provides a development programme for tutors that covers assessment, developing strategies to address needs, and ICT skills for recording and monitoring learning progression. LifeWorks coaches have a 3–4-day initial training programme, with ongoing monthly professional development of at least 4 hours' duration. Literacy Aotearoa works closely with other foundation-learning providers to provide professional development and provides tutors with teaching notes. Tutors often have national connections via their relevant associations and conferences or the relevant professional groups. There seems to be a pool of tutors with different strengths, who are also in touch with the requirements of the other programmes but as yet all these connections do not appear to have been translated into a strong and coherent community of practice.

Purposes of assessment

Finally in this section we return to the three broad assessment purposes and paradigms described in Chapter 3 to address some additional aspects of the analysis that could be the focus of ongoing work. This section also draws on the insights provided by the providers, policy makers, and researchers who attended the three workshops.

Systems accountability

In all the case studies except the CPIT and the Diploma of Teaching PI-ECE the programmes provided were free to the learners. To provide accountability for the public money spent, all these organisations participated in quality assurance processes and reported to key

stakeholders. For this purpose, learner progression was monitored and reported in all programmes.

EFTS-funded programmes, for example at the CPIT, were overseen by their institution's academic boards, and in the case of the ACE Diploma of Teaching and LifeWorks Certificate, by external moderation and monitoring. MCLaSS, Literacy Aotearoa, and WITT reported quarterly to the TEC on the progress of their learners. The programmes funded under the Workplace Basic Skills funds were monitored by Workbase. Workbase itself reported to the employer monthly, and to the relevant ITO. The PTE, Trade and Commerce, reported monthly to the TEC. The BEST cadetship had multiple stakeholders to report to, including the TEC, MSD, and Manukau City Council.

Some workshop participants stressed that testing must not be the driver of funding because this can have a distorting effect that is counter to the goals of lifelong learning. They discussed how this plays out with the NCES which was never intended to be a benchmark for literacy, numeracy, and language learning. It is easy to see how the credibility attached to unit standards and qualifications makes NCES success data seem attractive to providers, funders, and learners. However, the tension is all too evident if the impact of unit standards assessment has an overbearing influence and drives teaching to the standards rather than to students' needs.

Another aspect of this tension was highlighted in the workshops when participants expressed concerns that only the most experienced tutors were involved in assessment in some programmes. They thought that funding issues were behind this practice, which could be seen to ration expensive expertise. We have already noted the detrimental effect of not involving some tutors in diagnostic assessment, who are then not so well placed to effectively address ongoing learning needs. If this practice also extends to summative assessment there is another set of impacts on the potential for good formative assessment. Tutors who are not involved in summative assessment are not well placed to help students prepare effectively for this process or to address their individual needs for strengthening their assessment skills.

The monitoring organisations often require a different type of data than that needed to inform the learning goals and ongoing programmes of individual students. The workshop participants stressed the tension between teaching to the individual learning plan devised with the student and teaching to the outcomes that providers are contracted to deliver. Further, it was pointed out the change in literacy practice often occurs before actual literacy gains which may not be evident until some time after the programme. Also, as Chapter 3 outlined, data that is required for accountability purposes may be expected to be empirically generated and generalisable, whereas assessment data to inform teaching and learning needs to be richly detailed and informative for individual students. Other research has suggested that provided sufficiently rich data is collected for the latter purpose, if care is paid to assessment design, it can be relatively easy to aggregate data for accountability purposes (Wilson, 2004). This is an issue that bears further investigation.

Assessment for teaching and learning

As we have seen, assessment was an integral part of each of the case study programmes. Those involved in teaching used information from informal and formal assessment to focus efforts in relation to individual and group tuition. In the context of the current study it should be noted that assessment did not necessarily focus on literacy, numeracy, and language if the more immediate goal was to achieve certain unit standards for an NQF qualification. This is also an issue that bears further investigation.

One way to address this dilemma, discussed by the workshop participants, was the development of a bank of assessment tools. This suggestion was also made by Marr et al. (2003) as part of their research in the Holistic Adult Numeracy Assessment Project. They highlighted the tension, evident also in the workshops, that while potentially useful this could be seen as a move away from student-centred learning which should have the flexibility to grow from the interest and needs of each student.

The workshop participants felt that a bank of assessment tools, and possibly exemplars and stories of good assessment, could be helpful if it was supported by training. This would need to cover both use of the tools and their appropriate modification to new settings. Some people

were concerned that these tools might become the de facto curriculum, something that professional development would also need to address.

The workshop participants discussed the need to balance supporting the learner with providing stretch and challenge. In their study of practice Benseman et al. (2005) observed tutors highly engaged with their learners but pedagogical challenge was less evident. The limited dialogue by students and the lack of "wait time" by tutors when questioning limited the scope for formative feedback. We have already noted that this study does not provide rich data about actual classroom interactions and this remains an area in need of further investigation. A focus in this area could well supply exemplars of good formative assessment practice. Lack of experience is not the only issue. As workshop participants said, class sizes and diversity of learners' needs in large classes can also be a barrier to good formative assessment.

Assessment for lifelong learning

The goal of most programmes was to encourage lifelong learning, with assessment for learning intended to help learners become more independent. The assessment approach reinforced this when emphasis was given to self-referral (see CPIT, Literacy Aotearoa, WITT) and to self-assessment. The NCES can be one useful vehicle to support this purpose but it is not clear how involved students were in making judgements about how well they had met the performance criteria for the standards and tasks. While some might regard such practice as part of summative assessment as "cheating", the research literature on lifelong learning makes it clear that learners do need to be involved in making summative judgements about their learning, not just in making decisions about their progress during the learning (Aikenhead, 1997; Bryce & Withers, 2003). This is an issue on which the case studies have barely touched and it could be a focus of ongoing work.

Another contentious aspect was raised in the workshops. Aikenhead's description of the critical-theoretic assessment paradigm for lifelong learning (1997) makes it clear that this paradigm can raise political issues. The issue raised in this case is the need to develop a definition of literacy for New Zealand/Aotearoa that takes account of the two official languages of the nation.

A further issue raised within this paradigm is that teachers as well as learners must be seen to be lifelong learners. The workshop participants raised several questions in this regard. They said that as working in this area is regarded as a marginal profession there has been little opportunity to gain high status and valued relevant qualifications. Some felt that qualifications in adult literacy would help enhance the status of the sector.

While the case studies have documented opportunities for professional development the workshop participants noted some disincentives in practice. For example, some tutors are given no cover for their classes when attending professional development, so they tend not to go because this would necessitate cancelling classes. There is a direct tension here between pastoral concern for students and tutors' learning and professional development. Further, it was asserted that some providers do not see professional development as an investment. The workshop participants noted that there was a lot of expertise in the sector but limited cross fertilisation. Where resources are scare and there is competition for learners the will to share is limited. The result is duplication of effort and associated tutor burnout. Participants were keen to see a stronger community of practice and they thought this was especially important for smaller providers whose tutors may work in relative professional isolation.

Recommendations

If tertiary education providers of learning in literacy, numeracy, and language are to enhance their assessment expertise the following is recommended:

• There is an opportunity to build further assessment expertise by supporting professional conversations between tutors who have been involved in designing and using purpose

developed assessment tools. This would enable the sharing and critique of current practice and possibly the dissemination of models of good practice/exemplars.

- It would be helpful to develop a bank of assessment tools, and possibly exemplars and stories of good practice, provided that the introduction of such a resource is supported by professional development. Training would need to cover both use of the tools and their appropriate modification to new settings.

- There is an opportunity to use the data collected in the initial/diagnostic assessments more systematically for formative assessment purposes. Overall, there is a need to develop a greater understanding of the role of formative assessment in supporting learning.

- There is a need to explore how learning outcomes such as motivation and confidence building are valued and assessed alongside the traditional assessment focus on cognitive learning gains. This may require new types of assessment tools, probably self-assessment tools.

- Currently the primary focus of foundation learning programmes appears to be on supporting the individual learner and there is little evidence of the sector working together to build a shared understanding of standards for foundation learning. This is understandable given that such developments need to be co-ordinated and resourced but such linkages would provide greater consistency of assessor judgement across the sector and provide a vehicle for professional growth.

- There is a need to develop a greater shared understanding in the sector of the purposes of assessment—for systems accountability, to support teaching and learning, and to support lifelong learning. From such a shared understanding could come new possibilities for designing assessment tools and processes to meet all three purposes, in a way that places the priority upon assessment that supports the learner and their learning.

- There is a need to further investigate the use of unit standards within the NCES for foundation learning purposes and to explore the development of purpose designed qualifications.

- National qualifications for tutors working in the foundational learning sector are a priority.

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Appendix 1:   MCLaSS

Provider characteristics

MCLaSS in Wellington is a non-profit organisation providing free adult education and support services for refugees and migrants. MCLaSS is classified as an OTEP (Other Tertiary Education Provider). Most of MCLaSS's funding comes from the TEC (Tertiary Education Commission). MCLaSS provides adult education and support for refugees and migrants whose first language is not English, and who may otherwise not have an opportunity to learn. MCLaSS is not in competition with other ESOL providers and sees itself as offering unique and complementary services. Typically its learners do not meet the criteria of other providers such as polytechnics, universities, or PTEs.
English language classes are a key part of MCLaSS's work. MCLaSS delivers:

- beginner level English classes, including bilingual ESOL courses and ESOL literacy for adults not literate in their first language; and

- post-beginner and intermediate ESOL classes preparing adults for further education and employment.

The courses include orientation to life in New Zealand and are offered every weekday at times and places that suit parents with young children.
One of the special features of MCLaSS is its work in developing the capabilities of refugee and migrant community members to meet the educational needs within their own communities. This work includes:

- training workshops for volunteers who teach mother tongue maintenance classes for children and young people; and

- liaising with local and national organisations on behalf of the volunteer language tutors.

MCLaSS is one of five, linked, community-based organisations situated in the Multicultural Services Centre in a central city building. The organisations all provide services to migrants and refugees and came together to form a "one-stop-shop" for refugees and migrants. The other organisations are the Wellington English for Speakers of Other Languages Home Tutor Service (ESOLHT), Wellington Community Interpreting Service (WCIS), including the Telephone Interpreting Service, Refugee and Migrant Service (RMS), and Refugees as Survivors (RAS). The administration centre for MCLaSS is in this office building and classes are held both here and in locations around Wellington close to the communities they are working with. In 2004 all levels of the programme were offered at the central city centre. In 2004 MCLaSS offered adult ESOL classes and an ESOL school holiday programme at the Strathmore Community School.

MCLaSS runs an ESOL assessment and access service as a separate service under contract to the TEC and to the New Zealand Immigration Service[9]. MCLaSS has always had more people seeking ESOL classes than they have been able to cater for, and many

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[9]   Immigration Service was phased out in 2004 because sufficient funding was provided through a contract with the Tertiary Education Commission for an expanded ESOL Assessment and Access Service.

enquiries from clients for whom their classes are not appropriate. The assessment service is kept separate so that those being assessed do not think that they are guaranteed a place in a MCLaSS course.

Key informant

Maria Reynen Clayton (MCLaSS Co-ordinator).

Funding

In 2004 MCLaSS received a total of $350,000 (GST inclusive) from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). This was made up of a base grant of $200,000 (GST inclusive), and $150,000 from the adult literacy funds. TEC funds were tagged for:

• provision of professional development and ESOL tutor training for bilingual tutors from refugee and migrant communities;

• support for single parents with preschool children;

• support for employment of bilingual tutors;

• provision of ESOL literacy courses for 180 adult learners;

• provision of orientation ESOL literacy, language maintenance, and volunteer community language teacher training courses for 178 adult learners;

• facilitation and co-ordination of activities to meet the developing community education needs of ethnic community members; and

• improvement and implementation of learning assessment tools and methods.

MCLaSS also received funding from the New Zealand Immigration Service for helping recent immigrants with permanent residence status by testing English language skills, helping with enrolment into courses, and helping them find paid employment[10].

Student characteristics

Many of the learners who come to MCLaSS are refugees and migrants with little education and with dependent children. The majority of MCLaSS's learners have fewer than 6 years of schooling. Many are not literate in their first language. The learners come from Iraq, Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Syria with small numbers of learners from other communities. The co-ordinator reports that there are typically more prospective students than there are places.
The profile of MCLaSS's learners enrolled in the 18-week ESOL courses in the first semester 2004 was:

• 68 percent of the learners were women;

• 34 percent of the learners were from Iraq, 19 percent from Somalia, 16 percent from Ethiopia and Eritrea, and 11 percent from China;

• 63 percent of the learners were refugees and humanitarian migrants; and

• 47 percent of the learners were between 20 and 39 years.

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[10]   The contracts for these services are now with the Tertiary Education Commission and Work & Income.

Some students are referred through WINZ.

Tutor characteristics

In 2004 MCLaSS teachers whose salaries were met through adult literacy funding included:

• an Assyrian ESOL literacy teacher who also speaks Arabic and Kurdish;

• an Urdu speaking ESOL teacher;

• a Croat speaking ESOL teacher;

• a Cantonese speaking ESOL teacher; and

• a Swiss German speaking ESOL teacher.

MCLaSS also employs a small number of learning support staff who are able to provide bilingual or multilingual learning support.
In addition MCLaSS had the services of nine long-serving volunteer teacher aides:

• six native speakers of English;

• three migrants or refugees offering bilingual support; and

• six with ESOL teacher training.

Teacher/student ratios

In a class with 15 learners there is likely to be a teacher and a teacher aide or bilingual learning support person.

Specialist literacy/numeracy/language teachers

The minimum qualification required for a tutor is a TESOL qualification.
MCLaSS has experienced some difficulties with retaining ESOL teachers from refugee and migrant communities who may be in high demand. Some of these tutors' interest lies with learners other than beginning ESOL learners. Another issue is the need to have experienced ESOL teachers who can adapt to change in country of origin and needs of refugee and migrant communities.
In February 2004, largely in response to the preference of the government and MCLaSS to employ multi or bilingual tutors from refugee and migrant communities, some long-serving MCLaSS teachers who did not speak a community language joined a union to protect their employment conditions. The negotiation of the collective agreement required a review of MCLaSS policies including professional development.

Professional development

Teachers are spread over four locations and in 2005 regular teacher meetings are scheduled every 3 weeks. The teachers were involved in planning the professional development. The co-ordinator observes each teacher at least once annually, and carries out a performance appraisal. Teachers are encouraged to seek feedback from their peers, teacher aides, or learning support staff. MCLaSS pays some fees for ESOL teachers and aides who require further training and who want to upgrade qualifications.

Industry networks

MCLaSS plays a central role in providing networks for ESOL providers in Wellington. The large meetings of the ESOL providers network are organised by the MCLaSS staff delivering the ESOL Assessment and Access Service. The Wellington ESOL Home Tutor Service is based in the same building.
MCLaSS works closely with CLANZ (the Community Language Association of New Zealand). It facilitates a network and provides an online resource centre for community language teachers.

Programme characteristics

The focus of this case study is the English language classes.
MCLaSS offers five levels of ESOL literacy classes, and numeracy competencies were added to all five levels in 2004.
The Level 1 course focuses on the development of listening skills, confidence in a learning situation, and oral confidence. In terms of numeracy, Level 1 is about reading numbers 1–20, recognising simple written amounts, using money for shopping, giving basic information such as a phone number, and understanding simple time.
MCLaSS has very high retention rates, and if people do not attend classes they are taken off the course.

Initial/diagnostic assessment

After a preliminary face-to-face interview, phone conversation, or the receipt of a registration form, an indicative decision is made by the co-ordinator as to whether the person is probably eligible for a place in a MCLaSS course, in which case the person is referred to a MCLaSS teacher for their initial assessment interview. Usually the assessment interview leads to an appropriate placement.
MCLaSS uses an adaptation of the Australian English Language and Literacy Proficiency Assessment for their initial assessment. The focus is on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is a one-to-one interview but the person being interviewed is allowed to bring support people or MCLaSS pays for the interpreter if the client requests that.
When placing students, one of the factors taken into account is schooling. People are placed in bands A, B, or C depending on years of schooling. There is some elasticity in this and account is also taken of the likely quality of schooling received. Students in a Band A have had fewer than 6 years of schooling, and this band tends to have slower learners. They are priority students for MCLaSS.
The preliminary assessment also assesses the circumstances and responsibilities of the prospective learners. Courses are timetabled to take into account school hours so that parents are not expected to be at class while their school-aged children are at home.
Financial hardship is an issue for some refugees and migrants, with those in very low paid jobs having more difficulty accessing classes than beneficiaries who can access TOPs funding. This is taken into account when offering places. Other factors considered include the need for support for health, resettlement, and social isolation reasons.

Formative assessment

The assessment of learner achievement will be used both to inform teaching within a course, and summatively when a learner progresses to another course level. Thus assessment is serving both a formative and summative function.
Competencies are assessed in relation to domains:

- learner autonomy/role of the learner;
- speaking and listening;
- reading and writing; and
- numeracy.

Teachers are provided with guidelines for assessment, the competencies for each level matched to the domain, and an assessment schedule which sets out the competency, for example, *Can understand spoken instructions in familiar contexts*. The elements of the competency, the performance criteria, and the assessment tasks are given in tabular form. Mostly the assessment is expected to be completed through continuous teacher observation throughout the course, and as topics or materials are covered.

MCLaSS provides the teachers with observation sheets to support their monitoring of a learner's progress. The co-ordinator discussed how some teachers do not fill in the observation sheet, but they are nonetheless continually monitoring the learner and shaping tasks to adapt to where the learner is:

> She has such acute observation skills. When I go into her class, I know that she has registered everything about what they can do, because she's always got the support ready for them to do it. She gives them that support so that they don't trip up, she just gives them that little bit they need to get it right. It's all in her head. (Maria Reynen Clayton, co-ordinator, pers. comm.)

For the last 2 to 3 years MCLaSS has been holding feedback sessions with learners in their community languages. They introduced this idea in response to their experiences of difficulty in getting meaningful feedback or a dialogue with learners. Having the feedback in their cultural groups enables learners to comment on a number of aspects of their course experience. An issue that has emerged from these cultural group feedback sessions is the need to provide learners with an understanding of an interactive style of teaching and the active involvement of the learner in his/her own learning. Many of the learners' views of education reflect a much more traditional teacher-dominated approach. (Note: This issue was also raised in the CPIT case study.)

MCLaSS places weight on the learners' views and uses the feedback to make some changes, but in cases where they are not prepared to change for pedagogical reasons they enter into dialogue with the learners to provide the rationale for their approach. A common issue is the sense that working in pairs or small groups is wasting time. Once students know that the teacher is listening in, and observing and giving correction where necessary, they can begin to value that approach more.

The co-ordinator emphasised that in order to enhance learning, the processes involved in teaching, learning, and assessment need to be understood to some degree by the learners. She emphasised the need for tutors to be explicit about what they were trying to do. For example:

> The teacher will say 'I'm going to be correcting for such and such, I'm going to be listening for the verb, I'm going to be listening for the pronoun.' So they only focus on one thing. That's really good too with our learners, because they can't deal with too much at once and it gives a way of focusing the entire class on particular teaching points and you can deal with the diversity. (Maria Reynen Clayton, co-ordinator, pers. comm.)

Tracking learning progression

While the preference is for word-processed reports from teachers' records, not all teachers have sufficient computer literacy for this. Written records tend to be brief. Teachers keep a portfolio of students' work and provide the co-ordinator with a summary of each student's progress at the end of a semester or when they are promoted to another level.

Summative assessment

There is a set of competencies for each ESOL literacy course, and core competencies that must be consolidated before a learner is promoted to a higher level course. Students' learning is assessed and recorded against these competencies. Achievement is assessed in terms of four stages:

• not apparent;

• beginning;

• consolidating; and

• established.

At the end of the semester, or earlier if promoted during the semester, learners receive a *Record of Skills Assessed,* which is completed by the teachers. It describes the extent to which a learner has achieved the core competencies of the course.
With the permission of the learners this information is also passed on to other educational providers.

Salient assessment features

There are initial assessments to check both the suitability of the candidate for the course and his/her specific learning needs.
Feedback from the students about the course and approaches to learning are sought in culturally appropriate ways, and include an element of self-assessment as students reflect on their learning.
Summative tasks are assessed against specific criteria at each level. The emphasis appears to be on progression rather than on "end point" achievement, which means the programme can be responsive to students' needs.
The course co-ordinator clearly expects that tutors will make learning intentions explicit. This is an element of good practice in assessment for learning.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

The courses are well received within their target communities and are responsive to diverse learning needs. They cater for groups of learners who typically do not meet the criteria of other providers.
The approach allows for progression within semesters as well as between semesters, thus catering for different rates of learning.
A possible weakness lies in a perceived lack of consistency of interpretation of assessments between tutors based at different locations. Regular extended meetings for staff have been put in place to try to improve this.

