

## Learning for Living Te Ako mo Te Ora

AN UPDATE ON FOUNDATION LEARNING FOR TERTIARY EDUCATORS, INDUSTRY TRAINING ORGANISATIONS AND EMPLOYERS.

### *"What exactly does 'foundation learning' cover?"*

In this issue of *Learning for Living* we take a high-level look at where everything fits together in the project. We also look at some of the various strands of work being undertaken for the Learning for Living project by separate government agencies.

This issue also introduces you to two of the developers who are working with the latest round of exploratory projects. ■

## The NZQA Foundation Learning Quality Assurance Project

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is leading a project to develop improved quality assurance arrangements for Foundation Learning (literacy, numeracy and language). The project picks up on work on the draft Adult Literacy Quality Mark (dALQM), which was completed in 2004. A report on the dALQM is available on NZQA's website: [www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/foundation/index.html](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/foundation/index.html)

The new project will refine and expand the dALQM. The project team is made up of representatives of the tertiary quality assurance bodies, and an expert task group to ensure that providers have input. The project will:

- draft the agreed Foundation Learning Quality Assurance arrangements
- undertake consultation and trial of the proposed arrangements with tertiary education providers
- publicise the final Foundation Learning Quality Assurance arrangements, and
- develop an implementation plan.

To ensure consistency and to avoid reinventing the wheel, the project team will work with linkages to existing quality assurance systems within Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality, the New Zealand Universities Vice-

Chancellor's Committee and NZQA. The project is expected to be completed by June 2006.

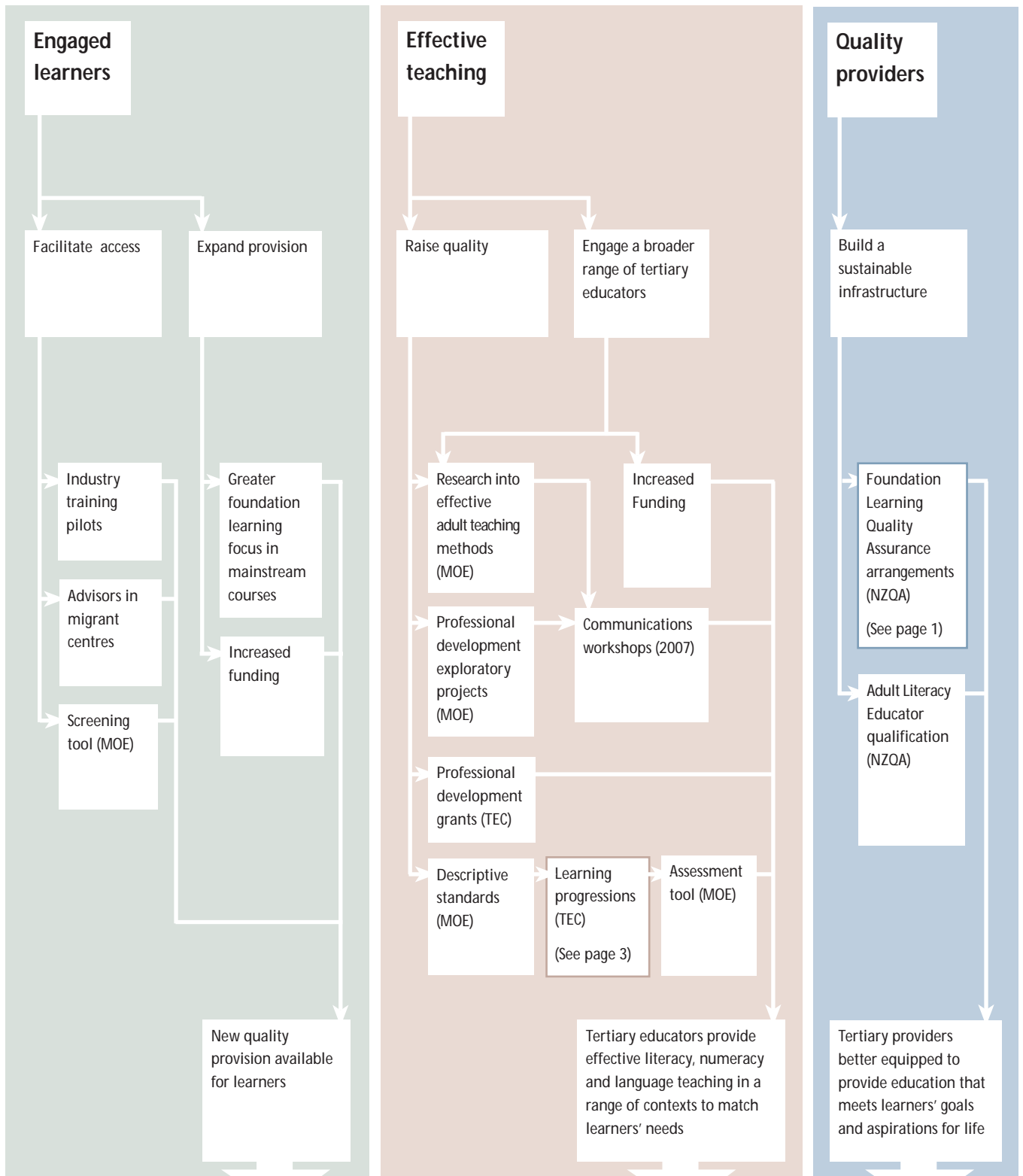
One of the project team's first tasks was to seek advice and develop a working definition of foundation learning. The following definition was agreed on by the project team.

