



Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Strategy 2015–2019

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Key points

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Strategy (Strategy) sets out how we will work with the tertiary sector, with employers and across government from 2015 to 2019 to lift literacy and numeracy skills. The strategy has been developed following consultation with stakeholders in the tertiary education sector and with employers.

- ❖ **New Zealand needs a population with high-level literacy and numeracy skills** to build a high-productivity, high-wage economy and an inclusive society where everyone can participate.
- ❖ **1.3 million New Zealanders** do not have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to fully engage in the economy and society (as of the most recent assessment in 2006).
- ❖ This is 43 percent of adults aged 16 to 65. **Māori and Pasifika** adults are over represented among this group.
- ❖ About **40 percent of people in the workforce** do not have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to function well in a knowledge society and information economy.
- ❖ Lots of people need help, but the **reasons for people's current literacy and numeracy skills can vary** significantly. Solutions need to be tailored to their specific needs.
- ❖ Over the past seven years, **we have made considerable progress** in establishing the conditions, capability and infrastructure required to improve literacy and numeracy skills.
- ❖ From 2008 to 2013, course completion rates for Level 2 foundation education have increased from 62 percent to 77 percent.¹
- ❖ But **we want to be able to reach more people** so they can succeed and **better target our support** to individual learners to help improve their outcomes.
- ❖ To ensure that TEC continues to make progress in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for more people, **this Strategy sets targets** for us to achieve by 2019.
- ❖ This Strategy sets out our plan to:
 - ❖ **reach more people** so they can succeed;
 - ❖ **better target support** to individual learners to help improve their outcomes;
 - ❖ ensure that **tutors and trainers are well equipped** to help their learners succeed; and
 - ❖ support and influence **other agencies**.

The Strategy

Everyone needs good literacy and numeracy skills to participate fully in the modern world

Basic literacy and numeracy skills are essential for participating fully in the economy and society in New Zealand, and they are a priority across the education system.² Lifting literacy and numeracy skills can broaden people’s lives and opportunities and contribute to a more productive economy.

- ❖ New Zealand needs a population with high-level literacy and numeracy skills to build a high-productivity, high-wage economy and an inclusive society where everyone can participate.

People’s employment opportunities, earning potential, health outcomes, financial capability, and social inclusion (among other things) can be constrained without sufficient literacy and numeracy skills. This impacts everyone, because it can perpetuate intergenerational disadvantage and limit economic growth and social development.

The TEC alone cannot address these challenges. This Strategy sets out how we will work with the tertiary sector, employers and across government to address this key priority in the Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019 (TES). This Strategy will support the work the education sector agencies are collectively doing to achieve the relevant Better Public Service (BPS) targets and to deliver the benefits of the Business Growth Agenda.

Changing technology, international competition and globalisation mean the demands for a highly literate and numerate population are constantly increasing. Future jobs will increasingly require higher skills and higher levels of training and education. Improving people’s digital literacy is also of growing importance in today’s world. This means that more people need to access high-quality education and training to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Everyone benefits when people have good literacy and numeracy skills

Benefits for Individuals

- ❖ Increased attachment and contribution to workplaces
- ❖ Improved participation and progression to higher-level qualifications and jobs
- ❖ Enhanced family/whānau/aiga well-being

Benefits for workplaces

- ❖ Improved productivity
- ❖ Improved workplace communication
- ❖ Improved retention
- ❖ Improved health and safety
- ❖ Less waste and rework

Benefits for society and the economy

- ❖ A more flexible, skilled and adaptable workforce
- ❖ Improved competitiveness and productivity
- ❖ Improved social integration, by reduced poverty and perpetuation of social disadvantage
- ❖ Greater contribution, participation, and inclusion in the benefits of a knowledge economy

The Government has a strong focus on improving the economic and social outcomes from tertiary education. This includes making sure that people have the skills they need to participate in tertiary education.

The TEC is the main government agency that funds interventions designed to improve adult literacy and numeracy.

- ❖ In 2015, the TEC will invest over \$300 million into tertiary education including specific literacy and numeracy funds and foundation-level funds where embedded literacy and numeracy is a requirement.³

A significant number of New Zealanders do not yet have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to fully participate in a modern high-skilled economy and society

The opportunity to improve New Zealand's literacy and numeracy skills is significant.