Table 15   **MCLaSS courses and numbers for first half of 2004**

Course name	Sub-total # courses	Objective # hours	Output # hours	Objective # learners	Output # learners
ESOL Summer Beginners (AS)		45	45	15	15
ESOL Summer Pre-Intermediate (JL)		45	45	15	18
ESOL Level 1 (MSC)		220	220	15	17

ESOL Level 2 A (NPF)		220	220	15	23
ESOL Level 2 A PM (MSC)		220	220	15	22
ESOL Level 2 B (PINC)		265	265	15	21
ESOL Level 2 B / 3 (Strathmore)		220	220	15	19
ESOL Level 3 B (MSC)		265	265	15	21
ESOL Job Seeker		178	178	10	20
ESOL for Assyrians (Levels 1 & 2 A)		72	72	15	14
Bilingual ESOL for Chinese		72	0	15	0
O/ESOL Older Refugees		72	72	15	15
Sub-total O/ESOL Literacy	**11**	**1894**	**1822**	**175**	**205**
Assyrian adult literacy		36	38	15	34
Sub-total Community language	**1**	**36**	**38**	**15**	**34**
TOTAL	**12**	**1930**	**1860**	**190**	**239**

Appendix 2: Literacy Aotearoa (1)

The Literacy Aotearoa case study comprises three linked case studies:

1. a profile of the national organisation and outcomes achieved in relation to learning, assessment, and tutor capability in assessment for learning;

2. the Pacific Women's Literacy Group (run by He Waka Mätauranga); and

3. a case study on limited duration assessment and literacy provision services contracted by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), and as delivered by He Waka Mätauranga, a Poupou (member) of Literacy Aotearoa.

Provider characteristics

Literacy Aotearoa is a key organisation in the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector. It is a national organisation of 50 literacy providers, known as Ngä Poupou. It was previously known as the Adult Reading and Learning Federation (ARLA), and was founded in the 1970s. As the ARLA Federation it established Workbase as an independent Trust. A feature of its work in the past has been the provision of individualised learning programmes. Today these are both in one-to-one and group learning programmes. An organisational shift in the 1990s encouraged Nga Poupou to better meet their community needs as well as the needs of the individual. He Waka Mätauranga has been a consistent leader of Nga Poupou in this shift. Community programmes such as whänau literacy programmes usually have a longer-term and intergenerational focus. Sutton et al. (2005) noted that in recent years there has been a decline in individual student numbers. It must be noted however that the ratio of Student Delivery Hours/Students has increased in 2004, indicating that students now receive more tuition. Literacy Aotearoa has also lost a small number of Poupou who for a variety of reasons, including lack of financial and human resources, were unable to cope with the revised quality assurance system and increased compliance requirements.

Main focus of Literacy Aotearoa

As might be expected the main focus of Literacy Aotearoa is on literacy provision. Literacy Aotearoa's mission is to "develop accessible quality literacy services to ensure the people of Aotearoa are critically literate" (Literacy Aotearoa, n.d.). Its objectives are to:

- honour Te Tiriti O Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi);

- provide literacy tuition at no cost to the student and in a way that focuses on empowering people by building on the student's knowledge and experiences to enhance their confidence and capabilities so they can fulfil their potential;

- coordinate a literacy services network throughout Aotearoa;

- coordinate the activities of members of Literacy Aotearoa;

- promote, develop and maintain quality literacy services according to the values, principles and beliefs of Literacy Aotearoa; and
- work towards ensuring government policy maintains and develops quality literacy provision throughout Aotearoa.

Key sources of information for the case study

The information for the case study was provided by Bronwyn Yates, Te Tumuaki (CEO) of Literacy Aotearoa, with additional information provided by Analiese Robertson and Toni Lee Hayward from He Waka Mātauranga. Further information was derived from the Literacy Aotearoa Annual Report 2003, and templates, guides, and other tools provided to learners and tutors.

Funding basis for the programme

The TEC classifies Literacy Aotearoa as an Adult and Community Education Provider (ACE) with a focus on foundation education.
The organisation does not receive EFTS for the adult literacy tuition and learners are asked to commit to a minimum of two hours per week. The organisation does receive EFTS for its NZQA–recognised Adult Literacy Tutor Training programme.

Student characteristics

Students self-refer and tuition is provided at no direct cost to the learner. Literacy Aotearoa liaises with a wide range of community groups and organisations to publicise its services. Students may hear about the services through a training programme, from their child's school, from a boss, a counsellor, through the news media, or through a caseworker from a social service agency such as the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). As much as possible the preference is for the initial contact to be made by the prospective student, not a referring agency. The practice is to strive to have an initial meeting with a prospective student within the first week of contact while motivation to seek assistance is high.

Number of students

In 2003 Literacy Aotearoa assessed and placed many adults including:
- 6320 assessed and placed in ACE literacy programme (one-to-one);
- 41 assessed and placed in YT[11] or TOPs[12];
- 200 assessed and placed in a WINZ[13] programme (short programmes);
- 429 assessed and placed in a whānau literacy programme;
- 344 in prisons received training for the NCES;
- 98 in prisons received literacy learning support; and

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[11] Youth Training.

[12] Training Opportunities Programme.

[13] Work and Income New Zealand (part of Ministry of Social Development).

- 100 received foundation learning support in the workplace.

Fifty-five percent of students were female and 45 percent male. Ethnicity is shown in Table 16 and ages of students in Table 17.

Table 16 **Ethnicity of participants in Literacy Aotearoa programmes**

Ethnicity	Percentage of students
Päkehä	38%
Mäori	32%
Pasifika	9%
Other	22%

Note – totals rounded so adds to more than 100%.

Table 17 **Ages of participants in Literacy Aotearoa programmes**

Age in years	Percentage of students
20 and under	20%
21–30	25%
31–40	27%
41–50	17%
Over 50	11%

The national report does not provide figures on the educational qualifications of the learners, but most have none, or else low-level qualifications (Literacy Aotearoa, n.d.).

Tutor characteristics

While a number of Literacy Aotearoa tutors and co-ordinators are paid, by and large the work of one-to-one provision is carried out by volunteer tutors.
All tutors are expected to have completed the Literacy Aotearoa Adult Literacy Tutor Training programme before they begin tutoring (this takes 100 hours, including a 20-hour practicum). Those who have been tutoring for a number of years may not have completed the training. Volunteer tutors will usually work with one or at the most two learners at any one time. Where literacy services are contracted, for example WINZ contracts, Corrections, and whänau literacy, tutors are required to commit for more than 2–3 hours in a week, and are paid. This work is undertaken by the more skilled and experienced tutors.

Professional development

Literacy Aotearoa plays a significant role in providing professional development to both its own tutors and for others working in adult literacy, numeracy, and language settings.
During 2003 Literacy Aotearoa, either through the national organisation, or through its Poupou, provided training for literacy tutors including:

- 316 trainee tutors through 30 tutor training programmes (100 hours including practicum);

- 20 tutors provided with assessor training, with 16 achieving Unit Standard 4098: "Use standards to assess candidate performance";

- 18 tutors trained, with 16 achieving the moderation unit standard Unit Standard 11551: "Moderate assessment";
- 8 trainers trained to Literacy Aotearoa's national standard of competence for to deliver the Certificate of Adult Literacy Tutor Training;
- managers and chairpersons from 30 literacy organisations provided management- and governance-related training; and
- training in methods for the integration of literacy into teaching and learning provided for PTEs[14] in Palmerston North, Otago, South Canterbury, and Wellington.

Industry networks

Literacy Aotearoa, both nationally and locally, works closely with other foundation learning providers. It holds its own national and regional hui for its member organisations. Literacy Aotearoa is a leading participant in national initiatives including:

- the ALAF trials (2003–2004);
- NZQA's work on the Adult Literacy Educator unit standards and qualification;
- the Quality Mark project, the Education Hui Taumata Mätauranga, the Learning for Living Exploratory Projects (represented by SALP[15]); and
- Bronwyn Yates is a member of the Foundation Learning Advisory Group (FLAG).

Thus it appears Literacy Aotearoa is centrally placed to have a positive impact on new initiatives and professional development in the sector.

Programme characteristics

Duration and timing

The duration and timing of an individual's literacy development programme is determined with the individual and based on their learning goals. Programmes are part-time, typically 2 hours per week.

Assessment milestones

Literacy Aotearoa has a structured approach to the process of assessment which is modified to fit with an individual's learning goals. Assessment is not linked to credentials or to the NQF.

The first assessment milestone is the initial assessment interview which may take place over more than one session.

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[14] Private Training Establishments.

[15] Special Adult Learning Programmes.

Initial assessment/diagnostic assessment

Literacy Aotearoa has its own initial assessment tool. The purpose of the initial assessment is to identify what the person wants to learn and why, and to find out information which will help develop a programme to meet the individual's needs. There is a 12-page *Student Initial Interview Form* which consists of various parts:

Part 1 Student profile—Contact details, NZQA number, learning goals and priorities.

Part 2 Background information—Background information is gathered on the following:

- why seeking assistance;

- childhood;

- schooling;

- employment;

- computer technology;

- training/educational opportunities;

- whether would like NZQA credits for learning;

- interests and hobbies; and

- health and special needs which may impact on learning.

Part 3 Verbal communication—The assessment includes a number of items related to verbal communication situations. These items are a self-assessment of confidence, e.g. when ordering food, and identification of the areas of speaking and listening that the learner would like to improve in.

Part 4 Reading skills—This part of the assessment covers current reading. The interviewee self-assesses their reading ability and priorities against a list of reading tasks and materials and then completes a reading task. The interviewee selects the text from a range offered. The range offered is shaped to match initial impressions about the interviewee. The assessor observes how the person goes about the reading task, and, following the interview, completes the reading observation checklist—which is a basic diagnostic list. The observation checklist covers: pre-reading strategies, strategies for difficult words, self-correction, phonological awareness, reading tone, sight words in text, and evidence of comprehension. This is attached to the interview form with a copy of the text read.

Part 5 Writing skills—This part of the assessment covers current writing, and includes self-assessment of writing ability in relation to a list of common writing tasks, self-identification of writing priorities, and selection of writing tasks. The writing task is on a topic chosen by the interviewee (with suggestions if required from the assessor). A range of writing tools which afford choice for the learner are provided (lined and unlined paper, pencils, pens, and felts, and dictionaries are provided). The assessor discreetly observes how the person goes about the writing task and completes an observation record after the interview. The observation checklist covers preparation for writing, handwriting, punctuation, strategies for spelling difficult words, spelling errors, genre/type/style, grammar, and comments made by the student about writing.

If appropriate, the learner will be asked to read what they have written. The piece of writing and a completed writing observation record are attached to the interview form.

Part 6 Maths skills—This part begins with open-ended questions on attitude to maths, followed by self-identified maths ability in relation to a list of specified maths tasks. A rating scale is used. For example, an item might be *Checking change you are given, e.g. at the supermarket.*

The learner checks one of the following ratings: Very Easy; Mostly Okay; Often Difficult. Either they or the tutor can add comments.

The initial maths assessment may include shared problem solving on basic maths problems to provide a context to discuss the language of maths. Examples provided are the use of pricing and discount information in retail advertisements. The learner is assisted to identify their maths learning priorities. The initial assessment interview concludes with the completion of a student enrolment and a privacy agreement form.

Procedure

The initial interview is conducted by trained and experienced Literacy Aotearoa tutors. They need to have the experience and expertise to use the assessment tool flexibly; for example, if a person is clearly not interested in an area such as maths skills, this section would be left out. The initial interview is expected to take at least 1 hour. The person carrying out the assessment writes up the information unless the interviewee asks to do so. The information from the interview is treated confidentially as agreed in a privacy agreement. Guidance to assessors stresses that:

> The emotional wellbeing of the person must always take priority over gathering information for assessment purposes…. There is no point in carrying out an assessment task if it results in the person never returning because of that experience (Literacy Aotearoa, 2001).

At the conclusion of the initial assessment interview the tutor will provide the learners with feedback and ensure that they leave the interview with some of their learning goals recorded and, if possible, with information of options available, and a sense of the next step.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is an integral component of the Literacy Aotearoa approach. There is an emphasis placed on the student "learning to learn". Guidance to tutors encourages them to get students to focus on what they have learnt in a session, not just on what they enjoyed.

Tracking progress

A form is used for recording what has been learned (learner's view of progress), and learning within sessions. A negotiated learning plan is designed to be used as an ongoing assessment tool. It is designed with space to record learning, the date of each session, and important things learned. There is provision for a midway review.

The learning Plan is seen as an important part of the student "learning to learn". The tutor and the learner each have copies of the learning plan, and information from it is also recorded on the individual Student Profile Record kept by management personnel. The intention is for management to monitor and follow up to ensure that the negotiated learning plan is appropriately developed and implemented. The management can then provide feedback to assist tutors.

Summative assessment

Typically, summative assessment would be where the student had a specific goal in mind such as the achievement of their driver's licence. In some Poupou students are offered the option of being assessed for unit standards and Literacy Aotearoa has accreditation for the NCES unit standards.

- **Certification:** Unit Standard Certification is currently not a universal approach used by Nga Poupou.

- **Reporting:** Records are required to be kept, and reporting is undertaken to management committees, the National Office, and, where appropriate, to funding bodies.

Salient assessment features

There is a very comprehensive diagnostic assessment procedure that is designed to elicit specific information about students' current learning needs in order to design appropriate programmes. Consideration is given to the emotional impact of assessment and assessors are encouraged to adapt the diagnostic assessment as necessary. An effort is made to complete the initial assessment soon after the original contact while motivation levels are likely to be high.

As assessment is not linked to credentials or to the NQF the individual's assessed learning needs, rather than outside factors, can drive the programme.

Learners appear to be centrally involved in joint goal setting with tutors.

Assessments are based on contexts that are relevant to the learner.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

Literacy Aotearoa provides a structured approach to working in partnership with learners to identify their learning goals, and their current skills, knowledge, and attitudes in relation to learning, communication, reading, writing, and maths, and based on this, to arrange appropriate placement with a tutor/programme. The Literacy Aotearoa approach enables learning plans to be individually developed and implemented, while providing monitoring and support for the progress of the learner and the tutor.

A condition for success if the approach were to be transported to another organisation is that successful implementation is dependent on having a strong infrastructure and support system for training the tutors, arranging placement, monitoring progress, and providing support to tutors.

A possible weakness in the Literacy Aotearoa system is its dependence on volunteer tutors, some of whom may be unable or unwilling to participate in processes and training that require significant additional voluntary hours.

Websites/reports relevant to the case study

http://www.literacy.org.nz/

Literacy Aotearoa. (2001). *Student initial assessment interview*. Auckland: Author.

Literacy Aotearoa. (n.d.). *Annual Report 2003*. Auckland: Author.

Appendix 3: Literacy Aotearoa (2)—He Waka Mätauranga and the Pacific Island Family Literacy Project for Tongan women

The Literacy Aotearoa case study comprises three linked case studies:

1. a profile of the national organisation and outcomes achieved in relation to learning, assessment, and tutor capability in assessment for learning;

2. the Pacific Women's Literacy Group (run by He Waka Mätauranga); and

3. a case study on limited duration assessment and literacy provision services contracted by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), and as delivered by He Waka Mätauranga, a Poupou (member) of Literacy Aotearoa.

Provider characteristics

He Waka Mätauranga

He Waka Mätauranga is one of the provider members (Ngä Poupou) of Literacy Aotearoa. Established 15 years ago it operates out of some rooms in the Auckland suburb of Mt Eden[16], and collaborates on a number of other sites with community organisations, including the local kura kaupapa Mäori. It has been an autonomous organisation since 1995.

He Waka Mätauranga is a treaty-based literacy provider, originally focused on adult literacy for Mäori, and more recently also for Pacific Island communities. While the focus of this case study is on a programme with Tongan women, the majority of learners at this Poupou are Mäori. It offers four group classes at Mt Eden, including literacy, driver's licence, computing, and raranga (traditional Mäori weaving). Literacy Aotearoa Poupou all provide the option of one-to-one literacy tuition.

This case study focuses on the Pacific Island Family Literacy Programme. There are a number of models of family literacy provision that all include taking an integrated approach to addressing the needs of adults and children, and fostering intergenerational learning (Benseman, 2004).

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[16] When the fieldwork for the case study was undertaken He Waka Mätauranga was based in Kingsland.

Key sources of information for the case study

The information for this case study was collected from two visits to He Waka Mätauranga, and interviews with the two key staff members, Analiese Robertson and Toni Lee Hayward, together with interviews with learners and the co-ordinator of the Pacific Island Women's Group.

Funding basis for the programme

Most of the funding for the Poupou comes from the National Organisation of Literacy Aotearoa. The Kainga Literacy Project which is the focus of this case study was funded through TEC funds channelled through Literacy Aotearoa. Nationally, Literacy Aotearoa had 285 adults and more than 500 members of their whänau enrolled in whänau literacy programmes in 2004.

Student characteristics

The Kainga Literacy Project initiative involves collaboration with the Pacific Women's Group at the Onehunga Community House, a mainly Tongan women's group. In the initial discussions held in 2003 the women's group identified that they had Tongan families coming to live in New Zealand who wanted to learn how to live in New Zealand. The group of women all come from Tonga, live in the same area, and spend a lot of time together. In the time period the members of the group changed as people returned to Tonga, obtained employment, enrolled in courses, and new people came.

Tutor characteristics

The two tutors who worked with the group were Analiese Robertson (Cook Island), and Toni Hayward (Mäori). At first the tutors involved were conscious that they were not Tongan and did not have the culture and language but the group insisted it was English literacy knowledge that they wanted.
Both tutors are qualified Literacy Aotearoa tutors. One is a national trainer for Literacy Aotearoa. Literacy Aotearoa encourages completion of Massey literacy papers. Tutors are encouraged to participate in other training such as with Lancaster University, for example, "Breaking Down Barriers", and the workshops on numeracy with Warren Shepheard.
The tutors work closely with other community groups, for example, the Pacific Island Education Centre. This centre offered a Pacific Literacy Training Course (provided by Literacy Aotearoa) in 2004 to develop a core group of Pacific Island tutors. The course was an initiative and collaboration between He Waka Matauranga and the Pacific Island Education Centre.

Programme characteristics

The main learning need identified for the students in this case study was how to live in New Zealand. In its early days the focus was on reading and writing in English. But with time everyday issues and needs arose which were able to be addressed in the group. The goals of the learners changed, and so too did those of the programme.
Over the 3 years the programme has been operating the group has covered a number of functional and critical literacy, numeracy, and language needs including:

- going to a bank and knowing how to open up a bank account, filling out the forms, knowing what to ask;
- reading letters that come home which are saying that benefits will stop unless you come into the office;
- looking at what this means, and how it is going to affect my family;
- immigration rules and correspondence, "because they've just come here, so getting them permanent residency, either for themselves or for family that they want to bring over";
- getting a driver's licence (this would be additional to the course);
- children and the letters they bring home from school;
- paying for school trips;
- budgeting; and
- getting a job.

The learning is strongly grounded in contexts relevant to the learner.

Initial/diagnostic assessment

With the Tongan women's group the initial assessment focused on a mixture of individual, family, and group needs. This involved the adaptation of standard Literacy Aotearoa initial assessment tools, and some work with individuals supported by the Tongan co-ordinator. While records were developed for individual learners, the initial approach was a group approach. One of the tutors suggested that it was difficult for the women to see themselves as individuals with individual needs, but easier to see these needs within the context of their roles in the family and the community.

The results and records of the initial assessment were for the use of the tutors in planning the programme and addressing group and individual literacy, language, and numeracy needs. They were discussed in general terms with the group.

Formative assessment

The project demonstrated that needs are not fixed, and that needs assessment can be conducted in a number of ways and at different stages of a programme. After He Waka Mātauranga had been working with the women's group for a year they held a "fono"[17] with the community to engage with the wider Tongan community and to develop the programme to further meet community needs. They saw the fono as an effective needs assessment tool, of taking stock of what was being achieved by the programme and where the community priorities lay:

> The fono was a real success and that helped us hugely because then we were able to engage with the wider community, inviting churches and other groups in the area, the schools. We also had a local MP there as well, so that was really good. That helped us too in that process, and also got the men involved as well because prior to that the men sort of were always behind the scenes, you never saw them, you never heard them, but you knew they were there sort of thing. The fono gave them a role in the programme so they actually came and did all our food for us and eventually some of the older Tongan men came in and were part of workshops that we ran, so they are actually becoming quite verbal and we even had men up

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[17] A fono is a Pacific Island meeting, the equivalent of a "hui".

> there crying because they could see the effect it had on the women in their family. They said it was making them stronger and these women are incredibly strong. They are looking after…some of them have got six…seven kids and they are at home looking after them because the men are always at work. So for them to actually see that impact and talk about it in front of us, and there were quite a few of us there…there were about fifty people. (Provider interview)

The family literacy programme was broken up into three—there was the literacy group with which He Waka Mātauranga were directly involved, then there was a Tongan language nest, and a homework project. The homework project is part of the Kainga Literacy Project and the focus is on helping the parents support their children's learning.

As described previously, the group worked on skills and knowledge they needed to function in New Zealand. Typically what was a difficulty for one was a difficulty for the group. Someone would bring in a letter from immigration, and a number of people would say they too had just received a similar letter and then the session would focus on reading and understanding the letter and response required. The group would work on things like opening a bank account, reading a bank statement, and the associated literacy, numeracy, and language. These sessions were not observed by the researcher but interviews with tutors and learners suggest that learning and formative assessment were intimately linked in these sessions. The sessions enabled immediate feedback on pronunciation, expression, interpretation, and so on:

> At times one team would focus solely on budgets. In these situations the tutor was informally assessing the learning progress of individuals and the group. On one level they were working on developing functional numeracy to meet their family needs, but they also worked on how to solve problems, such as what agency to approach if, for instance, they had insufficient money to buy food. (Provider interview)

Tracking progress

Brief notes were maintained for the sessions, recording what was covered, issues emerging, and plans for the next session.