"Foundation learning covers competencies in literacy, numeracy and language. In practice, foundation learning for adults may be defined as the application of a complex web of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, problem solving, numeracy skills and communication technology so that people can achieve their own goals in meaningful social, cultural, vocational and/or learning contexts. Foundation learning may be in English or Te Reo Māori."

The project team is currently grappling with the question of how to align the requirements of the dALQM with the existing tertiary education quality assurance standards. This will enable an improvement in foundation education quality with a minimum of provider cost.

The project will undertake trial audits of the Quality Assurance Arrangements with ten existing literacy, numeracy and/or language providers. Learning from these trials (and the consultation process) will influence the final shape of the Quality Assurance Arrangements. To find out more, contact Penny Hoy-Mack at [penny.hoy-mack@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:penny.hoy-mack@nzqa.govt.nz) ■

This chart shows how the initiatives being undertaken by government agencies participating in the Learning for Living project are working together to enhance teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy and language for adults.



**Raise foundation skills so that all can participate in NZ's knowledge society and contribute further to family and community**

## Learning Progressions – another step towards quality

In 2005 the Ministry of Education released the Key Competencies and Draft Descriptive Standards for adult learning discussion documents. The Tertiary Education Commission is now developing Learning Progressions which follow on from the Draft Descriptive Standards.

The Learning Progressions will identify the common progression of knowledge and skills that an adult will follow to reach foundation level competence and preparation for lifelong learning.

The Learning Progressions will:

- help establish a common understanding amongst tutors and learners about skills and knowledge
- be useful in building teaching capability in the sector
- evolve over time and contribute to reiterations of the Draft Descriptive Standards
- include the skills and knowledge required by adults who have English as a second language
- begin at entry level and build to 'foundation level' competence broadly equivalent to NCEA Level 2 (Year 12) or Level 2 on the NZ Register of Quality Assured Qualifications.

The draft Progressions will be accompanied by supporting handbooks for tutors. These will describe the components of the progressions and the theory behind them. The handbook will also provide examples of teaching tips and how adults might use the skills and knowledge described in the progressions.

### *The importance of the Progressions*

The primary purpose of the progressions is to facilitate effective teaching and learning, and to help tutors and learners identify areas for skill development and discuss progress. Tutors will be able to refer to the progressions to plan and evaluate their teaching programmes.

Along with the draft Adult Literacy Achievement Framework, Descriptive Standards, the Adult Literacy Educator qualification and the Adult Literacy Quality Mark, the progressions will help build a strong sector focused on providing quality teaching across all tertiary contexts including industry training, workplace literacy, targeted programmes, student component programmes and ACE.

The Learning Progressions will directly inform the development of:

- foundation learning course content and course descriptions

- diagnostic assessment tools to identify the skills and knowledge a learner already has, and therefore help tutors focus teaching efforts
- formative and summative assessment tools linked to the patterns of progress described in the progressions
- new qualifications and enhanced unit standards for learners more closely tied to the components of foundation level competencies which will provide employers and learners with better information about what learners have achieved
- new teaching and learning resources based on a common language
- professional development programmes for educators.

The progressions will be successful if they meet users' needs. Therefore, consultation with key stakeholders and New Zealand experts has been a crucial element in the development of the progressions. Following the preparation of the draft Progressions and supporting handbooks, a programme of consultation with sector groups and stakeholders is planned. ■

### *'Deliberate acts of teaching' – what it means*

Within the next few weeks, a recently-conducted literature review of the best international evidence on effective teaching methods for adult learners will be available.

One of the main findings from the research was the importance of 'deliberate acts of teaching'. To find out exactly what is meant by the term, the editor of *Learning for Living* asked the researcher, Alison Sutton:

"For students to really make gains in their literacy skills, one factor we identified was 'deliberate acts of teaching'. This is when the tutor focuses specifically on the different sets of skills a learner requires when developing new competencies. For instance, focusing on developing a learner's comprehension skills when teaching them to read.

"Of course, for a tutor to be able to adequately teach these skills, the tutor will need to have sufficient literacy teaching skills and appropriate training in this field. Even in dedicated literacy programmes, there is room for improvement in teaching specific skills. In vocational programmes where learners have literacy skill needs, programme managers need to ensure that the course curriculum includes both vocational or industry content as well as teaching specific literacy skills." ■

## Meet the developers

Round 2 of the exploratory projects is now under way, with seven new developers appointed. In this issue of *Learning for Living*, we introduce you to two of the new developers – you'll find more information on these projects in the next issue.

### *Carole Craighead*

"From a background of many years in secondary education providing foundation education in literacy, numeracy and language skills to the management of a Private Training Establishment, I have had a role in the transformation of the lives of many people who had believed that they were educational failures. I am committed to continuing this work in my role as a developer in the Learning for Living project.

