



Learning for Living Te Ako mo Te Ora

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

Learning for Living Issue 5 March 2006

In the last issue of *Learning for Living* we provided an overview of the inter-agency work being conducted in the Learning for Living project.

In that issue, we showed how the project's objective of raising adult New Zealanders' foundation skills is being tackled through three work strands. This issue of the newsletter looks more closely at work being done within the project on the first two of the work strands below. Each story in this newsletter is colour coded to show which strand it is associated with:

- promoting more effective teaching
- helping education providers to offer better quality programmes
- encouraging more people to participate in training.

The Tertiary Education Commission's Learning Progressions project and Round 2 of the Ministry of Education's exploratory projects will both help tutors provide more effective teaching while the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's Quality Assurance project focuses on raising the quality of tertiary education provision. ■

■ Professional development for tutors

Round 1 of the Learning for Living exploratory projects focused on building up evidence of the best ways for teaching literacy, numeracy and language to adults by looking at the operations of a diverse range of tertiary education providers.

Round 2 of the exploratory projects was launched late last year with a more tightly focused objective – and tutors will soon be able to gain from the findings of these projects.

Twenty seven foundation learning providers and tutors participating in Round 2 are currently working in clusters grouped geographically, looking at either reading or numeracy, with the common objective of benefiting learners through professional development for tutors. These clusters are working with researchers and developers to develop sustainable professional learning communities exploring effective teaching practice and learning for adults.

An important finding from recent research¹ is that adult foundation learning is most effective when delivered by skilled, qualified and well-supported tutors explicitly teaching literacy, numeracy and language.

“Given the paucity of literacy, numeracy and language teachers with qualifications specific to this field and the emergent nature of literacy, numeracy and language teaching, professional development is an important source of knowledge and skill development for its practitioners.

The great majority of . . . professional development events were of one, or at the most, two-day, duration.”

Benseman, Sutton and Lander –
“*Pedagogy in Practice*”

¹ Benseman J, Sutton A, Lander J, (2005) “*Working in the light of evidence, as well as aspiration*” - A literature review of the best available evidence about effective adult literacy, numeracy and language teaching. Ministry of Education.

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Tutors should be able to use a wide range of methods and techniques as required for each learner's needs in contexts that have meaning to adults.

In their observations of a selection of adult literacy, numeracy and language tutors in the classroom, John Benseman, Alison Sutton and Josie Lander were impressed by the tutors' enthusiasm and commitment. However the researchers felt there was room for improvement as only a limited range of teaching methods was witnessed and the tutors displayed varying levels of skills.

Round 2 of the Learning for Living exploratory projects therefore aims to enhance learner gain by raising the quality of tutors' teaching skills.

Participants in Round 2 clusters examine and evaluate their current teaching methods in light of evidence of best practices. Unlike typical professional development of one or two days duration, the clusters meet at present for up to one day approximately every three weeks.

As with the Round 1 projects, developers help the providers share the learning and tap into useful resources while researchers are evaluating learner gain and the impact of this initiative on the participating providers and tutors.

Sharing the information

All tutors will soon be able to benefit from the Round 2 research. The work done by the clusters will feed into a series of workshops focused on professional development being planned for adult literacy, numeracy and language tutors. There'll be more information on the upcoming workshops in the next issue of *Learning for Living*. ■

■ Enter the specialists

The Round 2 projects are focusing on reading and writing and a new feature of the projects is the establishment of specialist groups of reading and numeracy experts. The specialist groups will support the developers and clusters by providing a consultation and advisory service.

Reading specialists

Dr Libby Limbrick
The University of Auckland

Aaron Wilson
The University of Auckland

Kathleen Krsinich
Manukau Institute of Technology

Ginny Denny
Workbase

Alison Kirkness
Auckland University of Technology

Annette Nixon
Literacy Aotearoa

Numeracy specialists

Dr Gill Thomas
Maths Technology Ltd

Dr Glenda Anthony
Massey University

Dr Ian Christensen
He Kupenga Hao i te Reo

Susan Reid
Workbase

Victoria Yee
Auckland University of Technology

Warren Shephard



■ ■ Meet the developers

Last time, *Learning for Living* introduced Carole Craighead and Erica o' Riordan, two of the new developers working with foundation education providers in the Round 2 exploratory projects. In this issue, we introduce Janet Hogan, developer for the Wanganui numeracy cluster.

Janet Hogan

I am delighted to be a part of the second round of Learning for Living exploratory projects. I think it is so positive for everyone involved in adult foundation learning that this sector of the education system is getting recognition. It is a very diverse sector and this contributes to its strength but also offers challenges in a project such as this.

I am working with a numeracy cluster in the centre of the North Island. Three of the providers in this cluster are from Wanganui, one from Marton and one from New Plymouth. They are a stimulating and lively group of people to work with.

I have spent many years teaching maths and social sciences in the Foundation Studies programme at Manukau Institute of Technology in South Auckland. More recently I have been working as a maths, statistics and study skills tutor at Te Tari Awhina, the student learning centre at Unitec in West Auckland. In this role I work with students who are developing their understanding of maths and statistics concepts necessary for the courses in which they are enrolled. I also collaborate with staff to improve the delivery of maths and statistics across the institution.

It has always been an absolute privilege to work alongside adult learners as they gain confidence, knowledge and a growing awareness of possible pathways they can follow. This project is designed to increase the effectiveness of foundation learning for adults and I hope I can make a positive contribution to this.

Janet's cluster members are:

- Ag Challenge Ltd
- Literacy Aotearoa Wanganui
- Western Institute of Technology
- Training for You

■ ■ ■ Foundation *Learning Progressions*

As reported in the November 2005 issue of *Learning for Living*, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), after initial consultation with sector stakeholders, is undertaking a project to develop foundation learning progressions in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy.