Summative assessment

There is no summative assessment as such. Reports on progress are made to the TEC and to Literacy Aotearoa. The learning from the group is not seen as finite but part of an ongoing process. The members of the group both report, and are seen to be participating more confidently with their children's schools and education.

Literacy Aotearoa publishes books of the writing of its students. One of the identified learning needs of the group was "how to live in New Zealand" and in the stories and interviews published by this group there is a thread of how to live as a Tongan in New Zealand. The Tongan community and learning context appear to provide a scaffold to participation in literacy classes. A small number have achieved their learner driver's licence.

Salient assessment features

This case study describes culturally responsive assessment practices. There is recognition that the group is a more powerful entity than the individual in this setting and assessment practices are modified to cater for this need.

This case study is an example of a dynamic, changing programme that appears to be driven by the changing needs of the group as ascertained from assessment procedures. As such it

appears that much of the assessment focus is formative. Needs are identified and then these drive the programme development. Assessment appears to be ongoing, often informal and flexible.

The programme is not constrained by outside assessment demands.

Programme strengths

It seems that the impact of this programme has been felt well beyond the target group. There is anecdotal evidence that suggests a well-designed group programme can influence a much wider group. The programme is flexible, needs driven, and grounded in contexts that are relevant to the learners.

This is essentially a community development approach which provides a safe setting based on gaining confidence as a Tongan parent and in using English language in some everyday settings. The approach to assessment is appropriate to the context. The co-ordinators and the learners interviewed suggest that the understanding of the New Zealand cultural context and the confidence to contribute to their children's education has led to involvement in a Tongan language nest, and in a homework centre. Parents from the group are encouraged to attend the homework centre, and to engage with their children's homework. For example, a child from a junior school class has a reader, the parent encourages the child to explain what is happening in the pictures (in Tongan), and then to read in English.

As with most of the foundation learning case studies, lack of funding restricts the options available for the learners. It appears some of the learners would welcome a programme with additional hours geared to English language fluency and preparation for employment. However, if this were to be provided assistance would be required with childcare responsibilities. Factors impacting on attendance include winter weather, sick children, and other family responsibilities.

The contributions of the students provide testimony to their learning goals and journeys. The students highlight the development of confidence in the use of English in a variety of contexts. They also highlight the point of difference that this programme meets the family group's needs (rather than the individual's needs). The desire for additional learning opportunities is testimony to the success of the programme in building the confidence of the women as learners.

In 2004 the group planned an ambitious project, a weekend trip to Rotorua to visit the marae of one of the co-ordinators. The planning for the trip required the development of and use of a wide range of literacy and numeracy competencies. The group needed to budget, fundraise, plan travel, pack, and arrange how to spend their time in Rotorua. They also needed to prepare for the visit by learning about the protocol of the marae. The group literacy sessions thus had a joint project to work on, which enabled the learners to work in a supported setting as they made their plans and put their learning into practice.

The scale of the adventure is aptly illustrated by the co-ordinator of the women's group who, like most of the group, had never left Auckland before. So, while confident about driving around the country's largest city, the road south was frightening:

> The weather was not looking too good, as this was my first time driving outside the place I had lived for thirteen years. All the families arrived on time and the three vehicles departed. The weather and the speed of the motorway looked scary and I was unable to drive. Luckily one of the ladies had done the trip before so she took over from me. Everyone was smiling and shouting when we saw the sign for Rotorua but still we had a few kilometres to travel. (Participant interview)

Appendix 4: Literacy Aotearoa (3)—He Waka Mätauranga – MSD WINZ contract

The Literacy Aotearoa case study comprises three linked case studies:

1. a profile of the national organisation and outcomes achieved in relation to learning, assessment, and tutor capability in assessment, for learning;

2. the Pacific Women's Literacy Group (run by He Waka Mätauranga); and

3. a case study on limited duration assessment and literacy provision services contracted by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), and as delivered by He Waka Mätauranga, a Poupou (member) of Literacy Aotearoa.

This case study provides brief details of the WINZ contract work of He Waka Mätauranga. It was selected in consultation with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Bronwyn Yates. Background information on Literacy Aotearoa and on He Waka Mätauranga is provided in the two associated case studies and is not repeated here.

Provider characteristics

Key sources of information for the case study were Analiese Robertson and Toni Lee Hayward.

Funding basis for the programme

WINZ has contracted services from Literacy Aotearoa, and He Waka Mätauranga is one of two Poupou subcontracted to Literacy Aotearoa to fulfil these services. WINZ is part of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) which developed a fund to purchase literacy provision for the most disadvantaged job-seekers. A range of providers contract to provide the services. Literacy Aotearoa worked with 200 WINZ—referred job seekers in 2003. The programme is not EFTS-funded, but is roughly the equivalent of 0.01 of an EFT.

Student characteristics

The students are referred by WINZ case managers. A brochure has been developed by Literacy Aotearoa and the two Poupou to assist the case managers in identifying literacy needs, and He Waka Mätauranga has made presentations to case managers. He Waka Mätauranga had initial concerns as to how the case managers would identify the literacy needs of clients. A brochure was developed to provide case managers with some

indicators to look for in identifying literacy needs. Periodically He Waka Mätauranga makes presentations to case managers and discusses literacy needs indicators, and how to approach clients to offer them literacy assistance.

Programme characteristics

Through the national organisation of Literacy Aotearoa, He Waka Mätauranga is involved in a contract with the Auckland region of WINZ. They have been allocated five WINZ offices and WINZ refers "clients" for up to 12.5 hours of literacy assistance. Originally the contract was for 20 hours per client and was reduced to 12.5 hours in 2004. The duration and the timing of the programme are negotiated between the tutor and the learner. It is a part-time programme and may comprise 3 half days or be spread over a longer period. The focus is on needs identification in literacy and numeracy.

Assessment milestones

The 12.5 hours contracted limit how much can happen, other than the initial assessment and the development of a learning plan. Some learners develop a CV. The learners are encouraged to become part of other Literacy Aotearoa programmes, for example programmes that lead to the completion of a driver's licence, focus on computing, or individual literacy tuition.

Initial assessment/diagnostic assessment

The standard Literacy Aotearoa initial assessment is completed with the WINZ-referred learners. (See Chapter 7 for details.)

Formative assessment

This appears to be limited by the short duration of the course. However, it may provide feedback to the student about what options are available for meeting their learning needs.

Tracking progress

There is a template for reporting learner progress and issues to WINZ. The information is taken from the standard initial, midway, and final review. This is required by the contract with WINZ.

Salient assessment features

The focus is on identifying the needs of the learners.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

The tutors see the strength of the Literacy Aotearoa assessment approach as focusing on the learners' strengths, that is, on what they can do. They report that the learners experience this as empowering.

The weakness of this programme may lie in the small number of hours available to each learner. While acknowledging that the evidence is mixed, Benseman et al. (2005) suggest that learners with low literacy, numeracy, or ESOL skills need at least 100 hours of tuition. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) research found that there was a strong correlation between the lowest literacy level and unemployment (Culligan et al. n.d.).

Websites/reports relevant to the case study

http://www.literacy.org.nz/

Culligan, N., Arnold, G., Noble, A., & Sligo, F. (n.d.). *Analysis of New Zealand data from the International Adult Literacy Survey: Demographic predictors of low literacy proficiency; Executive summary; New Zealand Report.* Palmerston North: Department of Communications and Journalism, Massey University. Commissioned by the Ministry of Education.

Appendix 5:   Trade and Commerce

Provider characteristics

Mission statement:

> Trade and Commerce is a national provider operating in many regions of New Zealand that commits to providing high quality learning opportunities for students, who require further development of foundation skills in an industry context. This allows our students to be confident and successful in the transition to progressive further training and sustainable employment (Trade and Commerce charter, n.d., p. 1).

There is a focus on second chance education, a learner-centred approach to programme delivery, and holistic student support. Students work to develop foundation skills in an industry context and there are opportunities to gain a wide range of national qualifications. In 2003 Trade and Commerce introduced the National Certificate in Education Achievement (Level 1) as a qualification option. In 2004, 105 students achieved NCEA Level 1 and NCEA Level 2 is being offered for the first time this year. In 2004, 51 students achieved the National Certificate in Employment Skills.
Trade and Commerce delivers Training Opportunities Programmes (TOPs) and Youth Training (YT) throughout New Zealand.

Key contacts

Mike Hay (Academic Manager) and Lindsay Davis-Goff (Marketing Manager) were the key contact people for this case study. A small number of tutors and students were also interviewed.

Student characteristics

Trade and Commerce focuses on students who have not experienced success in the compulsory education sector and who have experienced difficulty in finding and maintaining employment.

Teacher characteristics

Nearly all Trade and Commerce's teachers have ongoing employment contracts, with varied hours and framework. A financial incentive scheme operates for tutors. It includes occupancy rates of their courses and outcome targets. Staff are expected to be able to demonstrate skills or have a qualification level above the level they are teaching. If Trade and Commerce cannot attract suitable staff with the minimum qualifications required they will provide training for them. The

minimum requirement for tutors assessing unit standards is US 4098: "Uses standards to assess candidate's performance". Staff also have the opportunity to sit the National Certificate in Adult Education at Level 5. Every staff member has a staff development plan and there is an annual appraisal that considers professional development needs.

Programme characteristics

The programme is student-centred and each student has his/her own individualised learning plan. This means that students can commence the programme at any time during the year and still receive excellent learning opportunities. Each student has a programme manager with an average ratio of 12 students to 1 programme manager.

An achievement plan is drawn up with each student. This covers three different areas. There are *workplace* skills that are the generic skills needed to succeed in employment; for example, getting to work on time, teamwork, personal presentation. There are *core* skills that centre around academic learning and achieving standards towards national certificates, and there are *employment and further training* skills such as writing a CV.

Initial/diagnostic assessment

Students participate in a comprehensive diagnostic assessment process. When a student first arrives he/she fills out the course enrolment form with the programme manager there to assist if necessary. This gives the programme manager his/her first opportunity to assess the student's literacy skills and attitudes. The enrolment form includes such details as name, address, date of birth, qualifications, employment history. There is also a "welcome to the course" form that is filled in by the student. This form provides important information for the programme manager such as the name of the student's WINZ case worker, previous courses, and background. At this stage in the process, there is a large degree of flexibility and the programme manager will decide whether it is appropriate to continue with assessments or whether perhaps it might be better for the student to join in with some other activity that may be going on. Up to a week is allowed to complete the initial assessments and the induction process. It is considered crucial that every effort is made to ensure this is a positive experience for the student.

As part of the initial assessment the student fills out a booklet that focuses on his/her current achievements and interests and identifies preferred learning styles. This booklet provides an easy way for the student to interact with written language and gives the programme manager some useful feedback about the student's literacy skills.

A copy of the student's *Record of Learning* is accessed and forwarded to the programme manager so they have a current record of any national qualifications and/or unit standards already gained.

Trade and Commerce uses literacy and numeracy diagnostic tools that were developed in-house some time ago, but have been contextualised more recently. Workbase reviewed these tools in 2004 and gave useful feedback. There seems to be a need for a way of more accurately assessing literacy needs at the lower end of the scale.

Once the assessments have been completed the programme manager analyses them to create the learner's Literacy Profile. The profile is designed to:

- measure current literacy levels;

- provide an individual focus for literacy development;

- be used as a reassessment tool; and

- measure gains in literacy.

The programme manager rates the student's level of achievement from 0 to 5 in a number of areas for each competency. For example, in reading the student will be rated on ability to read text, correctly summarise the content of text, to find specific information in text, and so on. Guidelines are provided for programme managers as to how these ratings should be decided. When the ratings for each area have been decided, they are averaged to give an overall rating for that competency. A comment is also made about each competency. The information is then recorded onto a summary sheet and this is used to identify key opportunities for development with the student. Goals are set that are short-term, medium-term, and long-term.

Formative assessment

The programme manager meets with each student on a 4-weekly (or if necessary, more regular) basis to check on progress. Goals are reviewed and new ones set as necessary. In relation to feedback, programme managers, in the interview, emphasised that it was important to be positive. Many of the students have poor self-esteem and building confidence is vital. One programme manager interviewed explained how he would choose a key thing to give specific feedback on rather than marking everything pedantically. It was also reported that every conversation or interaction with a student was an opportunity to review that student's progress and needs informally. Assessment was described by one programme manager as a constant, never-ending cycle. One of the students interviewed spoke positively about the opportunity to revisit work that had been done incorrectly the first time.

Self-assessment

Students are involved in reflecting on their learning and setting goals with their programme managers. In the interview with one of the managers some doubt was expressed as to the appropriateness of self-assessment when many students had little confidence in their ability to learn.

Tracking learning progression

Comprehensive records are kept of students' progress. Checklists are kept in the students' files that show achievement and unit standards and students have access to these. Unit standards are recorded as they are achieved. One of the programme managers interviewed mentioned that reflection on these cumulative records was important as it allowed emerging patterns to be identified.

Moderation

Programme managers are provided with excellent guidance, complete with examples, as to how assessments should be carried out and information recorded. Samples of students' work are looked at as part of the internal moderation process. There are systems in place for internal and external moderation of unit standards and qualifications.

Summative assessment

Students work towards a range of nationally recognised qualifications. Profiles that record achievement of specific goals are kept.

Salient assessment features

There is a very comprehensive initial/diagnostic assessment process that can span over a period of up to 3 weeks. This allows programme managers to assess students in a variety of ways and collect rich information about the learners. Assessment data is gathered through both formal testing and incidental observation.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

An emphasis is placed on ensuring the students experience a positive learning environment. Programmes are individualised and monitored closely to ensure they continue to meet student needs. Effort is being made to integrate literacy into meaningful contexts.

Appendix 6: BEST Training Pacific Institute for Education and Development

This programme was identified for the case studies by the TEC[18] (Pauline Barnes and Pauline Elliott in consultation with TEC regional managers).

In comparison to the other case studies there is richer detail about the provider and the case study programme because additional questions of interest were raised by the Ministry of Education in relation to the cadetship and to the NCES, and to Pacific peoples' participation and outcomes. Concern has been expressed that foundation learning programmes were not recruiting Pacific learners (Sutton et al. 2005) despite the awareness of the need to do so:

> We have a reasonable understanding of which social groups are most affected by inadequate literacy skills, but not a lot in any depth about these groups specifically–especially Pasifika, Mäori, young adults, older adults and disabled groups (Benseman, 2003).

This case study helps contribute insights into the characteristics of successful foundation learning programmes for Pasifika youth.

The provider

BEST is a PTE based in Auckland. In 2004 BEST had 1621 students. Three-quarters (76 percent) were female. BEST provides foundation education and education bridging to

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[18] The TEC contracts NZQA registered and accredited training providers (mainly PTEs but sometimes polytechnics) to provide youth training (YT) programmes for unemployed people under the age of 18, and training opportunities (TOPs) programmes for those over 18 years. The programmes are expected to lead to employment or further training.

employment or higher education for Pacific peoples. BEST began as a training provider in West Auckland 17 years ago, and in the intervening years has developed additional campuses, including the Manukau campus where the current case study is situated. Many of BEST's students are Pacific Island (51 percent) or Mäori (27 percent). Most come with no or low-level formal qualifications (almost 75 percent). Half of BEST's students are 25 years of age or older. In 2004, 70 percent of BEST's staff was of Pasifika or Mäori heritage. Retention rates across all programmes in 2003 were between 75 percent and 97 percent. The rates for successful achievement of actual qualifications ranged from 55 percent to 87 percent. TOPs and YT providers are required to report on outcomes for students, and in 2003 across programmes 75 percent to 85 percent progressed to further education or found employment. The data suggested a high level of success for BEST programmes.

Main focus of provider

BEST Training is positioned as a Pasifika provider. BEST's mission statement is:

> To work with Pacific people to fulfil the educational, vocational and business aspirations of the Pacific Island communities by providing quality educational programmes that responsively and effectively meet their learning and career needs (http://www.besttraining.ac.nz/about-us/mission-statement.htm).

BEST sets out to work within the family and cultural context of the learners, while preparing those learners to function in employment contexts. This involves the interweaving of cultural practices such as making a place for the family within the programme, use of prayers, and Pacific Island and Mäori ways of conducting meetings and social exchanges, with an adherence to contemporary workplace protocols such as dress codes, time keeping, and learning to be an active participant in communication and team work. BEST seeks to expose its students to Pasifika "heroes" and role models.

Elements of the fieldwork visit to BEST reflected this. Initial impressions on arrival at BEST shortly before 9 am on a Friday morning, were that those arriving on the campus at that time were nearly all Mäori or Pacific staff and students. It was not immediately apparent who were teachers and who were students. The room where the day began was a bright business-like meeting room. The table was adorned with a wooden bowl (kava bowl) and scattered flowers, and Pasifika artwork hung on the walls. The day began with small talk and coffee, and the formal discussion opened with a prayer. Care was taken to welcome and introduce people who joined the group during the morning.

Later in the day the researcher was taken to meet the 2005–2006 cohort as a group. This cohort was into their third week of the programme and most were dressed in business style clothes; for example, nearly all the male students wore a collar and tie. A reasonably formal protocol was followed in that once the group (those from the initial meeting) had been introduced, the students conducted a welcome. One gave a short, warm welcome in English, and the class presented the researcher with a bag of gifts[19]. Another student gave a whaikorero in a traditional format, and then led the class in a Karakia[20]. A group from the class then performed some gospel songs.

BEST offers a range of programmes, mostly funded through TOPs, Youth Training, or other targeted funding schemes such as Skill Enhancement, or Tupulaga. It also offers some EFTS-funded programmes, with students eligible to apply for loans and allowances. BEST has been engaged in provision of youth training for over a decade. In March 2005 BEST employed a full-time youth literacy educator to work with its youth programme. The Youth Programme is a year-long foundation programme for 50 students. Young people enrol in programmes such as Performing Arts, which are designed to staircase into further education or employment. The programme manager described BEST as following an integrated

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[19]   The bag contained a card thanking the researcher for coming, a book encouraging living life through knowledge of the bible, and a china container with a candle within and a religious message on the outside.

[20]   These were in Te Reo/Mäori language.

approach to literacy. BEST runs an employment consultancy, which is a key aspect of staircasing the students into employment.

Initial discussions with the BEST's director of programmes identified a number of foundation programmes which could be considered for a case study of assessment for learning in literacy, numeracy, and language. These included:

- Youth Programme (a year-long programme with multiple entry and exit points, 50 students on the Youth Campus. They are 16–18-year-olds, funded under Youth Training. There are four strands, and a specialist literacy educator on the youth site takes all youth for maths and English (speaking, reading, and writing);

- NC Business Administration and Computing, Level 2 (mostly women in their late 20s or older, mainly Pacific Island or Mäori);

- NC Business Administration and Computing, 36 weeks, blended face-to-face and e-learning. EFTS-funded and eligible for student loans and allowances;

- NC Certificate in Residential Care, Levels 2 and 3 (mostly women in their late 20s or older, mainly Pacific people or Mäori);

- Tupulaga programme, Level 4. Tupulaga Le Lumana'I is a TEC initiative developed for young Pacific Island people, and is also open to Mäori students; and

- Cadetship (youth employment project with Manukau City and Freightforwarders Association). The cadetships run for 52 weeks and combine training towards the National Certificate in Employment Skills with paid work experience.

Cadetship (Manukau City Council Youth Employment Project)

The Ministry of Education selected the Cadetship programme to be the focus of the BEST case study. In addition to the generic questions, the Ministry requested that information be obtained on how the employers/managers viewed the NCES as a foundation learning qualification. The programme is targeted at young people aged 16–24, who are not in school or work. It aims to equip them with the competencies required for work.

Key sources of information for the case study

Rachel Skudder, Director of Training.
John Fale, Workplace Mentor (appointed by BEST).
Cherith Vaha'akolo, Course Director Cadetships 2002 to March 2005.
Kathryn Dibble, Computing and Business Administration tutor.
Mark Wonglyn, Project Leader for the Cadetships, and manager of the Governance Group of Key Stakeholders (MSD, TEC, MCC, and IFFA).
Annette Smithard, was Manukau City Council Employment and Education Planner, now Strategic Plan Manager, Strategy and Development for Waitakere City Council.
Kevin Wilkie, Manager Regulatory Projects Environmental Services Manukau City Council.
Cadets from the first two intakes.
Eight graduates of the cadetship programme.

The Cadetship programme

The Cadetship programme started as a pilot led by Manukau City Council and involving the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the TEC as partners. The initial partners in

designing the cadetship decided it was important the cadetship had a training component, and that the cadets would emerge with tangible recognition of their work experience. At that point they brought BEST in as the training partner. For 2005–2006 the International Freightforwarders Association has become a partner, with 12 companies offering 24 placements. Manukau City Council is taking 21 cadets this year, and is positioning itself to recruit additional local partners in the future, and phase out of its role as a placement site.