Key facts

- ❖ **1.3 million New Zealanders** were at Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALLS) Levels 1 or 2 (that is, having low or very low literacy and numeracy skills) as of the most recent assessment in 2006.⁴ This is 43 percent of adults aged 16 to 65.
 - Almost 25 percent of the 1.3 million are at Level 1 (or 'very low'). The majority of these people – 62 percent – were **born in New Zealand**.
- ❖ **Māori and Pasifika adults are over represented** among those at ALLS Levels 1 or 2. More than 60 percent of Māori adults and almost 80 percent of Pasifika adults were at Levels 1 or 2 compared to around 43 percent of the general population
- ❖ Around **40 percent of people in the workforce** do not have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to function well in a knowledge society and information economy.

The majority of workers at ALLS Level 1 or 2 have relatively low levels of formal education. Recent immigrants and people of non-European ethnicity are over-represented among these workers. The current unemployment rate of people with no qualifications is 9 percent.

The industries with the highest proportions of workers at ALLS Level 1 are agriculture, manufacturing, forestry, transport, retail trade, and accommodation and food services.

The OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) will provide New Zealand's next comparable data of the literacy and numeracy skills of the adult population in July 2016.⁵ The results will provide a new rich international comparison of the adult workforce that will enable New Zealand to better understand its global competitiveness and inform decisions on ways in which education and training systems can meet emerging skill demands.

Changes in the age structure, education and other characteristics of the population since 2006 are likely to have limited impact on the distribution of skills. Some subsets of the population, such as Māori and Pasifika, are growing and are over-represented among those at ALLS Level 1 or 2. This means that as we help some people improve their skills, yet more people need help. We will know more about this when the results of the PIAAC are released in mid-2016.

We have achieved good results already...

We have made considerable progress in establishing the conditions, capability and infrastructure required to improve adult literacy and numeracy skills.

- ❖ The number of learners reached by adult literacy and numeracy education through specific TEC funding and the spread of embedded literacy and numeracy in foundation-level provision quadrupled from 36,200 in 2010 to 175,000 in 2013.
- ❖ New Zealand's approach is reviewed favourably as "one of the most active in the world" in relation to the development of literacy and numeracy policies.⁶

Our focus over the past seven years has been on improving the quality of teaching in foundation learning. We have developed standardised teaching resources and assessment processes and funded professional development. This has helped improve outcomes for foundation learners.

- ❖ From 2008 to 2013, course completion rates for Level 2 foundation education have increased from 62 percent to 77 percent.

Nearly 20% of learners are making measurable gains in their literacy and numeracy skills. This compares well with evidence from other countries as the impacts of literacy and numeracy interventions are often not seen over the short term. Rather, they materialise over time, only becoming substantial after several years.

We are tracking our progress across several measures, all of which are aligned to the success indicators for the TES. **Table 1** shows our achievement from 2011 to 2014. It shows improvement in almost all of our target areas.

...but we want to achieve more by 2019

We want to build on the results we have already achieved. We want to be able to reach more people to help them succeed and to better target our support to individual learners to help improve their outcomes.

This Strategy sets targets for the TEC to achieve by 2019 to ensure progress continues in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for more people (**Table 1**). They focus on getting more course and qualification completions, increased numbers of learners improving their skills at work, and more learners making literacy and numeracy gains during their learning. Achieving these targets will contribute directly towards the Government's BPS targets.

These targets and indicators are 'proxy measures' for the outcomes that result from lifting literacy and numeracy skills. These outcomes include having a more highly skilled, adaptive, innovative and productive workforce and more people fully participating and contributing to New Zealand's social and cultural well-being.

Table 1: Key targets and indicators to measure the Strategy's success

This table shows our targets for 2019, how we are doing now, and how this has improved since 2011. The table also shows how this Strategy will help achieve the TES's three indicators of success for improving adult literacy and numeracy.