Learning progressions identify the common sequence of knowledge and skills that an adult needs to develop in order to reach foundation level competence in these areas.

The TEC has contracted Learning Media Ltd to develop drafts of the learning progressions and accompanying tutor handbooks. Two working groups have been established to provide expert advice: one focussing on reading, writing, speaking and listening and the other on numeracy. The members of the working groups include: Dr Sue Dymock, Dr Robyn Chandler, Dr Margaret Franken, Kevin Roach, Sue Douglas, Dr Gill Thomas, Warren Shephard, Dr Murray Britt and Dr Gary Nathan.

The draft progressions and handbooks are expected to be completed by June 2006. The Tertiary Education Commission will then initiate a wider process of sector consultation and discussion on the learning progressions.



■ Quality Assurance project seeks feedback

How does a foundation learning provider prove they are providing quality learning?

In the November 2005 issue of *Learning for Living*, we introduced the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's (NZQA) Foundation Learning Quality Assurance project which seeks to provide a clear quality measurement. NZQA now needs your views to help shape the quality assurance requirements and ensure that the requirements work for all foundation learning providers.

The Foundation Learning Quality Assurance project team, comprising tertiary sector representatives and NZQA officials and supported by an expert task group, was established in July 2005. The team has been guided by two principles:

- retaining the strong educational focus of the draft Adult Literacy Quality Mark; and
- ensuring the requirements will integrate easily into the existing quality standards.

The project team has now agreed on a system of quality provider practices and requirements to help build an infrastructure supporting good quality literacy, numeracy and language teaching.

Within the following six areas, the project team has identified key practices known to make a significant improvement in foundation learning:

- *Goals and objectives*
The provider has a planned approach to the overall design of its foundation learning programmes that is consistent with the social, cultural, vocational and learning context of the learner.
- *Resources*
The provider has adequate and appropriate resources to support its foundation learning programmes.
- *Staffing*
All staff involved with foundation learning programmes and learners, including voluntary staff, are suitably qualified, experienced and supported by the provider.
- *Learner access and entry*
Learner access and entry to foundation learning programmes is facilitated effectively.
- *Delivery*
Programme delivery supports learners to achieve their foundation learning goals.
- *Review and development*
The foundation learning programme is systematically reviewed and improved.

In order to prove these quality practices are in place, providers need to meet the requirements associated with each of the practices.

Example

<i>Practice Five</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Programme delivery supports learners to achieve their foundation learning goals.	5.1 An initial assessment is undertaken of the foundation learner's needs, strengths and prior learning experiences.
	5.2 A learning plan, which incorporates initial assessment results, goals, strategies, and clear responsibilities for achievement, is negotiated between the learners and the tutor.
	5.5 Formative assessment of the learner's progress is reported to the learner, and other relevant parties, and leads to revisions of the learning plan, as appropriate.

NZQA wants your views on:

- how well the proposed requirements align with good quality in foundation learning
- suggestions for improving the proposed requirements
- the proposed implementation process
- whether providers could easily provide evidence to meet the proposed requirements
- an estimate of how long it might take to implement the proposed requirements.

You'll find full details of the requirements in the FLQA consultation document, as well as a response form for your feedback, on the NZQA website until 7 April 2006:

www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/foundation/index.html.

Comments are due by 7 April 2006. Once feedback has been analysed the Qualifications Authority will publish the finalised requirements in late 2006.

For more information, contact NZQA:
penny.hoy-mack@nzqa.govt.nz. ■

■ Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL)

Next month, a large-scale literacy survey will begin when New Zealand participates in the 'second wave' of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) along with Australia, Korea, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium).

This comparative survey builds on the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and measures the literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills of a representative sample of respondents aged 16-65 from participating countries.

ALL will provide new information on New Zealanders' skill levels and the relationships between skill levels and the labour market, economic growth, and education systems and services.

Survey methods and procedures were trialled in August and September 2005 in preparation for the main survey which will run from April 2006. Results will be available early in 2007.

Meanwhile, results for Canada and USA from the 2003 first wave, (which also included Bermuda, Italy, Norway, Switzerland and the Mexican state of Nuevo Leon) showed:

- a similar average literacy score compared to IALS
- a similar wide distribution of skills across the adult population, although Canada's results show an improvement in the scores of people with the lowest literacy scores.



More info?

You'll find more information about the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey at:

- educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz/research/all.html

For more details on the Canadian and US results from the first wave see:

- www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050511/d050511b.htm
- nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005117.pdf.

■ *New online resource: Developing workplace literacy programmes*

Workbase, an independent non-profit organisation focused on workforce literacy, is developing the first online, New Zealand-based, resource for workplace literacy programme development.

The online resource is specifically designed to help programme managers and programme coordinators with planning, set-up, and delivery of workplace literacy programmes, but is also intended to support planning and development of other programme services.

The online resource will be launched in May this year, and will be available at no charge. Users will be able to access it from the Workbase website www.workbase.org.nz.

Workbase will be offering free workshops for programme and business managers on using the resources in May and June around the country. For more information about the resource and the workshops please contact Dr. Ruth Schick at rschick@workbase.org.nz; 09 361 3800 or see the Workbase website.

This project has been funded through the 2005-2006 Tertiary Education Commission Innovation Development Fund. ■

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 ■

Back issues

We no longer have paper copies of Issue 1 but you can order back copies of other issues.

Issue 1 – Introduction to the project

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

Issue 3 – Current research

Issue 4 – Overview of the inter-agency work.

Email your order to learning.forliving@minedu.govt.nz. You can also download the newsletters from www.minedu.govt.nz. Search for “learning for living”. ■



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