Foundation learning

The director of programmes suggested that staff expect the students to begin the programme with low levels of literacy, but have the expectation that the programme will make a huge impact on literacy levels within the context of the cadetship curriculum.

The young people work towards the National Certificate in Employment Skills during the first 3 months of the programme. The NCES is only one component of that first stage, which also includes work on shaping expectations, setting goals for achievement, preparing for work experience, and budgeting. While on their training programme the students are required to maintain a daily journal of their personal journey. This requires the students to write each day, and once a week the class director reads the entries. Reading, spelling, and vocabulary extension activities form part of the programme.

Unit standards, directly relevant to literacy and numeracy, for the BEST version of NCES are:
1277: Communicate information in a specified workplace;
2977: Read texts for practical purposes;
5941: Exchange messages using electronic mail;
5942: Exchange messages with an online computer service;
8489: Solve problems which require calculation with whole numbers;
8491: Read and interpret information presented in graphs and tables;
8492: Use standard units of measurement;
8811: Collect information using a range of oral, written, and visual sources; and
10792: Write formal personal correspondence.

There are other unit standards that could be linked to multi-literacies and broader notions of literacy and numeracy. The content and assessments are tailored to the workplace environment, which for the first two cohorts was Manukau City Council.

Funding

The cadetship is funded from diverse sources. The partners contribute in various ways to the recruitment and selection process, then the targeted youth training fund is used for the initial 12 weeks of preparation for employment training (NCES), and the cadets receive a training allowance from the TEC. The workplace placements are funded by MSD (WINZ) and Manukau City Council using Job Plus funds, and then (as has been the case for a number of cadets) Manukau City Council or another employer takes over when the cadet gains a permanent job. MSD funds the BEST-appointed workplace mentors, and the council provides them with office facilities. The position of workplace mentor did not exist for the pilot but was identified as a need. There were two mentors for the 2004–2005 cohort, and they worked full-time supporting the cadets and their workplace supervisors. In 2005 there will be an additional 15 cadets and a number of freight forwarding companies to deal with, but without additional funding for mentors.

EFTS value or equivalent

The programme is not EFTS-funded. In EFTS-funded courses the NCES is usually 0.5 of an EFT. While it is difficult to attach an EFTS value to the overall programme, it is equivalent to 1 EFT.

Programme Characteristics

Duration and timing

The cadetship lasts 52 weeks, with the NCES training taking 13 weeks. The cadetship is a full-time programme.

Assessment milestones

The Cadetship programmes have direct links to employment, and indirect links to other vocational qualifications. Celebrating milestones is a feature of the programme. The first big celebration is held at the end of the 3-month employment skills training when a ceremony hands the cadets over for their employment placements. This takes place in the evening with family and mentors (from the employer), and an inspirational speaker. Last year the speaker was Eric Rush.
Monthly in-class awards are made to individuals, leaders, and teams. These awards are not about literacy, numeracy, and language but rather are about outstanding effort, endeavour, and hard work. Leaders receive double the awards of their teams. The rewards aim to provide social times that widen horizons. Some examples given were vouchers for a restaurant and the whole class went to *Mamma Mia*.
The outcomes from the first two cohorts have been impressive. From the first group of 30, 27 are in permanent employment, and the results are similar for the second cohort.

Students

Students are recruited through MSD (WINZ) case managers who identify potential cadets from among those unemployed for 6 months or more, aged 19–25, living in Manukau, and who they think would benefit from the programme.

Number of students

There were 30 students in each of the cohorts 2002–2003 (pilot) and 2004–2005. There are 45 students in the 2005–2006 intake. The 2005–2006 cohort is divided into two streams for most purposes. They come together for some shared activities.

Characteristics (gender/ethnicity/age/educational qualifications)

The third cohort (commenced April 2005) has 33 female students and 12 male, of whom 29 are Pacific peoples, and 13 Māori, with 3 others. They range in age from 19–25, many with no formal qualifications. They were not in employment or further training at the time recruited. Most had been unemployed for more than 6 months. One of the 2004 cohort had been unemployed for 4 years prior to the programme. Some students have school qualifications or have previously participated in diploma or degree level studies but have been unemployed for significant periods and were becoming discouraged job seekers.

Teachers

The teachers on the NCES section of the programme mirror the ethnicity of the student body with the majority being Pacific peoples or Māori. There is one Palangi teacher. The Cadetship programme has a dedicated course director, and tutors who have responsibility for specific components of the programme. In addition, there are two BEST-embedded mentors who

begin working with the students during their employment skills training, and who have offices at Manukau City Council where they provide support and assistance to the cadets and their supervisors (also known as mentors). This role is seen as crucial.

Minimum qualifications required

Those teaching on the programme are expected to have teaching qualifications (either in adult education and training, or school sector teaching qualifications). They are also expected to have extensive experience in youth work and/or career guidance. Those interviewed met these requirements. All had extensive experience in foundation education.

They are required to have the assessment unit standards already mentioned in previous case studies (usually done through the Performance Improvement Centre (PIC) at Auckland University (ex ACE)).

Professional development

Those interviewed were participating in professional development. Staff are encouraged to participate in courses offered through the PIC (which provides programmes for people working in training and development).

Initial assessment

Those involved with the development of the cadetship over the past 3 years were convinced that a key to the success of the programme was the initial selection process. This set expectations and a "burning to learn". MSD (WINZ) assesses eligible applicants and then invites approximately 120 young people to a 2-day seminar introducing the programme and the selection and training process. BEST staff attend as observers. Students self-select to continue from the point when the selection process begins. Approximately 50 of the original group continue through to the panel interviews.

What is assessed (foundation learning: literacy, numeracy, and language)

During the initial assessment process applicants are assessed in terms of willingness and commitment to making the most of the opportunity, readiness for opportunity, potential employability, personal attributes, and whether any barriers or gaps identified can be addressed in the cadetship.

Tools (and rationale)

The assessment tools for the initial assessment include an individual one-to-one interview, and a panel interview (BEST project manager, representatives of MSD, TEC, and employers—MCC and the freight forwarders). In addition to the individual and group interviews, other procedures used include: introductions of self to group; observation of working in teams of five compiling a picture of what they know about the council; and then completion of a written profile on themselves. The profile is used to provide an indication of literacy, and some individuals may identify learning needs within their profile. There is no testing of numeracy skills and knowledge at this stage.

Who receives the results?

The results are provided to the course director. The individuals receive feedback when they are told they have been selected for the cadetship.

Why this approach/tool?

The approach was explained in terms of building high expectations, and linking these to the requirements of the employment context. All partners have invested heavily in the programme and want it to be a success. The Manukau City Council has a newsletter called *City Life* and one issue profiled a former cadet who is now employed permanently as a pool lifeguard. At the time he was selected, Wallace was a long-term employment beneficiary:

> Two things got my attention to the point that I never missed a day's training. The first was in the fact that I got through the screening. I had been telling myself 'I won't get on' and then I did and it scared me, in a good way. The second was my tutor, who really cared about us and wanted us to succeed (*City Life,* September 2004, p. 2).

There is some ambivalence between the desire to have selection seen as achievement after a gruelling selection and therefore a huge achievement, and the desire that the selection process does not become yet another instance of failure for young people who have already expressed this in other studies. Some are running out of their entitlements to training programmes. Self-selection occurs by way of not continuing with the selection process, and at each point of the process a number of applicants drop out.

Diagnostic assessment/learning needs analysis

What is described as a very generic learning needs analysis linked to the NCES or similar qualification is administered to students prior to the course.
It has a number of sections or questions designed to provide a picture of the skills, experiences, and career-related needs/goals the student brings to the course.
The first five items require the student to rate on a 5-point scale their own skill level in relation to:

- confidence in relating to others;

- ability to understand instructions;

- ability to follow instructions; and

- ability to ask questions.

The students are specifically asked about literacy and numeracy needs, and areas that they would like to improve on. The language used gives the locus of control to the student:

Have you ever worked before? (including part-time)

Job roles held.

Do you think you had the skills to do the job?

If your answer is no, why not?

What skills did you practise?

What is your career goal?

The Action Plan section deals with units and topics identified to progress the student's skills acquisition and has a subsection on "Professional development needs".
The analysis is used with all BEST's TOPs programmes. The learning needs analysis is designed so that the course director and student/cadet may complete it together. It is signed by the student and the course director. It is later referred to in the exit interview held with each student. It is also used to develop an individual Career Training Plan with each student.
Example of section of one student's training plan

Job roles held: Storeman, line production, unloading goods, cleaner
Skills practised: **Practical, machinery, tools, equipment**
Career direction/goal: **Owning a business in motor mechanics**
Areas client would like to improve: **Maths, shyness, literacy, self-control**
Barriers to employment identified: Incomplete trade training at MIT due to finding employment to support young family

Specific diagnostic assessments

There is no formal diagnostic assessment of literacy, numeracy, or language associated with the Cadetship programme. The focus in the initial assessment is more on attitudes, although there is some provision for assessment of literacy. If a cadet had ongoing issues with literacy and numeracy they would be referred to the specialist literacy educator. This has not been required to date.

Formative assessment

The learning is designed around the skills, knowledge, and understanding for the workplace, and is particular for a cadet's likely placement area. Where possible documentation, processes, procedures, and tasks are drawn from the council or other employer. The intention is for the standard required for the workplace to be met. The feedback is thus tailored to this aim. During the placement stage the cadets are still polishing their communication, writing, reading, and numeracy skills so the feedback is centred on either "difficulties" experienced by the cadet or with gaps in performance identified by their supervisor.

In addition to the immediate and informal assessment, which occurs continuously in class and in the workplace, the cadetship provides for a number of one-to-one opportunities for formative assessment. Such assessments are linked to the NCES, preparation for employment, personal development, and workplace performance including communication in the workplace. The assessments include goal-setting opportunities, and occur frequently with regular feedback on progress and academic attainment provided by the course director.

The cadets are provided with feedback in order that they can be clear as to progress made, areas to work on, and what is required next.

Use of self-assessment

The tutors and the documentation suggest that self-assessment is encouraged and is an integral part of the programme. In the interviews it was stated that the tutors are encouraged to be role models in terms of self-assessment and other critical practices as an aspect of taking an integrated literacy approach.

The daily journals may provide some opportunity for self-assessment. They definitely provide the students with regular opportunities to reflect on their feelings and experiences, and to write. The students are asked to address four questions each day including: What was your biggest challenge today?

Students are given limited opportunities for self-assessment when they are asked to complete two structured course evaluation forms, one at the mid-point of the programme (NCES) and one at the conclusion. These provide feedback on a range of aspects of the programme including the tutorial staff, facilities, administration, and student support. The students are asked to rate their starting points on a continuum from *nil* to *a lot of knowledge* at the beginning of the course, and then to rate their knowledge at the time of the evaluation.

Tracking learning progression

Who monitors, how is this recorded?

The course director is a non-teaching position. The course director welcomes, inducts, monitors progress, and is the point of contact for learners and their tutors. This person plays a crucial role in mentoring and retention, with associated provision of pastoral care. (Absenteeism and retention are major issues with the target group for foundation and youth programmes.) It is the course director who will phone to find out why students are not in class, and who will refer students with personal difficulties to the social worker.

The course director closely monitors students' progress, is the only person who reads their daily journal, and who meets regularly with each student to review progress and stay abreast of emerging difficulties. The personal journal provides additional perspectives on barriers to learning. Learning progression is recorded in an individual student file maintained by the course director. This file includes the detailed personal profile, the initial generic learning needs analysis, the individual training plan, and a career plan. The course director and the rest of the team are monitoring progress both in relation to the NCES, employability, and towards the individual's own career plan. The career plan also shapes part of the work experience. Unit standards achievements are recorded and reported to NZQA and placed on the individual's Record of Learning.

The course director takes part in the teaching team meetings and monitors and reviews student progress using the records and interviews with individual tutors. Tutors record progress results, and report these using the management system[21]. A learner may have several tutors, e.g. communications, computing, health and safety, and so on. A tutor will monitor progress of learners in their own classes, but the course director will monitor overall progress across all their classes for a learner, and administer attendance records.

Tutors also participate in curriculum area meetings and in staff team meetings for the cadetship. Both types of meetings provide opportunities for monitoring progress and identifying concerns with progress of individual students. The cadetship team meetings include the project manager, course director, the BEST-appointed workplace mentor(s), and the tutors.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment in the cadetship is based on the requirements of NZQA for accredited providers. Unit standards are reported to NZQA and recorded on Records of Learning. Progress and results are reported in an aggregated way to the stakeholders.

Moderation of assessment

BEST participates in the national moderation system for the NCES, and has its own internal moderation system.

Salient assessment features

• The learning needs analysis is designed so that the course director and student complete it together, thus actively involving the student in assessment.

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[21] Tertiary organisations in New Zealand typically have computerised student management systems, and these are used for recording and reporting purposes.

- Specific feedback is given in relation to the programme's stated aim of developing skills, knowledge, and understanding for the workplace.
- Assessment is embedded in authentic contexts, that is, the workplace.
- When a student is completing exercises around a work-related task, there are opportunities for formative "feedback" on performance, and once competence has been demonstrated this will lead to the crediting of the relevant unit standard(s).
- In relation to literacy and numeracy, weaknesses may lie in limited use of initial and diagnostic tools. However, there was no evidence that these were required. The tutors had not identified any cadets who had required instruction beyond what was provided in class, and the managers spoken to at the city council were not aware of any issues related to the literacy and numeracy skills of the cadets within their placements and later permanent roles.

The employment component and outcomes of the cadetships

Initially when the cadets go to the council they are provided with the opportunity to observe a variety of work units in action, then they are matched to an area which had agreed to take a cadet and which ideally is in keeping with the cadet's career goals. For example, a cadet interested in a career in sport and fitness might be placed at the pool, whereas a cadet interested in administration might be placed in the call centre. In the previous intakes some cadets were placed outside of council. For example, one cadet interested in an automotive mechanics career was placed with an AA service provider. The BEST-appointed workplace mentors visit the cadets regularly in their workplaces and encourage them to apply for suitable roles as these are advertised in the council or outside the council.

The former cadets are visibly changing the look of Manukau City Council. In the visit to the council administration building the picture presented was of older (40-plus years) white employees working alongside young (19–25 years) Pacific and Mäori employees.

Eight Manukau City Council employees who were cadets, seven from the 2004–2005 intake, and one from the first intake, were interviewed. Their work areas were also sighted during the visit and provided a picture of the reading and writing demands that accompany the roles these young people were in. Three work in the customer service area dealing with enquiries from the public at the front desk or by phone. In addition to interpersonal communication skills, their work requires familiarity with the information management and search functions of the computer, and with council systems and processes. They deal with queries on anything from rates, dog control, to property information and licensing. Two are in roles involving organising training and seminars, flight bookings, processing refunds, and purchasing within their portfolio area.

Did the employer value the NCES?

The value employers placed on the National Certificate in Employment Skills was discussed at a meeting with Annette Smithyard[22], and with two senior managers at Manukau City Council. They were asked what difference the certificate made, and whether they would be comfortable with taking on cadets with the training and no national certificate, or with a different qualification.

One of the managers made the point that there are great outcomes for the first programme, with only 3 of the 30 in the first cohort not in permanent employment. But without the NCES

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[22] Annette Smithyard was Manukau City Council Employment and Education Planner, and in April 2005 was employed as Strategic Plan Manager, Strategy and Development for Waitakere City Council.

all they would have had was a statement that they had worked at Manukau City Council for 9 months. This manager had attended the awards ceremony and was impressed by the way the certificate was valued by the cadets and their families. In his view the cadets had needed the 3 months training prior to coming into the council because they had a lot of learning to do to reach the point of making the placement work. From the council's point of view the cadets come into the council knowing what is needed, although they and their workplace supervisors will still have a lot to learn over the 9 months. The supervisors need to learn to manage the cadets as "employees rather than a gift they can send back".

Another manager said the council found the NCES of value in other contexts. In the leisure area the council is now requiring the NCES for the approximately 40 temporary pool lifeguards they employ each summer. Their experience has been that those with the NCES have made the most of the experience of temporary work and are more likely to gain ongoing employment when the summer season finishes.

The Ministry of Economic Development reported on employers' views on the NCES in the context of a pilot project in 2004 by Enterprise Manukau. This pilot project was a response to a shortage of logistics and distribution workers. The pilot involved three companies (Contract Warehousing New Zealand, Amway New Zealand, and Quality Bakers) who already require that their employees have at least Level 1 National Certificates. Currently Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) offers Level 3 and 4 Certificates in Distribution, and the pilot was to use the Level 1 certificate as a foundation for people to complete a Level 2 Certificate in Distribution[23]. (The involvement of the Freightforwarders Association in the Cadetship programme has grown out of this project. Those cadets involved in the Freightforwards stream of the cadetship will have options in terms of either employment or enrolment in one of the MIT programmes.)

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

The approach has many strengths. All the cadets achieved the NCES, and some achieved additional unit standards and qualifications, along with the impressive employment results. The use of embedded workplace mentors also contributes to ensuring the course content and assessment remain current, and appropriate for preparing the cadets for the diverse areas in which they are placed. The NCES stage of the programme uses council documentation and prepares cadets for working in the council environment.

The staff at BEST suggested that the NCES was a vehicle to "switch on learning" for young people experiencing barriers to work and learning. Their view is that while many of the young people are academically capable, even the best and brightest struggle with Level 2 and 3 programmes after periods outside of employment or education. NCES enables the provider to address and change habits and attitudes developed through longer-term unemployment, for example getting up and being at work, concentrating on a task, working with others.

A small number of the cadets who had met the MSD (WINZ) criteria in relation to employment had some school qualifications and had in the past enrolled in university or polytechnic programmes at Level 5[24]. Prior to talking with the former cadets this prompted the question as to whether it was appropriate for students with literacy and numeracy at a significantly higher level than the literacy and numeracy demands of the NCES to be enrolled in such a programme. The former cadets interviewed were adamant that the programme was appropriate for them. Whereas some of the cohort struggled with the literacy and numeracy work, they had struggled with acquiring personal and social skills, and, in particular, with self-esteem and communication skills. The course had also improved their writing skills and in particular vocabulary and spelling.

The transportability of the model will be challenged to some extent by the placement of more than half of the 2005 cohort with Freightways' employers. There will be the additional hurdle

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[23]   http://www.gif.med.govt.nz/news/gifweekly/20040820.asp

[24]   In the interviews there was some uncertainty about whether "I did Sixth Form Certificate" meant a person had been enrolled for Sixth Form Certificate or that this was their achievement level.

of the increased number of cadets to each workplace mentor combined with a wider geographic and organisational dispersion.

Websites/reports relevant to the case study

http://www.besttraining.ac.nz/home.htm

http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/publications/newsletters/auckland-december-2004.doc

http://www.tec.govt.nz/downloads/a2z_publications/piki_mai_oct04.pdf

Mission statement. Retrieved 31 May 2005, from http://www.besttraining.ac.nz/about-us/mission-statement.htm

Appendix 7:   Workbase

Provider characteristics

The New Zealand Centre for Workforce Literacy Development (Workbase) is the leading national provider of workplace literacy education and is based in Auckland. Workbase is an independent, not-for-profit organisation and is registered and accredited by NZQA. Workbase provides resources and training for other literacy practitioners, provides 12 to 15 workplace literacy programmes in partnership with employers, and administers the Workplace Basic Skills Development Fund.

Workbase was selected as a case study in consultation with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry sought to have a number of examples of workplace literacy in this research. It was agreed that case studies be on programmes that have not previously been profiled in case studies, and that were not part of concurrent research (the *Learning for Living* projects). Workbase then identified the programme for the case study.

The Workbase case study selected for this project is based in a plastics company[25] in Auckland, and the programme has been operating in the company for 3 years. Workbase has a solid history with the plastics industry, and has worked closely with the Plastics and Materials Processing Industry Training Organisation (in the case study referred to as PaMPITO).

PaMPITO has a number of qualifications[26]. The qualifications relevant to foundation education are the National Certificates in Plastics Production Technician (Levels 1–4) and Plastics and Materials Processing (Levels 1–2). These qualifications include literacy and numeracy unit standards.

There is a small number of workers in the case study, which is one of a number of plastics industry workplace literacy programmes provided by Workbase. The plastics industry contributed $1.8 billion or 1.5 percent of the GDP in 2003, and is growing rapidly. More than half the workforce is based in Auckland, with the next significant centres being the Waikato and Canterbury. The plastics industry employs approximately 8500 people, many of whom come from non-English-speaking backgrounds. A significant proportion of the plastics workforce is Pacific peoples.

Plastics machinery and processes are increasing in complexity, and with that change comes a need for a more highly skilled workforce, hence the need for workplace literacy, numeracy, and language learning programmes.

Key sources of information for the case study

Barbara Wilkinson, Programme Manager.
Karren Smith (the tutor for the case study site).
The research team was provided with examples of learners' assessed written work from the case study site. No learners were interviewed, for a combination of reasons, including the

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[25]   The company wished to remain anonymous.