TES success indicators	How we can measure our progress	2019 targets (interim) ⁷	2014 ⁸⁹	2011 ¹⁰
More individuals across all age groups attain qualifications at level 2 or above	Number of learners completing level 2 qualifications (excluding industry training)	22,000 learners	19,425 learners	17,296 learners
	Level 2 course completion rate (excluding industry training)	80 percent	77 percent	73 percent
Literacy, language and numeracy skills improve across all age groups	Measuring gain through the Assessment Tool – rates of SAC Levels 1&2 and YG learners who achieve 'statistically significant gain'	25 percent	19 percent	17 percent
	Full and effective usage of the Assessment Tool – rates of usage by SAC Level 1 and 2 and YG learners ¹¹	90 percent for initial assessments 50 percent for progress assessments 415,000 assessments involving 150,000 individual learners	65 percent for initial assessments 30 percent for progress assessments 299,977 assessments involving 114,927 individual learners	16 percent for initial assessments 210,773 assessments involving 77,661 individual learners
	Periodic external assessments, such as PIAAC, and commissioned research and evaluations	Target TBA after PIAAC results release in July 2016	1.3 million New Zealanders (43 percent of adults aged 16 to 65) at ALLS Levels 1 or 2 ('low or very low literacy or numeracy skills) as of 2006.	
There is more industry involvement with tertiary education to support the upskilling of the existing labour force	An increase in the number of employers and learners participating in programmes funded through the Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund	8,000 employees receive programmes and 35 employers receive funding ¹²	5,886 employees received work-based literacy and numeracy programmes and 22 employers received funding	6,256 employees received work based programmes and 27 employers received funding
	An increase in the proportion of industry trainees with no tertiary qualification enrolled in a level 2 qualification who complete a level 2 qualification ¹³	60 percent	42 percent: 4,589 of 10,872 trainees	24 percent: 2,116 of 8,725 trainees

Lifting literacy and numeracy skills and proficiency results in wider benefits for individuals, families/whanau, communities and society.¹⁴ The TEC will investigate appropriate ways to measure and incorporate broader outcomes into the TEC's future decisions. This will supplement, not replace, the TEC's use of Assessment Tool data.

We will strengthen our work in four areas to help more people improve their literacy and numeracy skills

We have identified four areas in which to focus our work between now and 2019 to help ensure that we meet our targets and help more people improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

- ❖ Workstream 1: We will **reach more people** to help them succeed
- ❖ Workstream 2: We will **better target support** to individual learners to help improve their outcomes
- ❖ Workstream 3: We will ensure that **tutors and trainers are well equipped** to help their learners succeed
- ❖ Workstream 4: We will support and influence **other agencies**

The sections below explain in more detail what work we plan to undertake in each of these four workstreams.

Our work to develop an investment approach will also have implications for how we fund literacy and numeracy

In addition to these four workstreams, TEC is undertaking work across all of its funds (including, but not limited to, those directed at improving literacy and numeracy skills) to help significantly improve the economic and social value of the Government's spending in tertiary education. This is unfolding in parallel with this Strategy. It will help us get the best results for what we spend on improving New Zealanders' literacy and numeracy skills.

Workstream 1: We will reach more people to help them succeed...

One of the most important things we can do to improve New Zealand's literacy and numeracy skills is to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to improve their skills and capabilities. We will continue to ensure that foundation learning opportunities are targeted at those that do not already have a Level 2 qualification.

To ensure that we reach more people and help them succeed, we will focus our efforts on the significant number of adults in the workplace do not yet have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to fully participate in today's world, younger people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Our work will also help improve the employability of those in the community or close to employment.

- ❖ Literacy and numeracy alone rarely deliver the skills needed for the workplace, but without literacy and numeracy skills people are unable to do the kind of mainstream education and training courses which do enhance employability.

Expanding our reach is crucial because the TEC's literacy and numeracy interventions have mainly focused on adults in or close to tertiary education, rather than those in the workplace or not in education, employment or training. We estimate that TEC-funded tertiary education has to date only reached 20 to 25 percent of the 1.3 million adults with low or very low literacy and numeracy skills.¹⁵

...by increasing our focus on the workplace

The workplace is one of the most important areas for the TEC's future work because many of the target learners will be in the workplace in low-skilled occupations. Lifting literacy and numeracy skills in work settings will help create safe workplaces and will enable workers to up-skill to improve their economic outcomes.

- ❖ **Key action:** We will ensure we reach more people who need help by increasing our focus on the workplace.

We will grow the level of industry involvement to support upskilling by increasing the number of employers participating in workplace literacy programmes from 22 in 2014 to over 35 in 2019 and the number of learners in programmes from just under 6,000 in 2014 to over 8,000 in 2019. These targets are based on the current levels of funding appropriated by Government. This is an area of considerable opportunity and we will closely monitor demand. If we are successful in growing industry involvement, we will seek to redirect resources into this area and revise the targets upwards.

In 2015/16, we will make it easier for employers to engage in TEC-funded workplace literacy programmes and raise the skill levels of their employees by:

- improving the awareness, accessibility and responsiveness of the Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund
- increasing the reach and effectiveness of the Skills Highway programme with employers
- targeting industries with higher proportions of workers with high literacy and numeracy needs.

