



Learning for Living
Te Ako mo Te Ora

DRAFT DESCRIPTIVE STANDARDS

Describing the literacy, language and numeracy competencies that adults need to meet the demands of their everyday lives.

MARCH 2005

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INTRODUCTION

Developing a shared understanding of adult literacy, language and numeracy needs

Raising foundation skills so that all people can participate in our knowledge society is a key element of the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007*. The goal of the government's *Learning for Living* programme is to build adults' fluency, independence and range in *language, literacy and numeracy* so that they can use these competencies to participate effectively in all aspects of their lives.

Key Competencies in Tertiary Education: Developing a New Zealand Framework sets out how foundation learning is not a discrete set of skills, but part of a wider concept of key competencies. The foundation learning competencies of literacy, language and numeracy are from the 'using tools interactively' group of competencies as presented in that document.

The teaching and learning of literacy, language and numeracy (as with key competencies) should also consider:

- all aspects of the competency (skills, knowledge, attitudes and values)
- the relationships between competencies (eg, between speaking and listening, and reading and writing)
- the ability to adapt and apply the competency to new contexts (eg, speaking at home can be adapted to speaking on the marae)
- the use of the competency in combination with other key and specific competencies.

The Learning for Living work programme has at its heart the understanding that adults develop literacy, language and learning most effectively in contexts that have meaning and purpose, for example, to be able to use new technology in their workplace, to interact with their child's teacher, or to get their driver's licence. That is, they learn best when they are meeting the demands of authentic tasks associated with their roles as workers, learners, family and community members.

Enhancing the teaching and learning of foundation competencies

Learning for Living is about making a range of shifts in understandings, in thinking, in practice and in outcomes at all levels of the tertiary education sector in order to ensure that programmes deliver the competent individuals that New Zealand needs. In order to build literacy, language and numeracy in New Zealand adults these shifts will need to include:

- moving towards a shared understanding across education providers and employers of literacy, language and numeracy competencies that all adults need
- clearer articulation of literacy, language and numeracy competencies in a broad range of existing tertiary courses and qualifications (including courses that focus on specific knowledge and skills).

Over the last few years the Adult Literacy Strategy has set the groundwork in literacy provision for foundation learning. The adult literacy quality standard – the Adult Literacy Quality Mark – will provide a method of defining and ensuring quality in provision, while the qualifications for adult literacy, vocational and workplace tutors will be an important part of a strategy to build professional capability. The trialling of a draft Adult Literacy Achievement Framework (ALAF) started a crucial process of identifying clear goals for learners, providing guidance for tutors, and creating a common language around learner gains as a first step towards reporting the achievement of learners over time.

The foundation learning work programme will build on this work to assist educators, programme and qualifications developers to articulate, teach and assess literacy, language and numeracy within a broad range of contexts that reflect learner interests without making them 'add-ons'.

Describing the literacy, language and numeracy competencies that adults need to meet the demands of their everyday lives

This document contains drafts of descriptive standards which have been developed for reading, writing, listening and speaking, and mathematics. These are outcome descriptions of adult competency in language, literacy, and numeracy. They are 'context-free'.

The current draft of the descriptive standards was initially brought together by a team of experts from a wide variety of teaching and curriculum development backgrounds. The descriptive standards represent an attempt to define the essence of the literacy, language and numeracy that adults need in everyday life. These outcome descriptions are not intended to be taught and tested in isolation. They are not a set of discrete skills to be covered in total before other learning begins, but represent competencies that need to be developed, embedded and used within all learning. The National Qualifications Framework already provides a good mechanism for articulating and assessing these learning outcomes in a consistent way across the school and tertiary education sectors.

The descriptive standards will help educators to consider learning needs in terms of the demands that adults need to meet in their everyday lives by:

- developing a common language within which to describe literacy, language and numeracy competencies (by educators, learners, employers and government agencies)
- providing the basis for clarifying expectations of the learning achievement of adults in programmes that incorporate literacy, language and numeracy
- guiding learning progressions and learning outcome statements in courses and qualifications, while also raising the overall professional game plan of educators
- offering a model that could also guide the development of learning outcomes for higher level key competencies.

The descriptive standards will help employers and employees (and their representatives in employers' associations and unions) to understand the demands that adults face in their everyday lives in terms of literacy, numeracy and language competencies. This will assist with investment in education and training appropriate to the needs of workers.

We are sharing this first attempt at describing foundation learning in order to gather feedback on the descriptions. We are looking to build a consensus around the descriptive standards as a firm base on which to develop the teaching and learning supports for foundation learning. This will be a first step to embedding literacy, language and numeracy more widely in tertiary courses and qualifications.

The next stage will be to annotate these descriptive standards with comment and provide examples of how they could be contextualised for different settings and in combination with other competencies. The descriptive standards will also inform the development of learning progressions – teaching and learning tools that will help educators design pathways for learners.