[26]   In New Zealand nationally recognised qualifications are designed, developed, and maintained by standards-setting bodies. The unit standards and qualifications are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in accordance with the quality assurance process for registering qualifications. In industry the standard-setting body is usually the Industry Training Organisation (ITO). In this case study the ITO is PaMPITO.

difficulty in obtaining permission from the employer to be on site. The workers were shift workers and their scheduled tuition times were spread through the day and night.

Funding basis for the programme

This particular programme is partially funded through the Workplace Basic Skills Development Fund and also to a lesser extent the Industry Training Fund. The "trainees" have registered training agreements with their employers for the qualifications. The ITO "enrols" the trainees and maintains their records in a way comparable to the procedures of any other type of tertiary organisation. The employer also funds the programme and contributes through providing training on the job, facilities, and time. The workers contribute their own time for homework, and for some parts of the training.

EFTS value or equivalent

It is difficult to measure the EFTS value or equivalent of the programme. The formal tuition component is designed for 48 weeks of contact, which would equate with between 48–80 hours a year. Including homework and on-job components of the learning, the training is expected to be the equivalent of 20 credits or 200 hours of learning, that is 0.17 EFTS.

Student characteristics

In this case study the students are selected by the factory manager and also agree to be part of the programme. Workbase conducted a literacy needs analysis, which provided information on skill initial levels. This plays a key role in the selection. Those who undertake the training are required to sign a contract to remain with the company for 2 years or they have to repay the cost of training.
In the year 2004–2005 there were 18–20 learners at this site. They tended to be male Pacific peoples with few formal educational qualifications, and with ESOL needs. They are able to read and write in their home language but have difficulty with English.

Tutor characteristics

Workbase has 12 industry tutors. Most would have experience in teaching and some form of teaching qualification. The case study has one tutor, who is a specialist tutor with expertise in literacy and numeracy. She has a primary teaching qualification, and experience in both learning support at secondary school and tutoring on a TOPs programme.
Tutors are expected to gain two unit standards—US 4098: "Uses standards to assess candidate performance" and US 11551: "Moderate assessment"—as a minimum requirement.

Professional development

Workbase has a development programme for its tutors. Workbase's tutors meet for an hour a week (training and curriculum meetings), and are provided with a variety of professional development activities. In 2004, a 7-day training programme was held on assessing reading and maths needs, and assessment in literacy, numeracy, and ESOL. This programme included how to use assessment information to develop strategies for working with the individual learner. The tutors are also supported in gaining Excel skills. These may be used

for recording learning progression but are also often something their learners need to use in the workplace. The tutors follow comprehensive processes to develop and deliver the programme. These processes include initial assessment, setting learners' literacy goals, and monitoring and recording progress.

Workbase hosts and runs a variety of professional development programmes that bring together a diverse range of literacy, numeracy, and ESOL practitioners. In addition to their own "community of practice", such events keep the tutors in touch with developments. In 2005 Workbase hosted the visit to New Zealand of Sondra Stein from *Equipped for the Future* (discussed in Chapter 3). Jan Eldred from the UK National Institute for Community Education (NIACE) visited Workbase, and some tutors participated in workshops she ran for Literacy Aotearoa on "Catching Confidence".

Programme characteristics

The programme centres on providing industry and workplace-specific literacy, numeracy, and language learning.

The case study programme was set up in 2001 as a 1-year programme to assist workers having difficulty with their Level 1 Plastics qualification. Its specific purpose is to assist the learners to achieve an industry qualification. Although most of the learners are working towards the Level 1 Plastics qualification, a few learners are working on a first-line management qualification (National Certificate in First-Line Management, Level 3). The tuition takes place in the workplace.

The programme is linked to the NQF, mostly through the Level 1 Plastics qualification unit standards (communication; numeracy; plastics materials; health and safety) but learners may also choose other unit standards. The tutor will sometimes refer learners to "night school courses"—for example at MIT.

It is tailored to a mixture of the company's needs and the learners' needs in terms of foundation learning skills, including computer skills.

The initiative is referred to in the company as the "Workbase programme". In other companies similar programmes may be known as the "Communications programme".

Duration and timing

The learners are shift workers. Typically they are working on an individualised programme, and they can come singly, in pairs, or in small groups. One group of four is on night shift and meets with the tutor at 10 pm. They come in an hour early and go through to 11.30 pm, when they return to the production area to work through the night.

Initial assessment/diagnostic assessment

Following the Workbase approach, the programme at the case study site started with assessing the company's needs for performance gains, then identified the wider literacy needs from that. The next step was to conduct individual needs analyses. Broad goals for the programme were agreed with the company. An Individual Learning Plan was developed with each individual, based on the broader programme goals and linked to unit standards.

The initial needs assessment involved Workbase becoming very familiar with the company, its processes and its systems, and the skills that are critical to the company. The literacy, numeracy, and language demands of roles, processes, systems, and documentation were examined. When individuals' needs were assessed, this was done using workplace-generated items. They were assessed on things like reading workplace memos, job sheets, safety signage, and abbreviations used in the workplace documents, and on their ability to fill in relevant forms. Depending on relevance to role, the assessment may also include items of pricing, measurements, and other numbers-related work.

Once the unique assessments for the particular workplace are created, a sample group of learners is assessed. Although companies contact Workbase because they are aware that literacy and numeracy is an issue, most cannot afford the time or money required for in-depth needs analyses of their entire workforce. Often a small analysis will be conducted to identify what the training programme should include.

In the case study setting a short informal interview (approximately 20 minutes) is held with each individual. The interview is conversational and provides information about speaking and listening skills, as well as information about the background and learning goals of the individual. A written assessment is also conducted.

The needs of the individual are identified through mapping the results of the assessment to the identified needs of the organisation. In this case study there is also the link to the Plastics unit standards. Workbase took part in the ALAF trials and has chosen to continue to use ALAF. They do so by mapping the learner against the ALAF profiles at the beginning and the end of a programme.

The tutor uses the information derived from the individual interviews to guide tuition in the one-to-one or small group sessions. A plan is developed in consultation with the company, and brief Individual Learning Plans are developed for each learner. The company's goals are discussed with the learners, as are their individual learning goals, and this forms the basis of the Individual Learning Plan. The learning plan will identify unit standards to be achieved. The company receives aggregated results only from the needs anlaysis and gets the unit standard results.

The Workbase approach is for the learner to be given feedback as soon as possible from the initial assessment. The expressed intention is to increase the learner's self-awareness, confidence, and motivation to learn. The discussion with the learner is one way for the learner to develop the language of learning, and to play an active role in setting goals and developing an Individual Learning Plan.

Specific diagnostic assessment

The Plastics qualification includes two maths unit standards, and the tutor begins by finding out the current skills of the learner. She will ask them to do some calculations, and to explain how they go about it. This provides her with clues as to why they may be having difficulties with, for example, subtraction or multiplication. She is able to diagnose the problem and devise a strategy. This information is briefly noted, or informally recorded.

Formative assessment

One-to-one tuition working in relation to the needs of an individual's work environment and the Level 1 Plastic qualification lends itself to formative assessment being an integral part of sessions. The tutor is able to give immediate feedback to the learner as they work through the current course work. The tutor encourages the learner to "think aloud" and then uses her professional judgement to identify next learning steps in literacy, numeracy, and language learning.

Tracking progress

The tutor maintains a file for each learner. This includes the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), samples of the learner's work, and an ongoing record. This "running record" tracks attendance and progress and, depending on the learner and their needs, will include what is worked on, the focus of the session, issues, and homework. This enables the tutor to monitor learner progress against their Individual Learning Plan and the unit standards and to determine what support is required.

The tutor has monthly meetings with the company (factory manager) to update the company on progress and discuss emerging issues; for example, workers struggling with new documentation.

A monthly report goes to PaMPITO and to the company. This notes progress and lists unit standards gained.

Moderation of assessment

Workbase maintains its own internal moderation system, and this includes the support and oversight provided by the programme manager. The weekly meetings of the tutors and assessment-related professional development all play a role in the quality of assessment. Workbase is accredited to assess some units in the Plastics qualification, and others are assessed by PaMPITO assessors. The unit standard assessments are covered by the AMAPS and systems of the standard-setting bodies including PaMPITO.

Summative assessment

An individual is only assessed for the qualification when the tutor identifies that they are ready and can do what is required. The tutor works to ensure it is a natural process rather than an anxiety provoking special occasion. Where possible the assessment decision is based on evidence generated in the workplace, or from tasks in the tuition sessions. The unit standards require different types of evidence of skills, knowledge, and understanding. Examples of units in the Level 1 Certificate include: US 497: "Protect health and safety in the workplace", and US 271: "Identify and handle plastics materials". There are also unit standards on basic listening, maths, and working in groups.

There are arguments both for and against using unit standards. A number of the workplace tutors do not like using unit standards because of the way their use shapes the programme rather than the company's or individual's needs shaping the programme. But the programme manager and tutor reported that their experience is that learners prefer unit standards and find them motivational. It is also valuable to the learners to be able to demonstrate that they have transferable skills.

The use of unit standards poses some problems in terms of those with high needs in literacy, numeracy, and language. To get ITO funding a learner has to be signed up for a minimum of 20 credits. For people with low literacy, or who have language issues, there is a tension between passing the unit standards and developing basic literacy skills such as vocabulary and reading comprehension. Results are reported to the company, the ITO, and to Workbase. The ITO reports to NZQA and unit standards are recorded in an individual's Record of Learning. Where Workbase is the accredited provider, unit standard results are sent to NZQA, with a copy to PaMPITO.

The workplace programmes build graduation ceremonies into the programme; for example, the manager could present certificates for standards or qualification in the "smoko" room. This would be on an annual basis at the end of each programme.

The programme has a review process that includes elements of summative self-assessment. The students are encouraged to reflect on their achievements, including identifying new vocabulary learnt, and increases in confidence in reading comprehension, writing, and oral language.

Salient assessment features

• There is a comprehensive diagnostic assessment phase. Information collected is used to develop programmes. These programmes are tailored to meet the needs of the company and the individual learner.

- Both the company's goals and the learners' goals are discussed and made explicit.
- The company receives only aggregated results of the initial assessments. This allows individual learners to feel safe.
- There are discussions with the learner that focus on both the development of the language of learning and the importance of the learner playing an important role in goal setting.
- Comprehensive records that track learning are kept. This allows the learner to focus on progress made.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

The Workbase approach enables some of the diverse needs of learners to be met within a workplace context while meeting company goals.

Websites/reports relevant to the case study

http://www.workbase.org.nz/

Workbase. (2001). *Speaking for ourselves: Workplace literacy in practice: Improving literacy, English language and numeracy in the plastics industry*. Case study, Volume 3, October 2001.

Workbase is the home of the New Zealand literacy portal, which provides information, links, and resources in literacy, numeracy, and language: www.nzliteracyportal.org.nz

A description of the plastics industry, workforce trends and skills needs may be found at:

http://www.dol.govt.nz/pdfs/work-insight-issue3-ch2.pdf

Appendix 8: WelTec and Formway Furniture—literacy, numeracy, and language in the workplace

Provider characteristics

This case study involves WelTec (Wellington Institute of Technology), Workbase, and Formway Furniture in Lower Hutt, Wellington. It was selected in consultation with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry was interested in workplace-based literacy, numeracy, and language programmes.

WelTec is a polytechnic and its major focus is on vocational education. Its programmes range from Level 1–8[27] and from short courses to degrees. It was the first point of contact for the research[28].

Formway is a privately owned company that designs, manufactures, and sells commercial furniture such as workstations and chairs.

Workbase is an independent non-profit organisation that seeks to improve the literacy, numeracy, language, information technology, and communication skills of the New Zealand workforce.

One of the goals of Workbase is to support and enhance the capability of education and training providers to provide workplace literacy.

The case study is a small initiative designed to meet the needs of industry and people in full-time work. The approach uses an "embedded tutor". An embedded tutor is employed by an external training provider and is based with the client company's workplace. In this case embedded tutors were provided by both WelTec and Workbase and were based in a Learning Centre at the Formway factory.

The study started out looking at the use of an "embedded literacy, numeracy, and language" tutor from WelTec, and during the process of research extended to include the background to that development and the role played by Workbase.

The key informants were:

- Paul Mather, Director Innovative Manufacturing, Centre for Smart Product, WelTec. Up until 2004 Paul was Group Development Officer for Formway Furniture;

- Mike Styles (now working for the TEC as a Wellington area adviser), Formway's first embedded tutor appointed by Workbase, who worked at Formway from 2001–2004; and

- Bob Robinson, the WelTec embedded tutor (.5) at Formway, who started in 2003.

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[27] In New Zealand, programmes offered by Tertiary Education Organisations are classified according to level. Level 1 has a flexible "bottom" and its highest is equivalent to Year 11 in the school system. Level 5 is equivalent to the first year of a Bachelor's degree. Level 7 is equivalent to degree level.

[28] A member of the NZCER project team is also a member of the WelTec Academic Board, and was aware that WelTec was involved in workplace-based programmes.

The programme

Funding basis for the programme

The initiatives began in 2001, and since then have been funded through a combination of sources coming from the company (Formway), the Workplace Basic Fund (administered by Workbase), and industry training funds through the Furniture Industry Training Organisation (FITO).

The programme was not EFTS funded. Where the funding was provided through FITO the programme would provide the equivalent "learning" to 20 credits on the NQF, or the equivalent of 200 hours of learning. In the pilot programme in 2002–2003 the participants achieved 18 credits on average.

Purpose of the programme

The programme had a number of purposes, including those of the company and those of Workbase. The focus of the programme shifted with time and the changing needs of the company and the learners.

One of the goals of Workbase is to support and enhance the capability of education and training providers to provide workplace literacy. Hence, WelTec's "embedded tutor" worked in conjunction with the Workbase "embedded tutor" to assist the company to address foundation learning needs. Workbase maintained its embedded tutor through the Workplace Basic Skills Development Fund, and in liaison with WelTec[29].

Tutor characteristics

Workbase recruited, trained, and supported the original embedded tutor. The selection panel included a production worker. Mike Styles was appointed as the first embedded tutor. He had a science background and had worked as a horticulture tutor. At the time of the research he was working as an adviser in the Wellington Regional Office of the Ministry of Education.

Bob Robinson, the WelTec embedded tutor, had a background of working in industry, and had spent a number of years as a polytechnic communications and adult education tutor. Prior to becoming the embedded tutor he undertook a teaching English as a second language course.

Marci Isles was WelTec's manager for the Formway project and acted as a mentor for Bob. Her background was in TESOL and adult education. (Marci has recently begun work overseas.)

Student characteristics

The programmes have been voluntary. Seventy to 80 manufacturing process workers have participated over the time. The majority of Formway's manufacturing process workers are older, Pacific Island men for whom English is a second language. Typically, Samoan was the language used in work teams, at home, and in the community. Church was a major part of life. English would mainly be used to talk with non-Samoan managers and co-workers.

The pilot initiative in 2001–2002 involved 15 workers: 14 men, 13 with English as a second language, 12 Samoan. Most had left school at the equivalent of Year 10 without formal qualifications.

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[29] Workbase hosts and maintains the Literacy Portal which is a key resource for educators and trainers working in adult literacy, numeracy, and language areas.

Programme characteristics

The initiatives to date have focused on reading, writing, arithmetic, and language within the context of furniture manufacturing. They began with a pilot.

Description of the programme

The literacy, language, and numeracy learning initiatives had their origins in the company's concerns around quality issues. As the number of products and the demand for customisation increased so did problems with components going out of specification. As well as the increasing complexity of manufacturing specifications, there were other challenges, such as health and safety requirements and quality assurance, which required reading and recording skills.

The company, acting on the perception that they had literacy, language, and numeracy problems with a significant number of their workers, decided to seek professional assistance. This outside help was seen as particularly important as the company had no history of formalised training or even apprenticeships. They brought in Workbase to design and conduct a needs assessment. The needs assessment was tailored to Formway and used company documentation, and contexts for activities were things the factory workers would experience during their work. Participation in the needs analysis was confined to the manufacturing process workers and was voluntary. Only one worker declined to participate, the reason being that he was close to retiring.

The development of literacy, numeracy, and language were not treated as specific "programmes of learning", they were contextualised to the workplace. The company believed that learning and work should be seen as one and the same thing, and that doing facilitates learning. A learning centre was set up as the base for the embedded tutor. With time, the approach taken became an integrated approach in which literacy, numeracy, and language were an integral part of the learning of new skills and knowledge for production. An excellent example provided was that of the introduction of a new product, the "Life Chair". The 14 workers from the work team to produce the "Life Chair" participated in training courses around the new product. The courses and related sessions made use of written questions, workbook activities, and oral exercises—all linked to the introduction of the new product. This new product required new components, new processes, teamwork, and changes to the health and safety procedures. The training covered the process of producing the "Life Chair", and the skills required, including participating in a team and in informal meetings, listening skills, working with people from other cultures, and problem solving. This training included the terminology associated with meetings and other interactions, and the workers had practice in talking, questioning, reading, and writing. From the company's and the workers' perspectives the training was appropriate for the introduction of a sophisticated new product. The skill of the embedded tutor was in "upskilling" the workers in literacy, numeracy, and language while also "upskilling" them in a manufacturing process.

Formway is a design company that prides itself on creativity and this provided a fertile ground for the development of literacy, numeracy, and language. Formway designs furniture for workplaces and in 2004 went through a rebranding exercise with the slogan "To make work better". The general manager asked work teams from all areas of the company to put together presentations on "How work is being made better at your workplace". They were given 3 months to prepare.

The presentations were made to the senior management team. Some of the workers began their presentations by saying it was the first time they had spoken in English in such a setting. They had prepared their speeches and had written out what they wanted to say:

> What happened was when the teams started to present, the production team started to present with a bit of help from Mike, and boy, suddenly they were getting up, everybody was speaking, they had done PowerPoints, they'd done videos, they'd done waiata, they'd written songs, they'd gone to town and it was absolutely fantastic. And the design teams who were totally cynical about the whole thing suddenly got the wind up, because they were just going to turn up and talk, and sort of, play the fool. Suddenly they found themselves

being shown up by the production staff, so they had to buckle down and produce something that was better than what these guys had been producing. It was just fantastic. It really turned the tables.

I think the management team was absolutely blown away by what the teams were coming up with, and talking about, and the fact that people—even the people who were really struggling with English had prepared a speech and got up and gave it—it was fantastic. (Mike Styles, pers. comm.)

The next phase of the programme will focus on the development of first-line managers and will place less emphasis on foundation skills. This phase is not seen by the company as foundation skills, and will not be funded under the Workbase Basic Skills Development Fund.

Duration and timing

There have been variations. During the first 3 years of the programme the learners would each have a weekly 1-hour individual session with the embedded tutor, and in addition may have received coaching from the tutor while on the job, and participated in some group activities. Formway is not a 24–7 operation but it does have a morning and afternoon shift. The workers stayed after work or came in early to participate in the programme[30].
The planned activities did not include homework as the workers were people who were regularly working long hours of overtime and had heavy time commitments to their families and churches. Nevertheless some workers did do homework.

Assessment milestones

The programme was linked to the NQF with the use of unit standards. Some were ESOL specific, others linked to the furniture National Certificates[31], or the National Certificate in Employment Skills. The initiative had links with the FITO, Workbase, and to WelTec.

Initial assessment/diagnostic assessment

For the purposes of this case study the initial assessment refers to the original needs analysis conducted in 2001 by Workbase. This assessed literacy, language, and numeracy, using Formway's documentation and processes. Workbase used its own needs assessment approach, customised to Formway using examples gleaned from the shopfloor by the Workbase personnel. "In the workplace you really need to know what they can read and write. You need a concrete starting point for defining needs."
The assessments were conducted by Workbase personnel, mainly Susan Reid. These people were by that time known to the workers, because of the time they had spent familiarising themselves with the shop floor and production processes.
An assessment took an hour on average. The assessment was voluntary, and individual. The assessments were tailored to the individual, so that if the individual demonstrated difficulty, they would move on to another item, or be provided with a more appropriate item. The items were drawn from the workplace and included instructions for machines and processes, job sheets, health and safety instructions, leave application forms, internal memos, and workplace calculations.

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[30]   Often the training would take place in paid worktime, but on occasions workers came in, or stayed for up to an hour extra to participate.

[31]   Furniture qualifications are listed on: http://www.tec.govt.nz/education_and_training/ito/furniture.htm

Only the individual and Workbase saw the results of individual assessments. The company was provided with a breakdown of the results for each team. Teams varied in size from 5 to 10 members.

The company wanted to determine whether or not the production workforce had sufficient literacy, numeracy, and language skills to cope with what the company was expecting in terms of production, quality, health and safety, and ongoing training. The assessment was also to identify gaps in the skills level. In addition the approach may have met some workers' goals:

> I think some of them found it very challenging, but they were all prepared to give it a go. Many of them saw this as—(particularly as we had a very stable long-term workforce, quite mature, most of them Pacific Islanders)—they saw this as potentially a second chance education. (Mike Styles, pers. comm.)

The impression was that the workers were happy with the assessment process, and the company did not receive any negative feedback[32]. The focus was on literacy, numeracy, and language skills in the team as much as with the individual:

> We got the profiles back and then we looked at how we could develop the programme. …they were strong in some areas and not in others, and there was definitely some weaknesses in some teams. Some teams were stronger than others. So we knew we had some real underlying literacy and numeracy issues with some people. (Mike Styles, pers. comm.)