By 2019, we will improve the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy interventions by:

- working with industry training organisations to identify and implement effective ways of ensuring that workplace training addresses literacy and numeracy needs
- developing more industry-specific and contextualised educational resources for tutors and trainers
- increasing the availability and quality of training and professional development for educators who will be working in vocational/workplace contexts.

...by collaborating with other agencies

We will also continue to work closely with other agencies whose clients need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This will help us reach people who are not in the workforce or in tertiary education.

We will continue to work with:

- the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to ensure that the Government can support as many NEETs as possible – many of whom will engage with MSD’s beneficiary support programmes, so we can help MSD understand their learners needs and ensure that programmes are tailored to meet them
- the Department of Corrections in supporting and enhancing literacy and numeracy programme delivery inside prisons
- the NZ Transport Agency on developing new driver licence modules inside Pathways Awarua so that more people can build their literacy and numeracy skills while getting support to gain their driver licence, which can improve their employability
- agencies involved with Māori development initiatives such as Whānau Ora, ‘He kai kei aku ringa’ – the Māori Economic Development Strategy, ‘Tau mai te reo’ – the Māori Language in Education Strategy, and other relevant initiatives
- our partners in the cross-government Skilled and Safe Workplaces initiative to develop other opportunities to influence employers to stimulate investment in the development and sustainability of their workforce (particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy). This includes labour market information, initiatives to bring tertiary education organisations closer to industry and supporting industry skills leadership.

We will also work across government to explore whether a national publicity campaign could reduce stigma around low literacy and numeracy skills, and demystify and promote potential solutions to improve one’s literacy and numeracy. This campaign, if resources allow, could have a focus on whānau, employers, or other particular groups in society.

Workstream 2: We will better target support to individual learners to help improve their outcomes...

In addition to reaching as many people as possible, we also need to make sure our support is tailored to meet individual learners' needs and circumstances. The reasons for people's low literacy and numeracy skills can vary significantly, so solutions need to be tailored to their specific needs.

This has not been fully addressed in the work done to date. Trainers and tutors have told us that they need more targeted teaching resources to help them meet the specific needs of these learners.

Meeting the particular needs of people with low literacy and numeracy skills will help them make the gains required to fully participate in today's economy and society. We recognise that different learner groups in the tertiary sector have different needs and circumstances that warrant particular tailored approaches.

❖ **Key action:** We will target our support to:

- ❖ Māori
- ❖ Pasifika
- ❖ younger learners
- ❖ adults who are new to New Zealand
- ❖ adults with learning difficulties.

...by supporting more Māori learners to succeed

Māori learners are over-represented in the numbers of adults at ALLS Levels 1 or 2. Between 2006 and 2026, the Māori population is projected to grow faster than the New Zealand population overall. Raising literacy and numeracy skills of Māori learners will help us meet all of our targets outlined in Table 1, help fulfil the Government's obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi, and will help New Zealand realise the potential of this future workforce by ensuring learners are equipped with the skills, qualifications and experiences that employers will be seeking.

We will better target support to Māori learners by:

- completing the Te Ata Hāpara reading option inside the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (Assessment Tool), which has been designed to be relevant and responsive to Māori learners
- consider and implement the recommendations of the national Māori literacy and numeracy framework 'Haea Te Pu Ata' as resources allow. This could include funding professional development for tutors and trainers working with Māori learners so that these learners' needs are met, supporting regional literacy and numeracy hubs, and collaborating with Māori development initiatives such as Whānau Ora.
- work with the tertiary sector and community organisations such as iwi and hapu to increase the reach of TEC-funded literacy and numeracy programmes into marae and homes, such as through family/whānau literacy programmes
- exploring whether further educational resources for te reo Māori speakers are required in order to meet the needs of this learner group effectively.

...by supporting more Pasifika learners to succeed

Pasifika learners as a group represent a significant opportunity to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Between 2006 and 2026, the particularly youthful Pasifika population is projected to grow faster than the overall New Zealand population.

We will better target support to Pasifika learners by:

- continuing to fund professional development delivered to tutors and trainers working with Pasifika learners to ensure that these learners' needs are met
- collaborating with other government or community Pasifika development initiatives, and building upon the successes of the Māori and Pasifika Trades Training scheme
- work with the tertiary sector and community organisations to increase the reach of TEC-funded literacy and numeracy programmes into locations often used by Pasifika community members like churches and sports clubs.
- exploring whether further educational resources for Pasifika learners (who may also have English as a second language) are required in order to meet the needs of this learner group effectively.