My own further education in research in Adult Education adds value to the experience I bring to this role. I have also gained from my work in the moderation of Core Skills unit standards and the review of the National Certificate of Employment Skills under contract to NZQA.

In this developer role I will have the opportunity to participate in and support the excellent work already offered in the tertiary sector but which is not always evident to the casual onlooker. The team I will be part of, acknowledges their learners' rights to receive the best possible learning opportunities in order to acquire the quality skills they need to reach their career and personal goals.

I hope to be able to help the participants I will work alongside to further enhance the effectiveness of their literacy teaching skills."

Carole's cluster will focus on literacy and includes the following providers:

- Asia Pacific Training
- New Zealand Management Academies Ltd.
- Northern Business College
- UNITEC.

### *Erica o' Riordan*

"I was born in England and came from first generation literate parents. None of my grandparents could read or write, they could not even write their own names. My parents were luckier, as they both went to school – but had to leave at an early age.

When I was 11 we went to live in South Africa. When I finished school, I studied to be a tutor and specialized in teaching reading. I had always felt a link with the African population who had not had access to education. One of my first jobs was with a literacy bureau in South Africa where I taught teaching skills to literacy tutors, wrote literacy materials and also taught adults to read, write and speak English. It was pretty hard as my students were not literate in their mother tongue either! One thing it did teach me though, was that literacy was the area I loved teaching.

I have spent over 25 years involved in teaching English at different levels, both with children and adults and I must say that adult education has been a wonderful learning experience for me as my students have shared their life experiences and joys with me."

As well as working as a developer, Erica is currently involved in writing a Ph.D focused on autobiographical writings of certain South African activists.

Erica's cluster, the Tauranga literacy cluster, includes:

- BOP Polytechnic
- Fairview Educational Services
- River City Training Academy
- Salvation Army Employment Plus
- Wintec
- North City Training Centre ■



## Hora's advice

Meet Hora Panah. When she first came to New Zealand she spoke little English. After working steadily through various programmes, she is now studying for a Certificate in Liaison Interpreting. On her way, she has picked up some useful tips for English language learners.

"If you want more English lessons, watch cartoons on TV and go shopping," suggests Hora with a smile.

Hora arrived in New Zealand from Afghanistan in 1999 with her mother and two sisters, speaking only limited English. As a doctor in Afghanistan, Hora was used to being the breadwinner, but to provide for her invalid mother and sisters in New Zealand, Hora knew that her main priority was to learn English. "I wanted to go back to medicine, but English was a problem."

In Afghanistan, Hora used the Dari language and alphabet which are similar to Arabic so she needed to learn to read and write a new language in a new alphabet. However, she found that being literate in her own language was helpful as she could make notes using her own language and alphabet until she became more familiar with English.

Trying to reach her goal of working in medicine, Hora juggled a series of English language courses along with caring for her mother. She found it very difficult to start studying again, but caring for her mother became the biggest obstacle for

Hora as it restricted her choices of courses. That's when she discovered cartoons as a learning aid. "We would sit here watching cartoons trying to understand," says Hora, laughing. "Cartoons are good because the English is easier and the pictures help you understand."

Another useful technique she discovered for learning English at home was to talk to her neighbours. "At first the lady next door couldn't understand anything we said. We used our hands to make each other understand, but now it's OK." Her personal experiences will help others because Hora now works with the Refugee and Migrant Service, helping people settle into New Zealand.

"Those who are working will learn some English in the workplace and the children learn English very quickly at school, but for those who spend more time at home it could be difficult to practise what they have learned." Hora says that shopping can be an excellent way to not only build English skills but numeracy as well, "by learning to read labels, ask for things and count money." She also suggests that people develop friendships with other people in their English language classes for peer support.

Hora's main piece of advice for learners is to be patient. "You can't learn English in a few months. It takes time." As Hora sees it, learning is something you keep doing – "there's always something new. After six years, I am still learning." ■



## *NZQA Update on qualifications*

The Adult Literacy Educator unit standards and their Accreditation and Moderation Action Plan are now registered. You'll find the unit standards and action plan at:

[www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/explore/domain.do?frameworkId=1644#nqf-top](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/explore/domain.do?frameworkId=1644#nqf-top)

These are currently being incorporated into the new qualification, the National Certificate for Adult Literacy Educators.

Unit standard 21204 is intended for adult educators, to enable them to deal explicitly with their learners' literacy and numeracy needs as part of a wider training or education programme. ■

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## *Tell us what you think*

The *Learning for Living* newsletter is intended to help everyone involved in delivering foundation learning by providing information, advice and updates on recent material. We'd like to know what you think of the newsletter.

What could we do better? What would you like to know more about?

Email your comments to [learning.forliving@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:learning.forliving@minedu.govt.nz) ■

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## *Back issues*

There are limited numbers of issues 2 and 3 available.

Issue 1 – Introduction to the project

Issue 2 – Meet the Developers in the first round of exploratory projects

Issue 3 – Current research

You can also download the newsletters from [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz).

Search for "learning for living". ■