Formative assessment

This section relies on the reports of the manager and the tutors. The intention was, as much as possible, to merge work and learning. The workers would have an individual session with the tutor where they worked on their individual learning programme which involved direct instruction, learner activities (e.g. reading aloud, doing calculations, talking about work processes), and feedback on these activities. As well as having individual time with the learners, the tutor spent much of his time working with teams in their workplace as they carried out routine and required work. The tutor would be assessing the "learning needs" within the team and the workplace and intervening to create a learning opportunity. Mike, the embedded tutor, was seen as a member of the Formway staff and spent much of his time on the shop floor. Being out and about in the factory was also a way to both receive feedback on the programme, and to provide feedback to workers. Sometimes this would be feedback mid-activity, other times it was to encourage practice based on his combined knowledge of where the learner was at in their learning programme, with the skills, knowledge, and application requirements of production. He was able to identify teaching moments, or moments to encourage a worker-learner to use knowledge and skills they were acquiring, e.g. to complete a form, to read a specification, to express an opinion, and he could then provide feedback. This also enabled the gathering of naturally occurring evidence to meet unit standard requirements.

Tracking progress

The reporting required by the company was for the tutor to report on the achievement of credit for specific unit standards. The tutor would provide an aggregated report plus printouts on the progress for each individual against the unit standards being targeted. Initially these included ESOL unit standards. Unit standard completions were reported through Workbase and later FITO.

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[32] The workers were not interviewed for the case study, and the case study relies on the interviews with the tutors and the former Formway Group Development Officer.

In 2003 the Formway tutor participated in the ALAF[33] trials for reading and writing with the assessments being done once, then repeated 6 months later. The comparison of the two sets of ALAF results demonstrated that there had been progression within a step but not between steps (Mike Styles, pers. comm.). The learners were not given their ALAF results so it is unclear what their views of the results were. The tutor saw the strength of the ALAF as providing a snapshot of progress. He would have liked to have seen additional work done on ALAF so that it also could be used as a diagnostic tool.

Use of self- and peer-assessment

Workbook exercises included opportunities for self-assessment. While not specifically articulated approaches, the group activities could provide opportunities for both self- and peer-assessment in relation to topics such as communicating in groups, communicating with people of other cultures, and teamwork. It was common prior to some assessments for the workers to practise at home with their partners or children who would give them feedback.

Moderation of assessment

Mike developed workbooks for use at Formway that were designed around workplace activities, with the requirements for gathering evidence for unit standards falling out of the activities rather than shaping the activities. As much as was possible the activities were everyday work activities and contributed evidence towards more than one unit standard. These workbooks were internally moderated by Workbase. Those assessments that related to the NQF initially came under FITO's, then Workbase's, and finally WelTec's systems and processes in relation to AMAP[34]. In practice from 2001–2004 they were only externally moderated once.

Summative assessment

The programmes were linked to the NQF and the learners achieved ESOL, generic, and furniture-specific unit standards. Initially the focus was on the National Certificate Level 2 General Furniture Making (Introductory), but later this changed to the National Certificate in Employment Skills (NCES) because the company valued the generic units on communication, health and safety, reading, and writing which could be tailored to Formway.

Salient assessment features

Specific assessment strengths identified were:
- The diagnostic assessment was tailored to the company's needs and then adjusted as necessary to meet individual needs.
- Staff apprehension about testing was minimised by assurances that results would only be known to the individual and to Workbase.
- Information from the diagnostic assessment was used to design the programme.
- Assessments were contextualised and distinctions between learning and work minimised.

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[33] ALAF refers to the draft Adult Literacy Achievement Framework discussed in Chapter 1.

[34] NZQA Accreditation and Moderation Action Plans for accredited providers. These are specific to domains and fields of the NQF. They are freely available on the NZQA website.

- There was recognition of achievement, which in turn provided motivation.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

The "embedded tutor" approach taken at Formway has been very successful. Its success is demonstrated in the current situation with a majority of production workers whose literacy, numeracy, and language skills have been lifted to the point where they can participate in further training.

Significant time and effort were put into the building of a high trust environment where learning and associated assessment were seen as the norm.

Mike Styles commented that his experience with Formway taught him that literacy problems do not equate with a lack of ability. Rather there were lots of people using a great deal of skill and energy to hide low level literacy skills. "When you unleash literacy, you unleash a whole lot of other things." Gains in literature and language produced other positive results in the workplace, including motivation, inclusiveness, and communication. It also made further training possible. Literacy is a tool for delivering a whole lot of other training in the workplace:

> I mean it's an incredibly powerful and motivating thing that happens when people get a chance to empower themselves, and given the right environment, lots of things happen.

Learners progressed at different rates, but funding is based on an expectation that learners will cover a minimum amount in a given time span (for example, 20 credits in a year). This was not always possible:

> One of the problems is particularly with people who have been out of education for a long time. They aren't going to automatically jump in there and start learning on this preconceived rate of learning. Some people will catch on very quickly but other people will start very slowly and then start to pick up as they get more used to being in the learning situation. (Paul Mather, pers. comm.)

Specific strengths of the programme are:

- it meets company needs;
- it is motivational for workers and had positive spinoffs for themselves and their families; and
- it provides an integrated approach to literacy, numeracy, and language learning.

In contrast the potential weaknesses of the programme, particularly in terms of sustainability and transportability, are:

- it is dependent on a tutor having a combination of high-level knowledge of how people learn in literacy, numeracy, and language and the dispositions required to work creatively in a multicultural environment;
- the case study context is atypical in that it involves a company that is creative in both what it does, and how it does it. The company valued generic skills and saw them as underpinning technical skills, whereas FITO—as with other ITOs—is sometimes under pressure to delete generic units from its qualifications;
- it requires acknowledgement that people will learn at different rates; and
- there is a tension between the needs of an industrial workplace for specific and often rapidly changing skills and the value of national qualifications that may become outdated, and may not be specific enough to address emerging skills and knowledge (Curtis, 2003).

Website/report relevant to the case study

http://www.workbase.org.nz/Document.aspx?Doc=VoicesfromManagementJan2003Final.pdf

Curtis, D., & Denton, R. (2003). *The authentic performance-based assessment of problem-solving*. NCVER. Retrieved May 2005, from http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1316.html.

Appendix 9:   The use of heritage languages in assessment: Diploma of Teaching—Early Childhood Education–Pacific Islands (DipTchg(ECE-PI)[35]

This case study focuses on the Diploma of Teaching Early Childhood Education–Pacific Islands DipTchg(ECE-PI) at the University of Auckland, Faculty of Education, School of Pasifika Education (SCOPE)[36]. This site was identified by the Ministry of Education as of interest for its integrated approach to foundation learning and assessment. The diploma uses a deliberate learning strategy that enables students to initially develop understandings of academic concepts in their strongest language, and from there to recognise and use these concepts in English language contexts. This programme is unique nationally.

This case study was developed over a series of meetings, interviews with staff, a group interview with 10 students, and documentary analysis. The staff listed below assisted with the design of the research approach, including the questions, were consulted over the interview questions, briefed the students, set up the group interview with the students, and selected relevant documentation on assessment practices.

Funding basis for the programme

The programme is EFTS-funded and eligible for student loans and allowances. The diploma has an EFTS value of 3 or the equivalent of 3600 hours of learning over the 3 years.

Purpose of the programme

The mission of the programme is:

> ….to ensure young children, irrespective of their cultural background, socio-economic status, gender or religion, have access to quality early childhood education through training

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[35] Afamasaga Telesia Alipia, Airini Faumatu, Jessie Faumatu, Manutai Leaupepe, Vitulu Pua, Susan Smith, Patisepa Tuafuti from the SCOPE at the Faculty of Education, University of Auckland were co-researchers in this part of the investigation, along with Diane Mara (NZCER). Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

[36] In 2004 this department was part of the Auckland College of Education which amalgamated with the University of Auckland in 2005. The then Centre for Pacific Islands ECE has become part of the Faculty's School of Pasifika Education.

of high quality teachers to ensure the preservation of Pacific Islands cultural identities and heritages (Auckland College of Education, 2003, p. 3).

Foundation learning component or focus

Other teacher educator programmes require students to enter their programmes with the level of English required for academic study. The (DipTchg(ECE-PI) has a number of features of interest to the Assessment for Learning in Foundation Courses project. These include provision for students to undertake course assessments in their strongest language, and the assessment of English language proficiency at the point of exit from the programme rather than the more usual assessment at the point of entry. There is, however, a requirement for English credits in NCEA if the applicant to the programme is under 20 years of age.

Key sources of information for the case study

Faculty of Education, University of Auckland: Afamasaga Telesia Ailipia, Airini, Fuamatu Jessie Fuamatu, Manutai Leaupepe, Vaitulu Pua, Susana Smith, Patisepa Tuafuti.
NZCER: Diane Mara

Description of the programme

The DipTchg(ECE-PI) is a Level 7, 3-year, full-time programme which qualifies graduates to teach in a variety of early childhood learning environments, including Pacific Islands Early Childhood settings, kindergartens, and childcare centres. Students learn in a multilingual setting and have the opportunity to use both English and their heritage language. Part-time study is an option.

The former Auckland College of Education launched the programme in 2000 in response to increased credential requirements from government. The DipTchg(ECE-PI) built upon a history of Level 4 ECE studies delivered through a relationship with the Pacific Islands ECE Council Aotearoa (PIECCA).

Curriculum design and pedagogy have drawn on previous research indicating best practice, including a review that identified three key factors affecting Pasifika outcomes in tertiary education (Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2002). These were:

- clarity of assignments;

- access to academic support; and

- social interaction to provide student support.

The diploma is made up of 32 modules including three practicum modules, totalling the required 360 credits for a Level 7 teaching diploma. The programme of study covers the main curriculum areas for ECE with an emphasis on the development and maintenance of Pasifika cultures and languages in ECE settings. Other subjects covered include:

- Te Whāriki—The New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum;

- languages;

- practicum;

- spiritual development in ECE; and

- human development.

Each module is assessed and the student needs to gain a pass mark or better. Modules of particular interest in the context of the current project include:

- learning to learn in a Pacific Islands early childhood tertiary education environment;

- English for academic learning in Pacific Islands early childhood education;
- language acquisition; and
- heritage language and literacy in Pacific Islands early childhood education.

Lectures, classes, and tutorials are usually conducted in English, with group work and discussion taking place in any of the seven Pacific Nation language groups in the DipTchg(ECE-PI) student cohort, i.e. Tokelauan, Cook Islands Māori, Niuean, Fijian, Tongan, Tuvaluan, or Samoan. During the first year students are encouraged to present their work in their strongest language, while also doing a module on English for academic learning. They are scaffolded over the following 2 years to bi-literacy, and their strongest language is used to assist in learning English. To graduate students much show adequate levels of English proficiency.

The uniqueness of this programme lies in its approach of embedding English language and academic literacy skills into the programme.

Those students who have basic interpersonal communication skills and academic language proficiency that are firmly established in the mother tongue transfer those skills to another language, especially orally. It takes more time to become proficient in the written language.

Links to other providers or employment

There is a general shortage of qualified early childhood teachers, and particularly of those able to teach in Pacific Island ECE settings. Graduates of the DipTchg(ECE-PI) are eligible to teach in general and Pasifika ECE settings. The diploma staircases into the Bachelor of Education. The interviews with staff, and the reports from the monitor[37] indicate that many of the graduates continue with their studies while working in ECE settings.

The DipTchg(ECE-PI) operates under the accreditation and approval of Colleges of Education Accreditation Committee (CEAC) and the Teachers' Council. The programme was re-approved in January 2005 by the Teachers' Council.

Students

The students are recruited through Pasifika community networks, including churches, Pacific Island ECE centres, newsletters, and radio programmes. Prior to enrolment in the diploma a number of the students have completed the Certificate in Introductory Tertiary Studies. Of the 10 students interviewed during the case study, three had been encouraged to apply by their minister's wife (typically a central figure in Pasifika ECE), three had heard about the programme in the community, and the College of Education had a stand at a conference where another student came to hear about the programme. Two referred to attending the Open Day for the programme. One student had done the Certificate in Introductory Tertiary Studies.

In 2004 there were 182 students (149.2 EFTS), of whom 177 were women. The majority of the students were Samoan (n=101), with others being Tongan (n=15), Niuean (n=16), Cook Island (n=15), and the rest from other Pacific communities (as identified above). They ranged in age from 21–73. In 2004–5 the programme has an outreach at Tokoroa[38,] where there are 28 students, of whom 26 are Cook Island students.

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[37] Dr Lynn Foote from the Dunedin College of Education is the external monitor for the programme. The New Zealand system requires the appointment of an external monitor to see the standards that form the basis of accreditation as a teacher education provider are maintained, and that recommendations made are addressed. Detailed information is available from http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/docs/teacher-registration.pdf

[38] The Tokoroa outreach programme is delivered at the Tokoroa campus of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

Some students on the programme have TeachNZ Early Childhood Education Scholarships. These meet the costs of course fees and provide $10,000 over the period of study.
Of the 10 students who participated in the group interview, six were Samoan, two Niuean, one Fijian, and one Cook Island.
All were women, with most referring to being the mother of a number of, usually grown-up, children. At least two of the group had teaching qualifications from a tertiary education institution in their own Pacific Island. One had taught for 7 years in the islands, and the other for 3 years. Four of the students referred to applying unsuccessfully for general teacher education programmes, two on multiple occasions. The students were not specifically asked about applying for general programmes. Rather, they were describing how they came to be on this programme.
There was evidence that the students deeply appreciated having their culture and language acknowledged and valued. This made a significant contribution to the students' engagement in the programme.

Teachers

The Centre for Pasifika ECE Teacher Education is the largest Pasifika ECE teacher education centre in the country. The lecturers, all of whom are women, all have Pacific Nation heritage including Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, and Cook Islands. They are supported in their work by tutors, mentors, and contracted assessors who are fluent in respective Pacific languages. The minimum qualification held by teaching staff is a Graduate Diploma. Five staff members are enrolling in Masters programmes and two in Doctoral programmes.
In terms of qualifications related to language acquisition, nearly all are bi-lingual, and one member of the staff has a Masters in Applied Linguistics.

Student selection process

All applicants are assessed by a selection committee, and interviews are conducted to determine suitability for the programme. Applicants to the DipTchg(ECE-PI) have to meet the entry criteria of:

- at least 17 years old;
- academic ability; and
- personal qualities and attitudes.

They must have the equivalent of at least 60 credits, NQF Level 2, of which the equivalent of 12 credits are in English and/or a Pacific Nation language.
Those over the age of 20 need to provide evidence of their ability to cope with tertiary study. This would include examples of recent study or relevant experience. As part of the interview process, they are asked to write about themselves either in English or their heritage language. A student who can read and write fluently in a Pacific Nation language, and who demonstrates the ability to cope with tertiary level study, may be accepted even if they lack effective communication skills in English.

Diagnostic assessment

Some students are identified with particular needs for language and academic skills prior to the commencement of the programme. They are encouraged to seek academic learning support. Pale Sauni, Manager Pasifika Student Services (PaSS), provides tutorial and one-to-one academic support for Pasifika students across the faculty's programmes. This may involve the development of Individual Learning Plans and monitoring progress. The model adopted draws on the student, their peers, and their family.

Information from the initial assessments is also used to alert lecturers to the needs incoming students may have in relation to coping with the demands of English and of writing assignments.

Formative assessment

The programme places emphasis on formative assessment, and this needs to cover more than content knowledge. Not only are students given feedback about the details and structure of assignment writing, but they also discuss in class why they are doing the assignment, and are encouraged to talk through their assignments. They are also encouraged to ask and challenge lecturers so lecturers can respond to their learning needs.

Within some modules course work is structured so students are required to present an assignment for formative assessment. Feedback is given and the assignment is reworked, and redeveloped, and is then presented for summative assessment.

Self-assessment

The programme seeks to develop the student teachers as reflective practitioners and each module has self-review and self-assessment components built into it. In their first year students complete a module *English for academic learning and professional purposes in Pacific Island early childhood education*. The course work includes the guided development of an ongoing academic/English language development plan to be used in the current and future courses. This plan also addresses the report and the essay that students need to plan and write as part of the course requirements. Each week the students write their reflections on progress:

- What is it that you did?

- Why you did that.

- What you learned from doing that.

- What you felt about doing/learning that.

Another example of self-reflection is provided from the practicum. Students are asked to write their own reflections on what they have achieved in relation to the specified learning outcomes, in light of the performance criteria. They are required to write their reflections three times a week while on the practicum. They are provided with a format and an exemplar based on Smyth's (1989) stages in personal and professional autonomy:

- Describing (what did I do?);

- Informing (what did this mean?);

- Confronting (how did I come to be this way?); and

- Reconstructing (how might I view or do it differently?).

In addition they need to write a summary of their reflections in relation to the learning outcomes. Their associate teacher adds their reflective summary to this.

Peer-assessment

Peer-assessment is an integral component of most modules, and is used formatively rather than summatively.

Tracking progress

Staff share information on students' progress at regular staff meetings, and identify apparent academic or language difficulties. This enables the staff to take a co-ordinated approach to working with students, and to decide when to refer a student to learning support services. The staff maintain contact with PaSS while a student is working with the service.

Summative assessment

The students are provided with details on the learning outcomes and performance criteria, assignments, and the marking schedule which shows the allocation of marks. Students attach the sheet to their assignments.

When assignments are sent out to contracted heritage language assessors they will also have the marking schedules, and exemplars of A, B, and C results.

There is detailed record keeping, and student progress is monitored by the lecturers, programme leaders, and the director. Extra attention will be given to students who are struggling. Students are provided with opportunities for re-assessment and, where appropriate, opportunities to demonstrate they can meet the learning outcomes in alternative ways. For instance, a student may miss out on a pass mark and this may surprise the staff in the light of their experience with the student on the module. The issue may be a language one, and if the learning outcome is about knowledge and understanding, then the student will be provided with an opportunity for an oral assessment.

Those who successfully complete the 32 modules gain the DipTchg(ECE-PI). Four cohorts have now graduated from the programme.

Moderation

There are appropriate polices and processes in place for external and internal moderation. Dr Anne Meade[39] is the external moderator for the programme and reports annually to the Academic Board. Her reports cover:

• the structure, organisation, design, and marking of student assessments;

• the quality of student performance in terms of knowledge and skills; and

• any recommendations for the programme arising from student assessments.

The external moderator's reports are detailed and specific, and indicate that issues raised are addressed. The moderator has raised the question of the need to have an interpreter for moderating assessed work presented in a heritage language.

In addition to the external moderator, there is an external monitor. Dr Lynn Foote, from the Dunedin College of Education, is the external monitor who conducts an annual monitoring visit.

New lecturers are provided with the Handbook *PI-ECE programme moderation,* which sets out roles, responsibilities, and processes. This includes information on reconsideration and resubmissions.

All modules and their assessments are internally pre-moderated, with assessed work being post-moderated within teaching teams. Programme leaders are required to maintain a record of moderation and report on moderation in their Module Annual Report, which goes to the Faculty Pasifika Board as well as to the external moderator and monitor.

Student feedback on assessments is sought through the evaluation process, and in meetings the external moderator and monitor have with students.

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[39]   Dr Anne Meade is an independent consultant, an auditor for the NZ Universities Academic Audit, and a leading figure in ECE policy and research work.

Salient assessment features

- Assessment including self-, formative, and summative assessment is core to the teaching and learning, and occurs in conjunction with internal and external quality assurance processes.
- Students are given opportunities to show they can meet learning outcomes in alternative ways.
- Learning outcomes and performance criteria are made explicit to students.
- Students' current competencies in their first language are recognised.

Strengths and weaknesses of the programme

This programme develops foundation skills within the programme of instruction rather than setting them within the entry criteria.
In order to foster deep learning, the programme encourages students to discuss what they are learning, and to present work in their strongest language. Value is placed on developing the knowledge and understanding first, and then on presenting learning in English. This creates some challenges for assessment and moderation. These challenges are addressed through staff collaboration where the language of the student's work and the feedback to the student are in a language for which the lecturer lacks proficiency.
A possible weakness is that with the exception of the Samoan language, there is limited access to assessors who are fluent in the heritage language and also experts in ECE. Assessors may not always be knowledgeable about ECE. To address this issue the lecturer in ECE works closely with the language expert when assessing the stduent's assignment.
The testimony of the students and lecturers, the reports from the monitor and the external moderator, and the successful re-accreditation of the programme by the Teachers' Council all suggest that this assessment approach is highly successful in developing English language skills and academic literacy. This programme has made a dramatic contribution to the numbers of qualified Pacific peoples early childhood teachers at a time of shortage. Many had been turned away from general ECE teacher education programmes because they did not feel that their skills in Pacific Nation languages were valued and they may have also lacked the required level of English language.
The outcome of this multifaceted approach to assessment, teaching, and learning is a 95 percent student success rate. This is nationally outstanding for a Level 7 programme, and even more significant when you consider that the cohort includes many students for whom they are the first tertiary graduate in their family, from one of seven Pacific nation groups, and within an age range of 21–73 years.