Comment on the draft descriptive standards

We are keen to receive comments on the way in which these descriptive standards will help to cultivate quality teaching and learning of literacy, language and numeracy throughout the tertiary education sector. You may wish to comment on the extent to which the descriptive standards reflect your understandings of what adults need in terms of language, literacy and numeracy to function effectively in New Zealand society.

Please return feedback to tertiary.strategy@minedu.govt.nz or write to: Tertiary Education Learning Outcomes Policy, Ministry of Education, PO Box 1666, Wellington.

DRAFT DESCRIPTIVE STANDARD: LISTENING

In order to meet the demands of being a worker, a learner and a family and community member, adults need to be active listeners.

Listening Competency Description

Active listening requires an adult to:

- be confident with key concepts about language
- maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday use
- be willing to engage as an active and interactive listener
- determine the purpose for listening and use listening strategies appropriate to the purpose
- monitor their comprehension
- make sense of the communication
- reflect on the underlying meaning and respond.

Listening Competency Standard (Foundation Level)

Active listening requires an adult to:

- **be confident with key concepts about language**, and in particular that:
 - there are different types of oral texts including dialogue, speeches, explanations, instructions, songs, personal stories or sports commentaries... which can be spontaneous or scripted
 - there is a range of language functions including requests, commands, refusals or humour
 - structure and choice of words will vary according to purpose (formality/informality)
 - features such as gesture, intonation and pace... affect meaning.
- **maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday use** – where this includes:
 - a vocabulary for everyday tasks (eg, food preparation or caregiving) in family or community settings
 - having a more specialised vocabulary for specific (eg, work or leisure) contexts of direct relevance.
- **be willing to engage as an active and interactive listener** in a variety of situations including maintaining a dialogue, engaging in meetings, receiving instructions
- **determine the purpose for listening** (eg listening for details, or listening for cues) and **use listening strategies appropriate to the purpose**, such as turn-taking, rebuttals and interruptions... to participate in formal and informal discussions such as meetings or chat
- **monitor their comprehension** and seek clarification where necessary such as clarifying directions when instructions are not clear or asking questions to check that they understand the intent of the communication
- **make sense of the communication** by integrating the information gained from listening with their prior knowledge (ideas, events, and experiences) to make sense of the communication
- **reflect on the underlying meaning and respond** (eg, by maintaining dialogue or preparing a written or oral response to a presentation).

DRAFT DESCRIPTIVE STANDARD: SPEAKING

In order to meet the demands of being a worker, a learner and a family and community member, adults need to be able to speak so that others can understand them.

Speaking Competency Description

Being a confident speaker requires an adult to:

- be confident with key concepts about language
- maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday use
- be confident in expressing their identity through speaking
- determine the purpose for communicating
- organise and relay information
- use features to assist the listener's understanding
- monitor the effectiveness of the communication.

Speaking Competency Standard (Foundation Level)

Confidence in speaking requires an adult to:

- **be confident with key concepts about language**, and in particular that:
 - there are different types of oral texts including dialogue, speeches, explanations, instructions, songs, personal stories or sports commentaries... which can be spontaneous or scripted
 - there is a range of language functions including requests, commands, refusals or humour
 - structure and choice of words will vary according to purpose such as the difference between formal and informal speaking situations
 - features such as gesture, intonation and pace affect meaning.
- **maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday use** – where this includes:
 - having an adequate vocabulary for everyday tasks (eg, food preparation or caregiving) in family or community settings
 - having a more specialised vocabulary for specific (eg, work or leisure) contexts of direct relevance.
- **be confident in expressing their identity through speaking** using stance, continuity, clarity and cultural features when maintaining a dialogue, engaging in meetings, and giving instructions
- **determine the purpose for communicating** (eg, providing information, providing commentary or opinion) and use speaking strategies such as turn-taking, rebuttals and interruptions that are appropriate to the purpose, to participate in formal and informal discussions
- **organise and relay information** according to purpose, context, and audience (eg, presenting facts, recounting learning, exploring issues, and interacts in conversation) selecting the appropriate structure, style, tone and vocabulary
- **use simple features** such as volume, pace, and gesture **to assist the listener's understanding**
- **monitor the effectiveness of the communication** and adjust if necessary (eg, by maintaining dialogue, responding to questions and adjusting delivery in response to interactions).

DRAFT DESCRIPTIVE STANDARD: READING

In order to meet the text-based demands as a worker, a learner and as a family and community member, adults need to be able to read a range of everyday material with understanding.

Reading Competency Description

To read with understanding requires an adult to:

- be confident with key concepts about language
- maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday use
- be willing to engage with written text
- determine the purpose for reading and select appropriate text
- decode accurately and fluently and select appropriate reading strategies
- integrate the information they get from text with their prior knowledge in order to make meaning
- monitor their comprehension
- reflect on the underlying meaning and respond to text.