Website relevant to the case study

http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz/news/displayfullnews.asp?from=archive&id=8

Appendix 10: LifeWorks

LifeWorks was selected in consultation with the Ministry of Education as one of the case studies for the current research. The programme has significantly more students than any of the other case studies or other foundation learning programmes in New Zealand.
LifeWorks is offered by The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. The polytechnic works with approximately 30,000 learners per year, enrolled in programmes from Leve1s 1–7, including certificates and degrees. In 2002 the polytechnic had a total of 6458 EFTS of which 5483 were MOE-funded.
The mission of the polytechnic is:

> To support national development goals, build workforce skills and empower New Zealanders as individuals and citizens by providing flexible, nation-wide access to education that meets the changing vocational needs of learners (The Open Polytechnic, 2005).

LifeWorks is a distance programme for foundation learners and is supported by contracted learning coaches, who conduct home visits. As is usual in distance education, much of the teaching and assessment is built into the pre-packaged multimedia learning materials. Instructional designers, programme advisers, and other academic staff contribute to roles that would be played by an individual in a face-to-face course.

Key sources of information

The primary contact point for the case study was Jan Osborn (Academic Manager until April 2005), and later Ann Balcombe, who had been LifeWorks' Academic and Policy Development Manager in 2004, and who designed the persistency model referred to later in this case study.
A meeting was held with the LifeWorks Director, Caryl-Louise Robinson, and other staff including Jan Osborn, Tarah Nikora, and Teresa Quin. The researcher was provided with copies of programme documentation, course materials, assessment instruments, and the coaches' guides. A number of documents such as the Profile[40] were accessed through the internet.

Funding basis

The programme is EFTS-funded. Each enrolment is .5 of an EFTS. This represents 600 hours of learning. In 2004, LifeWorks contributed 41 percent of the polytechnic's total EFTS.

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[40] Educational organisations receiving funding from the TEC are required to have a Charter approved by the TEC, and all TEIs, ITOs, and the larger PTEs are required to have Profiles. The Profile describes the organisation, what it does, its contribution to the TES, and its current work programme. This information is publicly available.

Programme purpose

As described in programme documentation, the intention is to provide a structured learning programme to develop students' employment prospects, empower them to make positive life decisions, and staircase them into further study. The programme is intended to offer a pathway through which students can reflect on their personal values and attributes, and their employment future.

Foundation learning component or focus (with reference to literacy/numeracy/language)

The graduate profile includes the expectation that students will have improved their literacy, numeracy, computing, communication, and relationship skills.
Students who successfully complete the programme will have completed the National Certificate in Employment Skills (NCES) which has specific literacy and numeracy components. While all the unit standards may have literacy dimensions, a number have specific links to literacy and numeracy. These are:
US 10792: Write formal personal correspondence;
US 2977: Read text for practical purposes;
US 2989: Read and assess texts to gain knowledge;
US 8489: Solve problems which require calculation with whole numbers;
US 8490: Solve problems which require calculations with numbers expressed in different forms;
US 8491: Read and interpret information presented in tables and graphs; and
US 9492: Use standard units of measurement.

Background and description

The polytechnic developed this programme under licence from Mahi Ora 2001 Ltd—a subsidiary of Te Wänanga o Aotearoa (TWOA). From its launch in 2000 to January 2005, 36,000 students have enrolled in Mahi Ora. LifeWorks is based on the Mahi Ora Programme of TWOA, and, like the parent programme, combines a provider qualification with a national qualification. Mahi Ora and LifeWorks are self-directed, home-based, distance education programmes supported by kaitiaki and coaches.
Assessment and pedagogical issues identified by internal and external scrutiny during 2003 included moderation of assessment. LifeWorks was reviewed in 2004, and a replacement version piloted. A new version that incorporated the changes introduced was then produced. The current LifeWorks version (March 2005) consists of six courses:

- Kit 1: Live life passionately;

- Kit 2: Your choices;

- Kit 3: Vision New Zealand;

- Kit 4: Living life out loud;

- Kit 5: Life's challenges; and

- Kit 6: Leading your future.

Each of the kits includes a journal with tasks that the student needs to complete. The coach assesses these against the Certificate in Vocational and Personal Development. Assessments structured around three assessment books that contain "Worklife Challenges" are used to assess against NCES unit standards.
A community-based coach is assigned to an enrolling student. They will meet with the student in their own home or in a mutually agreed location. Students can also access assistance by phone, using a free call number. The visits from a coach are designed to oversee and monitor progress, assist with learning, and assess work towards the NCES.
In a recent survey of LifeWorks students:

- 83 percent reported that LifeWorks had helped achieve personal goals;
- 76 percent reported that LifeWorks had helped achieve employment goals; and
- 73 percent reported that LifeWorks had helped achieve educational goals.

However, when asked what was the *main thing* gained from LifeWorks the respondents tended to identify personal development and dispositional gains with:
- 37 percent identifying personal development as the main thing;
- 16 percent identifying future direction;
- 16 percent identifying motivation; and
- 15 percent identifying education.

Duration and timing

LifeWorks is designed as a 12-month programme, taking approximately 12 hours a week at a student's own time and pace. There are monthly intakes with students receiving one of their six kits bi-monthly.

Links and pathways

LifeWorks is linked to the National Qualifications Framework. The National Certificate of Employment Skills (NCES) is achieved by those successfully completing LifeWorks. The NCES, as offered by The Open Polytechnic, consists of 61 credits[41], and LifeWorks courses are the equivalent of 63 credits. Those students who complete the programme without achieving the NCES will have the unit standards they have gained recorded on their NZQA Record of Learning, and these may be credited to other qualifications.

Student characteristics

The students work on the programme in their own homes. The course is free to students. The recruitment strategies include targeted direct mail, advertisements in targeted media, and word of mouth. From February 2003 to March 2005, 18,000 students have enrolled. The majority are mature, part-time students and female.

Teacher/coach characteristics

The role of teacher is undertaken in more than one way in this programme, with the instructional design and design of assessment activities occurring during the course development phase, and learning support and assessment of activities being undertaken by "coaches". Version Two of LifeWorks, introduced in 2005, has seen a change in the role of coach from that of assessor to one of facilitating learning and assessment.
The Open Polytechnic contracts three training providers, Barnardos, Mahi Ora Northland[42], and YMCA, to provide "coaching" services. The "coaches" are expected to visit each student at least five times during their 12-month enrolment, and they are expected to be accessible by phone during working hours. Where a need can be demonstrated, students are provided with cell-phones to facilitate access to phone support.

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[41] The credit total for the qualification ranges from 55–69 depending on choice of electives.

[42] Mahi Ora Northland is part of Te Wänanga o Aotearoa.

Teacher/student ratios

There are about 80 coaches employed by the contracted community providers and supported by six LifeWorks Regional Programme Advisors employed by the polytechnic. Each coach works with approximately 80 learners.

Specialist literacy/numeracy/language teachers

Although students do not necessarily have access to specialist literacy/numeracy/language teachers, some coaches have specialist qualifications, such as the Literacy Aotearoa certificate for tutors. The emphasis is on self-managed learning. Kit 2 includes Cornerstone Maths with a CDROM aimed at developing mathematical skills. This Australian-developed programme was adapted to the New Zealand context by the Australian writer, so the teaching expertise in numeracy is built into the resource.

Minimum qualifications required

Coaches are required to have unit standard 4098[43]. The coaches are expected to be, or become, experienced in carrying out summative assessment using prepared assessment activities and schedules.

Professional development

The coaches who are responsible for providing learning support, and for carrying out the assessments, complete a 3- to 4-day initial training workshop and participate in ongoing monthly professional development sessions (4 hours). They are encouraged to work towards the National Certificate in Adult Education and Training, Level 4, and support is provided for this, facilitated in sessions led by the regional programme advisors employed by the polytechnic.
Coaches are provided with a detailed guide *LifeWorks unit by unit: This is your worklife challenge guide to assessing the National Certificate in Employment Skills.* This is 63 pages in length and introduces the coaches to assessment approaches and tools, and provides guidelines for carrying out the three integrated assessments or Worklife Challenges. The work of coaches is monitored and supported by the advisors through regular meetings.

Initial/diagnostic assessment

Almost no assessment takes place prior to enrolment. The student completes a standard application for enrolment form—typically in their own home—and sends this to the polytechnic. The form includes questions on secondary schooling and previous highest educational achievement, and tertiary study. There is a section titled *English language proficiency.* Questions include whether or not the student's first language is English.
One section is titled *Disability* and asks *Do you live with the effects of significant injury, long-term illness or disability? If 'Yes', please mark the way(s) you are affected.* A list follows of disabilities such as deafness and includes an item which may be a trigger for self-identification of literacy or numeracy learning needs:

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[43] Unit standard 4098: "Assess candidate performance using supplied assessment activities", is a Level 4, 5-credit unit that is widely used as the minimal requirement for those assessing unit standards in the workplace or in education settings. http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nqfdocs/units/doc/4098.doc

LifeWorks is open entry, and the material sent to students prior to enrolment says that students will be able to work at their own pace. All you need is a desire to take your life forward.

The material does not state any prerequisite skills, knowledge, or dispositions related to self-directed study, nor is any reference made to prerequisite literacy, numeracy, or language (ESOL) skills.

Prospective students are told that they will not be able to enrol if they have previously enrolled on Mahi Ora or if they are have completed, or are currently enrolled in, the National Certificate in Employment Skills, or have the majority of unit standards towards this qualification. During the course they may apply to have unit standards achieved elsewhere credited to the qualifications that make up LifeWorks.

Once enrolled, the programme is designed to help the students develop individual learning objectives, and to provide information that the coaches may use in individualising support to a learner.

The guide provided to coaches sets out the approach to take on their initial visit to a student, which includes getting to know the learner as an individual, and determining what their learning needs are. It is suggested that the coach uses an assessment adapted from the three categories of the *International Literacy Strategy 1996 (IALS):* prose, document, and quantitative. Examples of skills and knowledge at each level are provided to the coaches as a guide or quick reference. These examples are contextualised to the LifeWorks programme. The coach discusses the skills areas of literacy, numeracy, computing, and managing distance learning and assesses their impression of the student.

The coaches have been introduced to the concept of the persistency/non-persistency model developed by the Open Polytechnic for the programme. This model was introduced in 2005 with a view to full implementation later. Coaches are encouraged to discuss prior learning experiences with individual students, and in their first and second visits with the student to assess their level of self-directedness or autonomy. The coaches are looking for the mix of confidence, motivation, and ability to learn and be self-directed in learning. The scoping looks at the student in relation to:

- attitude and confidence in learning (particularly in respect of LifeWorks);

- identification of their literacy, numeracy, computing, and distance learning skills (see Table 18); and

- their understanding of their learning preference and style/s.

For each of the skill areas listed in the table below the coach rates the student as confident; would like some help; would like lots of help; never use.

Table 18   **Areas of focus for the initial assessment**

Distance learning	Literacy	Numeracy	Computing
• finding time • working on own • making contact with coach • using and handling learning materials • getting started; focusing on learning • learning without a community of learners beside me	• speaking to others • reading • writing • comprehension • grammar and spelling	• solving problems using calculations and calculator • solving maths problems using tables and graphs • multiplying decimal numbers with calculator • measuring and estimating things like	• word processing • managing the computer • emailing • internet

	length, depth, quantity
	• converting between percentages, fractions, and decimals using a calculator

(LifeWorks, n.d., p.15)

The model provides a staged approach to scoping a student's persistence level. Students are assessed in relation to three categories:

- persistent;
- semi-persistent; and
- non-persistent.

Those who fall into the persistent category are likely to require the least support, whereas those in the semi-persistent category are likely to initially require additional support, and those in the non-persistent category are likely to require support to get started and to persevere.

One of the tasks for the student and the coach is to develop a learning contract for each part of the programme (three parts—personal development, vocational development, and action planning) that includes objectives (the pre-determined unit standards which make up the qualification), identification of learning resources and strategies, outcomes, and progress measures. This information is used as the basis for the development of a learning plan, and for planning time using the Planner (a customised calendar with goal setting).

Tracking learning progress

Assessment in the LifeWorks programme is systematically planned, recorded, and monitored. Coaches are provided with forms for recording students' progress and achievement, and LifeWorks and the training provider, who employs them, retain these.
The forms include Assessment Schedule pages in an independent stand-alone booklet, and a Journal Achievement booklet for each journal (the formative assessment). The Assessment Schedule provides details of the assessment tasks, the related unit standard(s), and performance criteria. LifeWorks securely stores the Assessment Schedules. There are two carbon copies of each Journal Achievement record, one for the provider (Barnardos/Mahi Ora Northland/YMCA), and one for the student. The original is kept with the Student Assessment file.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is difficult in programmes where there is a large distance learning component as the ability to provide timely specific feedback to learners is often limited by the nature of the learning environment.
Each kit provided to learners includes a journal which is structured as both a learning and formative assessment activity. The approach includes self-assessment and coach assessment but does not usually include peer-assessment. A number of activities include verification by a third party.

Self-assessment

Each journal is accompanied by a Journal Achievement booklet which is jointly completed by the coach and the student. This includes a number of self-assessment items. All conclude with the question "What learning have you gained from completing this journal?"

The programme aims to scaffold learners to develop capability in self-monitoring and self-assessment of progress towards their own and programme learning objectives. The students are provided with a ring-binder book *My self-help guide to the worklife challenges*. This sets out information specific to the unit standards in the National Certificate in Employment Skills and more generic information and examples to support their learning and assessments. The students are provided with Worklife Challenge Workbooks for their assessments. These set out the learning objectives and include learning contracts signed by the student and coach, and information on the unit standards to be assessed, and the assessment activities. The learning contracts include information on negotiated progress checks. Students also receive six journals that include learning activities and activities that have the potential to be formative.

Each of the three "Challenges" starts with a learning contract as outlined above. The content for the unit on managing one's own learning includes a discussion on a model of a learning plan and review of progress. As part of Challenge One a learning plan is developed and reviewed a minimum of 3 weeks later. Challenge Three requires a plan for students' own future directions and Journal 6 complements this in the form of an action plan related to the learner's future goals.

Peer-assessment

The students work as individuals, although some of their assessed tasks require verification from an observer, witness, or employer. There is peer-assessment involved in one unit standard assessment (US 8817: "Listen attentively and interact during discussions").

Summative assessment

The assessment tasks and assessed work for the 24 unit standards that make up LifeWorks are internally and externally moderated. Unit standards are assessed during the programme, and where they are successfully achieved this is recorded and form part of the institution's monthly returns to the Ministry of Education and NZQA. The unit standards achieved are recorded on the student's NZQA Record of Learning. Those learners who successfully complete the LifeWorks programme are entitled to the National Certificate in Employment Skills, and The Open Polytechnic Certificate in Personal and Vocational Development. Depending on the requirements of the assessment, students and coaches may negotiate types of evidence that may be used for the summative assessments. Assessment activities may include:

- story telling;
- answering questions;
- statements from someone regarding previous experience;
- practical demonstrations;
- interviews;
- worksheets;
- letters;
- charts/diagrams;
- drawings;
- posters; and

- oral reports.

Moderation

The coaches, the LifeWorks team, and The Open Polytechnic all participate in ongoing quality assurance systems including those of moderation. As with other case studies that are subject to the NZQA requirements for external moderation, the judgements as to the fairness, validity, and reliability of the assessments remain with the moderation body.

Common assessment tasks and transparent marking criteria contribute to consistency, validity, and the reliability of assessment decisions. The programme advisors and the LifeWorks moderator internally moderate the work of coaches. The regional meetings of the coaches also provide a vehicle for developing consistency in assessment decision making. LifeWorks was revised as a consequence of internal and external feedback from moderators, coaches, and LifeWorks staff.

Salient assessment features

- Initial/diagnostic assessment is limited in this programme.
- Formative assessment is a challenge for distance programmes and the use of well-supported coaches would seem to ameliorate this difficulty.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

The strengths of the overall approach lie in its systematic planning, monitoring, and recording of data, and that those successfully completing the qualification achieve a national qualification.

The polytechnic seeks regular feedback from LifeWorks students. At the end of the programme students are encouraged to complete a LifeWorks Programme Evaluation Form and to either post it in a prepaid envelope or give it to their coach. In addition, the polytechnic conducts regular student satisfaction surveys.

LifeWorks is a Level 1 programme leading to a Level 1 national qualification. The weakness in the approach lies in the lack of a screening or placement assessment. If an individual needs to develop the foundation skills the programme develops then it is appropriate. There may be a number of applicants for whom a 12-month 600-hour programme is inappropriate, for example, those with general qualifications at Level 2 or higher such as the old University Entrance, NCEA Levels 2 and 3, or higher, qualifications.

Given the numbers of students involved it may be worthwhile for representatives of The Open Polytechnic and the contracted providers to be provided with in-depth training in placement and diagnostic assessment with a view to procedures being developed for LifeWorks.

Sometimes strengths may also be weaknesses. One of the strengths of the programme is the opportunity it provides for the study to be home-based. Assessment typically takes place in the physical environment of the learner's home, and in a one-to-one situation, which inevitably has potential to either limit or encourage feedback based on perceptions of power and appropriateness. Note that there is no evidence to suggest that this is a problem, but nonetheless the potential is there. The feedback from the LifeWorks Academic Policy and Development Manager is that the professional development provided to the coaches (via the courses for the National Certificate in Adult Education and Training, Level 4), explores these issues.

Appendix 11: Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT)

Provider characteristics

Over the last few years, CPIT has attempted to meet the needs of diverse groups of students, by establishing a range of foundational courses and programmes (D Gough, pers. comm.). This particular case study focuses on two courses that are aimed specifically at students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The courses are English for Tertiary Study 1 (ENTS 430) and English for Tertiary Study 2 (ENTS 530). These are cross-faculty courses and can be credited to a number of programmes. These courses are just one component of a much broader approach to foundation skills at CPIT.

The key informants were:

- David Gough, School of Languages and Communication, CPIT;

- Barry McKessar, Course Leader, English for Tertiary Study 2;

- Janna Bland, Tutor;

- Sandra Arnold, Tutor; and

- Trevor Nesbit, Programme Leader for BICT.

Purpose of the programme

English for Tertiary Study 1 (ENTS 430) and English for Tertiary Study 2 (ENTS 530) both aim to:

- extend students in all areas of communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and

- extend students' abilities and confidence in learning through English.

Student characteristics

Most of the students are international students or recent migrants. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds both linguistically and in regard to their prior educational experiences. The students are enrolled in various faculties across the polytechnic.

Tutor characteristics

The tutors involved all have specialist qualifications in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Programme characteristics

Both courses in the study consist of tutor-led skill-based workshops with an emphasis on small group and pair work activities. The focus is on developing research skills and learning strategies for academic study. During the course students compile a portfolio that records significant work from throughout the semester. This portfolio is worth 25 percent of the final grade and is one of four assessment tasks.
In ENTS 530 students are required to complete:

• at least three journal entries. These are explained as an opportunity for students to think about their language learning. Topics for journal writing are given in class and also posted on Blackboard (the online learning environment). Clear guidance is given to students as to the length of entries and style of writing required;

• four writing tasks, which are all marked and can be resubmitted after corrections have been made;

• four online exercises; and

• additional learning, for example, vocabulary and grammar tasks, reading from graded readers, and accessing information from the Web. There is an expectation that a record of such activities will be kept.

There are tutor/student interviews partway through the course, in week 4 or 5. Final assessment is a combination of course work and exams.

Initial assessment/diagnostic assessment

IELTS[44] results are used to place students. Those who come into the programme without an IELTS score are given a placement test. This test is one that CPIT has used for some years in an intensive full-year English language course. It looks at language competency and has sections on vocabulary, grammar, listening, and writing. This test is well known to the staff involved in implementing it, so they can easily interpret scores. After the placement test, results are fed back to the faculty to which the student belongs and a recommendation is made as to which language class the student should be enrolled in. It is emerging that as well as test scores there are sometimes other factors that need to be taken into consideration when placing students. Barry McKessar, course leader of English for Tertiary Study 2, explained that a student may have been learning in English in their own country and thus have relatively high test scores but still lack the independence in learning necessary to succeed in the New Zealand system. He attributed this to the student's prior experience in an education system that was more reliant on rote learning. This student would benefit from the foundation language course and in cases such as this there is close liaison with faculty co-ordinators. Even after placement, there is a flexibility that allows changes to take place where it becomes obvious that the initial assessment did not accurately pinpoint a student's needs. In week 4 or 5 of the course one-to-one interviews are held with students. In this interview areas of weakness are identified and actions agreed on. By having the interview a few weeks into the course, the students have had the opportunity to begin to develop an awareness of the demands of the course, to have increased their level of confidence, and to have already produced some work.

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[44] IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is designed to assess language competencies of people wanting to study or work in places where English is the language of communication. IELTS is recognised in many English speaking countries. It is offered in two test formats—academic and general.

Formative assessment

The programme allows many opportunities for formative assessment. Work that is not up to the required standard is resubmitted once corrections have been made. Marked work is returned to the student with a marking sheet that indicates where improvements need to be made. Students are encouraged to approach the tutor if they want help.

Janna Bland, a course tutor, explained that when she is introducing a new style of writing she gives students the marking schedule right at the beginning so that they are clear about the success criteria. Time is put into explaining how the marking schedules work and what the abbreviations mean so that students can then use these when responding to feedback on their work. For example, if the tutor puts VT in the margin of a student's essay, the student can go back to the marking schedule, find out that VT means verb tense and then will be alerted to what needs addressing in their work. In this class too, when writing essays, the students receive feedback on their initial outlines, before they produce a draft essay. The first draft is marked and returned to the student. The student makes necessary corrections and then submits the outline and both drafts for inclusion in the portfolio. This tutor also identifies observing students in class and giving feedback to them, particularly during group work, as an important element of formative assessment.

As part of the week 4 interview, weaknesses and strengths are identified. Potentially, this information could be used formatively.

Interviews with students indicated that they really appreciated it when feedback was specific and cued them into the sort of corrections they needed to make. Comments such as "good work" or "well done" were perceived as unhelpful.

Self- and peer-assessment

There are opportunities for both self- and peer-assessment. Students are encouraged to check through their homework answers together. During peer-assessment students are given guidance as to what to give feedback on.

One tutor explained that considerable effort needed to be put into explaining the benefits to students of becoming more independent in their study and developing skills in self-assessment. Once they are working in "mainstream" courses students will receive less feedback from staff and need to be able to monitor their own learning to some extent. This idea is new to many students who are used to much more teacher-directed learning and it is at times perceived as staff not fulfilling their roles properly.

Tracking learning progression

The portfolio system in place is very useful for tracking students' learning progress. It consists of almost weekly tasks and counts for 25 percent towards the final assessment. The interview that occurs in week 4 or 5 of the course also has a written record that identifies any areas of concern identified and actions agreed.

If students are identified as having difficulties during the course, checks will be made with their "mainstream" courses to see whether the problem is limited to the language part of their programme only or whether it is of a more general nature. Difficulties experienced by international students are followed up by the international adviser.

The participation of individual students in Blackboard activities can be easily tracked by tutors.

Moderation of assessment

Staff involved in the courses meet regularly to discuss any issues arising. Guidelines for assessment are produced and an effort made to ensure staff have a common understanding of them.

External moderation of assessment occurs between CPIT and another tertiary provider. Tasks and their associated marking schedules are moderated.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is based on a combination of exams and the portfolio.

Salient assessment features

- There is a strong emphasis on formative assessment. Students complete a series of small tasks and receive feedback on their learning. At the same time these tasks make up the portfolio which is part of the summative assessment and so students are motivated to put effort into the ongoing tasks.
- The initial interview is delayed till several weeks into the course to allow students time to "settle in" and to allow discussion of actual tasks completed.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

This programme allows students to improve their skills in English for tertiary study whilst also completing foundation level studies in their chosen faculty. This means that the completion of a degree is not unduly delayed whilst the student is increasing his or her competency in English.

Students completing English for Tertiary Study courses come from various faculties from across the polytechnic. This means it is difficult for the language tutors to make their courses context specific as any one class may have a mixture of students from design and engineering, health and science, humanities, or commerce for example. Course material therefore tends to be generic although tutors do attempt to tailor it to student need and interest by adding specific vocabulary lists or adapting essay topics. The extent of such adaptations is limited by staff workloads and competing demands on their time.

The use of the online environment, Blackboard, gives students additional opportunities to interact with each other and to revisit tasks completed in class. For most, this learning environment is very motivating.

Students on these courses also have access to the Language Self Access Centre, which is situated in the polytechnic library. It contains multimedia resources to support students in many ways, for example in listening, pronunciation, reading, writing, vocabulary extension, grammar, and exam practice.

One informant thought some sort of equivalency between foundation programmes from different institutions is a critical issue that needs further exploration.

Appendix 12:   WITT—The Learning Centre

Provider characteristics

Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT) was formerly the Taranaki Polytechnic. Its main campus is in New Plymouth, and has satellite campuses in Hawera, Stratford, Taumarunui, and one, Rangiatea, situated within a marae-centred community in New Plymouth. An immersion Māori language programme is offered at Rangiatea. WITT offers programmes from Levels 1–7 including trade qualifications and degrees. In 2002 WITT had a total of 2611 student enrolments, with an EFTS total of 1597 of which 1419 were MoE-funded EFTS (Benseman, 2003).
The mission statement of WITT is:

> The Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki, through partnership with its communities, and by honouring the Treaty of Waitangi, is committed to providing viable, excellent, innovative and flexible learning that seeks to anticipate and meet the needs of learners and staff, in a stimulating educational environment, serving our communities and those who come to learn with us.

Sources of information for the case study

In addition to annual reports for the centre, quarterly reports to the TEC, and other documentation such as records, assessment activities, and papers written by staff, information was also gleaned from individual and group interviews with the following staff: Barbara Morris, Jan Brown, Vanessa Ross, and Thilani Nissanga. No students were interviewed.

Purpose of the Learning Centre

The purpose of the centre is to provide students with the learning support they need to successfully complete their chosen course of study. The Learning Centre's work with individual students is one component of a broader approach to foundation skills. The broader approach includes:

- workplace literacy programmes offered through the Faculty of Humanities, which are delivered in workplaces and funded through the Workplace Basic Skills Fund;

- Te Mana Rangitahi which is WITT's teen parenting programme at Waitara (a year-long programme based around the National Certificate in Employment Skills) and parenting (Early Childhood unit standards);

- Introduction to Tertiary Studies (one semester full-time, Level 1);

- National Certificate in Employment Skills (one semester, Level 1); and

- Preparation for Tertiary Study (12 weeks full-time).

A number of students (approximately nine in 2004) who were students on the Introduction to Tertiary Study course sought assistance from the literacy tutor. A similar number from the

Preparation for Tertiary Study course sought assistance from the Learning Centre tutors. Although on a foundation or bridging programme, these students still need additional intensive support to cope with their course work. It is not uncommon for students to return the following year and enrol in a qualification-based programme, cope for a while, and then encounter learning problems. The Learning Centre tutors think that students with experience of learning support recognise a learning problem and seek support before it disrupts their study. Such students know when, where, and how to get assistance from the Learning Centre.

The Learning Skills tutors also run workshops on study skills, writing skills, and referencing within courses. Online learning support is also available and students are able to email their requests for assistance. Resource booklets are available, for example, the *APA referencing guide* written by Barbara Morris from the Learning Centre.

A mixture of the students' availability, their commitment, and their learning goals determines the timing and duration of the individual programmes. Some can only commit an hour a week because of their course, family, or work commitments, whereas others can commit to 4 hours.

According to the tutors interviewed it is hard to put a figure on how long it takes people to make progress with their literacy and numeracy because so many variables are involved. Apart from the level of student motivation, other variables include whether the presenting difficulty arises from a learning disability or a schooling gap. For instance, if a student has for some reason missed a maths concept that everything else hinges on, progress can be very rapid once the gap is filled. Another student, however, may have limited understanding of even the most basic concepts and may struggle to make progress despite being highly motivated.

Funding basis of the centre

The Learning Centre is a stand-alone centre that was originally funded by an equity grant from the Ministry of Education. Since the mid 1990s the centre has been funded out of WITT's operational budget.

Student characteristics

The WITT enrolment form includes a question which asks students about learning disabilities and asks if they want assistance. A small number indicate the need for assistance at that point.

Students self-refer to the Learning Centre. The centre does not have administrative support, and operates on an open booking system. A whiteboard lists time slots for tutors, and students and staff wanting to meet with the tutors select the tutor they wish to see by writing their student number or initials into an available timeslot. Teaching staff may encourage a student to seek assistance from the Learning Centre, but the student is the one who needs to take the initiative:

> They have to acknowledge the need. It is no good a tutor bringing a student in by the hand because they tend not to commit to the help. So the student comes in on their own referral and at that point we would, one of us, one of the four of us, chat with that student and try and make a call as to whether that student is wanting course-related help, in which case they would take their needs to one of those three Learning Skills tutors, or whether they are actually in the category of needing one-on-one foundation skills—basic literacy and numeracy assistance, in which case they would come and see me [*the Literacy tutor*] and we would set up a regular weekly appointment of an hour, two hours, even up to four hours a week. (Provider interview)

The Learning Centre provided data on the students receiving support. In 2004 a total of 289 individuals made contact with the centre[45]. Just over three-quarters (78 percent) were female. A little over half (53 percent) were Päkehä, 18 percent Mäori, 28 percent international, and 1 percent other. Just over half (51 percent) were over the age of 30, and just over a third (34 percent) in the 20–29 age bracket.

The students are drawn from a variety of programmes and faculties. A high number are nursing students or intending to study nursing, 106 (37 percent). Others are studying in the trades, beauty therapy, and business administration. A number of self-referrals come from the foundation level qualifications in business administration and computing.

Students requiring an assessment accommodation (such as the use of a reader/writer in an exam), are required to be assessed by the centre, and a number are supported with learning assistance.

The example was given of students being provided with both tuition and scaffolded support with the use of reader/writer in their first year nursing exams, but by the third year completing their state finals unsupported. Students sometimes need a notetaker for classes, as their slowness with processing information, writing, or poor spelling means they cannot get notes down. A system is in place where another student in the class will take notes and make a copy available for the "unidentified" student. This system is a temporary measure and is phased out as the student develops the necessary skills.

Teacher characteristics

Those teaching in the Learning Centre, Workplace Literacy programmes, and the Teen Parent Programme have a range of qualifications including:

- primary teaching qualifications and experience;
- SPELD training and experience;
- TESOLNZ;
- accredited national tutor trainer for Literacy Aotearoa;
- postgraduate qualifications in adult education; and
- postgraduate qualifications in special education.

Professional development

The teaching staff are entitled to 10 days professional development annually, and some financial support (approximately $400 per year).

Recently they have been involved in trials and discussions on the ALAF, and the Quality Mark.

The co-ordinator of the Workplace Literacy Programme is an accredited National Trainer for Literacy Aotearoa, and has a TESOL background.

One of the tutors has written a book on guided reading and writing for adult learners (Treliving-Brown, 2005). Another provided the research team with two papers she has written on the assessment of learners with learning difficulties/disabilities.

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[45] This figure may be distorted by individuals who sought assistance from more than one learning support tutor or the literacy tutor without identifying themselves as a previous client of the service. The records systems are maintained separately.

Professional links

The group and individual interviews provided ample evidence of strong professional links, which are used to inform tutors' own community practice at WITT. These links include:

- membership of, and involvement in, hosting the ATLAANZ Conference in November 2004 (the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa, New Zealand);

- membership of the Adult Literacy Practitioners Association (ALPA);

- involvement with Literacy Aotearoa; and

- working with Workbase (through the Workplace Basic Skills Fund).

Programme characteristics

The purpose of the Learning Centre is to support students in successfully completing their courses. Students present with diverse learning needs related to their course work, and time spent with a Learning Centre tutor varies. While typically the student will come for learning support out of class time, there are occasions when it is appropriate to come in class time. The Learning Centre does not have a single programme, but develops programmes to meet the needs of individuals. These needs typically include literacy, numeracy, or language. While some learners are seeking fairly basic learning assistance with maths, others are seeking assistance with advanced statistics. They may also want study skills, such as time management, note taking, writing essays, and referencing.

Although the work of the learning skills tutors overlaps, each has a particular area of expertise: working with Māori students; learning disabilities; international students. As a rule of thumb the learning skills tutors work with students requiring course-related assistance, and refer those students with more fundamental foundation learning needs in literacy and numeracy to the literacy tutor. The informal interview held with students when they first make contact with the centre assists in determining who will work with the student.

The Learning Centre tutors, along with the literacy tutor, introduce their services to students at the beginning of first year courses. The student handbook provides an outline of the Learning Centre and of the role of the literacy tutor. As part of the staff induction programme the tutors provide a session and a pamphlet on early identification of learning difficulties, including in literacy and numeracy. Among the recommendations made to tutors are to use screening or practice exercises which do not count for final grades to gain an indication of the students' writing/maths and pre-entry knowledge relevant to the subject.

Initial assessment/diagnostic assessment

The Learning Centre has a number of assessment tools at its disposal, and the extent to which they are used varies with the presenting need of the learner. The overall aim is to establish a starting point for the learning assistance, and a secondary aim is for measuring progression. The initial and diagnostic interview process at the Learning Centre would usually involve an informal interview to:

- establish rapport with the student;

- build a picture of the student's language, vocabulary, communication skills;

- obtain relevant background information;

- identify the student's learning goals;

- identify the reason the student had come to the Learning Centre; and

- provide the student with information about the process.

The informal interview assists the tutor in determining whether the student is in need of basic literacy and numeracy learning assistance, or whether they are in need of assistance in relation to their course work. If the latter, the tutor would prepare to tailor the more formal assessment by obtaining and familiarising themselves with the relevant course materials. At least 8 hours a week of literacy assistance is provided to the students on the Teen Parent programme, and, while not compulsory, this does not involve self-referral.

Formal diagnostic assessment

This is designed to identify skills that the student has or does not have with particular reference to the context of the student's chosen course of study. The learning assistance will then be designed around the assessed needs. The assessment has two sections, the first using standardised tools, and the second determining competency levels for functioning in the classroom. The tutor uses his/ her professional judgement to decide which of the standardised diagnostic tools to use to determine the starting point for the learning programme. The purpose of the formal assessment is to identify the areas of learning difficulty. The Learning Centre tutors use one or more of the following tools to assist in pinpointing the areas on which to work:

• the Marie Neale Reading Assessment (Revised)—standardised;

• Schonell Spelling Assessment;

• Aston Index Vocabulary Assessment; and

• Wepman Auditory Discrimination Assessment.

One of the tutors explained that before students take a test she tries to reassure them by explaining the purpose of the test, and if it is a test with alternative versions (such as the Schonell) she will let them flick through the test first.
The most common problem for students self-referring to the centre is spelling. They cannot spell words, and are unable to use the correction function in a word-processing programme. Such students are unable to get their notes down in class, or to complete their written assignments.
Not all students are assessed. It is an option the student is given but the choice remains with the student. As one tutor explained, though, it is important to get an idea of the student's background, their current skills, and the demands that will be placed on them in the environment they are planning to move into.
Where appropriate the diagnostic assessment also includes a learning disabilities checklist and/or referral for medical assessments such as hearing tests. The centre has adapted an informal questionnaire from the American Council on Education and the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities (ACENDALLDC, 1995). This section is added when assessment is required to obtain funding or access to "accommodations" for course work and assessments such as notetakers, peer tutors, reader/writers, or additional time for exams.

Formative assessment

Assessment of learning in the context of an individual learning programme cannot be tidily divided into diagnostic/formative/summative, and often these overlap and are iterative.
A recording sheet, or "learning log", is maintained by the tutor from the initial assessment. This comes out at each session and is used to orient and debrief learners at the beginning and end of a session. Notes are made on basic items:

• *What did you do today?* For example, agreed to send emails; reading aloud.

• *What are you going to do next time?* For example, continue spelling programme.

- *Any difficulties/experiences/anything that needs to change*? For example, good visual use of notebook. Fluency needs to catch up with comprehension.

The sessions with learners are one-to-one and the tutors described them as being sessions in which attention is paid to what and how the learner is learning, the tutor drawing on their professional knowledge to identify what feedback to give the learner and what to do to guide learning.

One of the tutors was asked to what extent learners were interested in comparing where they are at in comparison with other learners. When the students first come to the centre they may ask about where the results of their assessment place them in relation to age or school levels. But her view was once their learning assistance is underway their focus is on coping with their own course work, and getting their qualification and being independent, rather than knowing what their comparative spelling, literacy, or numeracy levels are.

Use of self- and peer-assessment

An individual learning programme at the Learning Centre is based on self-assessment. The learners self-refer, they choose whether to continue with their learning programme, a decision that is likely to be based on self-assessment of progress, and they decide when to exit.

The approach of the tutors is to foster habits of self-monitoring and independence.

The starting point provides some measure of progress, and along the way goals change. For example, students are encouraged to compare writing samples from early in the course with what they can do now and focus on progress made.

The Learning Centre works with individual students, and peer-assessment is not used.

Tracking learning progression

The centre reports annually to the WITT executive and council on numbers of students, faculties drawn from, numbers seeking study skills support, literacy, numeracy, or disability support.

Moderation of assessment

There has been no formal external moderation of the approach to assessment, although the tutors did discuss the tools with external experts. The use of standardised tools is one way of ensuring consistency of assessment. There was a consciousness that some of the tools may be regarded as outdated, but this was rationalised in terms of them being the most effective diagnostic tools they had access to. The emphasis was on finding a starting point for an Individual Learning Programme.

The individualised nature of the assessments does not lend itself to moderation of assessed work. However the nature of the working relationships among the tutors provides an informal review, in that one tutor may have conducted the initial assessment and another tutor is then working with the learner.

Summative assessment

There is little emphasis placed on formal summative assessment, although summative assessment is available if requested by the student. The reading and spelling tools both have a second set of assessments available for this purpose.

The Learning Centre has an individual programme for each of its learners. The intended learning outcomes differ from student to student. The aim is to equip the learner to cope in their chosen course of study. The goals for the individual programme are clear to both

student and tutor. They have a shared purpose in their sessions. The emphasis is on the formative assessment of progress against the agreed goals and on the teaching and learning required to support the learner's development of the skills.

The best indication of success is when the student goes back into their "normal" programme of study and passes.

Salient assessment features

- There is an emphasis on diagnostic and formative assessment in the Learning Centre programmes.
- The student is encouraged to set goals for their learning, and progress is monitored by both student and tutor against these.
- Students are actively encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their learning and there is a strong element of self-assessment.

Strengths and weaknesses of the overall programme

The tutors work within what appears to be a strong community of practice (with the literacy tutor, the workplace learning tutors, and another foundation learning tutor).

The effectiveness of the approach lies in the experience and expertise of the current team which is able to draw on a wide repertoire of individual and collective strategies for diagnosing learning difficulties and supporting diverse learners to acquire literacy, numeracy, and language skills.

The fact that students self-refer to the Learning Centre means they are likely to be highly motivated to succeed.

Website relevant to the case study

http://www.atlaanz.org

Appendix 13: Exploring assessment in tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language learning settings: Insight into current practices and future options

Interview questions for researchers, specialists, and officials

1. Please could you briefly describe where your experience/expertise lies with Foundation level tertiary education?

2. What are the common assessment practices in [specialist area]?
   (a) **Pre-entry/placement assessment**. *Would like to have information on Tools? Approaches? Purpose? Who is involved? How recorded? Used by whom?*
   (b) **Diagnostic assessment.** *Would like to have information on Tools? Approaches? Purpose? Who is involved? How recorded? Used by whom?*
   (c) **Formative assessment.** *Would like to have information on Tools? Approaches? Purpose? Who is involved? How recorded? Used by whom?*
   (d) **Summative assessment.** *Would like to have information on Tools? Approaches? Purpose? Who is involved? How recorded? Used by whom?*
3. What are the major influences on assessment practice in [specialist area]? *Looking for things like NQF, ITOs, Individual Learning Plans, contracts, etc. How is assessment information used? By whom*?
4. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of current practices in [specialist area]?
5. How else might assessment be used in [specialist area]? *What potential do you see for using assessment information? In order to develop an understanding of assessment practices in context it would be helpful to have concrete examples of practice.*
6. Please could you describe examples of poor practice in assessment that you have encountered in [specialist area]?
7. Now could you please describe examples of excellent practice in assessment in [specialist area]?
8. What do you think provides evidence of effective assessment practice in [specialist area]?
9. What factors do you think are critical for effective assessment practice in [specialist area]?
   For improving learning? Providing information for other providers, employers? Recognition of achievement?
10. As part of this project we are drafting a set of principles for good assessment in tertiary literacy, numeracy, and language learning. What would you like to see as principles of good assessment in [specialist area]?
11. What are the major obstacles to good assessment practices in [specialist area]?
12. In your opinion who are the major decision makers in [specialist area] in relation to assessment policy and practice?

13. If you were charged with the task of bringing about significant change to improve learning in [specialist area] what changes in assessment practice do you think could make a difference to learning?
14. What learning practices in other countries or in other sectors in NZ would you like to see used to guide progress in assessment for better learning in [specialist area and/or other adult foundation learning areas]?
15. Have you any other comments you would like to make about assessment in [specialist area] or in other adult literacy, numeracy, and language settings?

Glossary

ACE	Adult and Community Education
ALAF	Adult Literacy Achievement Framework
ALL	Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey
ALPA	Adult Literacy Practitioners' Association
ALQM	Adult Literacy Quality Mark
CPIT	Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology
ECE	Early childhood education
EFTS	Equivalent full-time student funding
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FITO	Furniture Industry Training Organisation
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
ITOs	Industry Training Organisations
ITPs	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics
MIT	Manukau Institute of Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NCAET	National Certificate in Adult Education and Training
NCES	National Certificate in Employment Skills
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PITO	Plastics Industry Training Organisation
PTE	Private training establishment
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEI	State owned tertiary education institutions (colleges of education/ITPs/universities/ Wänanaga)
TES	Tertiary Education Strategy
TOPs	Training Opportunities Programmes
WelTec	Wellington Institute of Technology
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand (part of MSD)
WITT	Western Institute of Technology in Taranaki
YT	Youth Training

NZCER