Reading Competency Standard (Foundation Level)

To read with understanding requires an adult to:

- **be confident with key concepts about language**, and in particular that:
 - there are different types of written and visual texts which vary according to purpose, such as forms, messages, instructions, reports, notes, records, emails, narratives, memos, web-based texts, manuals, advertisements, newspapers and personal writing
 - sentence structure ranges from simple to complex and may include, for example, use of bulleted lists or prose, and is adjusted to audience and context
 - conventions such as directionality, punctuation, and paragraphing help make meaning.
- **maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday use** that allows them to read most text, such as newspapers, signs, instructions, emails... in family or community settings along with other words that are more specific according to work or community contexts of relevance
- **be willing to engage with written text** in familiar work, family or leisure contexts
- **determine the purpose for reading** such as providing information, providing commentary or opinion, correspondence, etc **and select appropriate text**
- **decode accurately and fluently** using their knowledge of the relationship between sounds and letters **and select appropriate reading strategies**, such as skimming or close reading, related to the purpose
- **integrate the information they get from text with their prior knowledge in order to make meaning**, including:
 - that gained from their knowledge of text types, such as steps in an instruction manual, layout of a business letter, key in a diagram, or index in a directory
 - information from multiple texts such as looking up a phone number on a business card.
- **monitor their comprehension** and adjust their reading strategies if necessary, for example, by slowing down, re-reading, or identifying unknown vocabulary
- **reflect on the underlying meaning and respond to text** in either spoken or written form.

DRAFT DESCRIPTIVE STANDARD: WRITING

In order to meet the text-based demands as a worker, a learner and as a family and community member, adults need to communicate ideas and messages in writing.

Writing Competency Description

To communicate ideas and messages in writing requires an adult to:

- be confident with key concepts about language
- maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday tasks
- be willing to engage and persevere in producing written text
- determine the purpose for writing and select the appropriate text
- use a range of strategies in order to organise information and ideas
- use conventions accurately and appropriately to assist the readers' understanding
- use a range of text forms to communicate information most effectively
- seek feedback from the audience if appropriate.

Writing Competency Standard (Foundation Level)

To communicate ideas and messages in writing requires an adult to:

- **be confident with key concepts about language**, and in particular that:
 - there are different types of written and visual texts which vary according to purpose, such as forms, messages, instructions, reports, notes, records, emails, narratives, memos, web-based texts, manuals, advertisements, newspapers and personal writing
 - sentence structure ranges from simple to complex and may include, for example, use of bulleted lists or prose and is adjusted to audience and context
 - conventions such as letter formation and font choice, appropriate spelling, paragraphing and punctuation help make meaning
 - the writer's voice (ie, friendly, humourous, direct, neutral, etc) is a significant factor in communicating meaning.
- **maintain an adequate vocabulary for everyday tasks**, such as food preparation and caregiving, in family or community settings along with other words that are more specific according to work or community contexts of relevance
- **be willing to engage and persevere in producing written text** that successfully communicates the intended message in familiar work, family or community contexts
- **determine the purpose for writing** (eg, providing information, providing commentary or opinion, correspondence) **and select the appropriate text**, such as email, formal letter or txt msg
- **use a range of strategies**, such as brainstorming or listing... **in order to organise information and ideas** selecting the appropriate structure, style, tone and vocabulary for formal or informal situations
- **use conventions** such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, abbreviations and acronyms... **accurately and appropriately to assist the readers' understanding**
- **use a range of text forms** such as charts, diagrams, essays and dialogue... **to communicate information most effectively** in situations with varying degrees of interactivity
- **seek** written or spoken **feedback from the audience if appropriate.**

DRAFT DESCRIPTIVE STANDARD: USE MATHEMATICS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

In order to meet the demands of being a worker, a learner and a family and community member, adults need to use mathematics to solve problems.

Mathematics Competency Description

To use mathematics to solve problems requires an adult to:

- be willing to engage, use, and persevere with mathematics in a variety of situations
- be confident with the key concepts and facts of mathematics
- identify, understand and solve problems
- make sense of, analyse and critically reflect on the logic of information presented mathematically and use it to make links between mathematics and the world
- understand and be able to use mathematical representations
- select and use mathematical tools.

Mathematics Competency Standard (Foundation Level)

To use mathematics to solve problems requires an adult to:

- **be willing to engage, use, and persevere with mathematics in a variety of situations**, encompassing work, family, and community roles
- **be confident with the key concepts and facts of mathematics**, including numbers, the number operations and the number system; measurement and units of measurement; spatial awareness and the properties of shape; data, variation, and chance
- **identify and understand** problems, determine the degree of precision required by the situation, interpret it mathematically, decide on a strategy, collect data, **and solve problems** verifying the reasonableness of the answer in familiar work, family or community contexts
- **make sense of, analyse and critically reflect on the logic of information presented mathematically** such as equations, sequences and deductions **and use it to make links between mathematics and the world**
- **understand and be able to use mathematical representations** such as pictures, diagrams, graphs, charts, tables, numbers and symbols... including interactively
- **select and use mathematical tools**, such as calculators, computer hardware and software, drawing and measuring instruments.