...by supporting younger learners to succeed

One of the TES's six priorities is getting at-risk young people into a career by helping them transition from school into tertiary education, training, or into the workplace.

Meeting these learners' needs effectively will increase the proportion of industry trainees without prior qualifications completing Level 2 qualifications to 60 percent, and the number of learners participating in workplace literacy and numeracy programmes from under 6,000 to over 8,000. Over time, this will also help increase the overall number of adults who have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to participate in today's world.

We will better target support to younger learners by:

- adding more questions to the Youth option of the Assessment Tool to make it more attractive to younger learners (aged 15 to 25)
- continuing to fund professional development delivered to tutors and trainers working with younger learners to ensure that these learners' needs are met
- working with the Ministry of Education to use educational resources (such as the Assessment Tool) where appropriate, to help secondary schools better meet the literacy and numeracy needs of their Year 12 and Year 13 learners
- monitoring uptake of foundation learning provision to ensure that it is targeted at those that do not already have a Level 2 qualification and be more likely to be at risk of becoming disengaged.

...by supporting adults who are new to New Zealand to succeed

This new workstream responds to feedback from the tertiary sector and employers on the needs of these learners. It focuses on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners – adults who are non-, pre- or semi-literate in English. This group of learners is likely to include a high proportion of refugees and some migrants. Adults who are born overseas and whose first language is not English are more likely to have very low literacy and low numeracy skills.

Addressing the needs of learners new to New Zealand will help increase the number of adults sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to fully participate in today's world, as measured in periodic external assessments such as PIAAC.

We will better target support to adults who are new to New Zealand by:

- completing the new Starting Points options in the Assessment Tool – a vocabulary option for ESOL learners, and a reading option for both ESOL and foundation-level literacy learners
- continuing to work with other parts of Government to meet migrants and refugees needs by implementing the tertiary education components of the Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy and the Refugee Resettlement Strategy
- monitoring and adjusting levels of provision to ensure they best meet need in key migrant and refugee resettlement areas
- working with our partner agencies, particularly the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, to ensure that more migrants take up their pre-purchased English-language tuition.

...by supporting adults with learning difficulties to succeed

Tertiary education sector feedback has also highlighted the needs of adults with learning difficulties, particularly learners who may enter Youth Guarantee provision. The Dyslexia Foundation estimates one in ten people have dyslexia. Addressing these needs will, alongside other actions in this Strategy, increase course completion rates and qualification completion rates. This is also a new explicit area of the Strategy. We will need to develop our work in this area and build our evidence of what works well for adults.

We will better target support to adults with learning difficulties by:

- collaborating with other government agencies and community organisations to develop a coordinated approach to ensuring that adult literacy and numeracy initiatives can meet the complex learning needs of adults with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other conditions
- developing, as resources allow, training resources and other interventions for tutors and trainers working with adults with learning difficulties.

Workstream 3: We will ensure that tutors and trainers are well equipped to help their learners succeed...

The TEC's educational resources have a positive impact by making it easier for educators to understand and help improve their learners' skill levels. We need to make sure that our resources are maintained and that the sector is aware of their effectiveness.

However, resources on their own are not enough. We also need to make sure that tutors and trainers are able to use the resources effectively and supported to develop in their roles.

...by maintaining and promoting our educational resources

The TEC will maintain and build upon our suite of educational resources that are used by the sector to support tutors and trainers to address the needs of their learners.

The Learning Progressions are widely used as a 'backbone' framework to address literacy and numeracy needs, and usage of Pathways Awarua continues to grow. There is statistically significant evidence that good Assessment Tool usage is associated with educational outcomes such as higher course completion rates.

However, we have not yet achieved full and effective use of the Tool. The state of embedded literacy and numeracy practice varies across the sector.¹⁶ Some TEOs are at a 'mature' stage of practice, but many are still at either a 'partial' or 'emergent' stage:

❖ **Key action:** We will ensure full and effective embedded literacy and numeracy in foundation education.

In 2015/16, we will also help to maintain and promote our education resources by:

- completing new options inside the Assessment Tool which meet the needs of Māori, younger, ESOL, and foundation-level literacy learners and continuing to develop the Tool to meet more learners' needs as resources allow
- increasing the use of Pathways Awarua throughout the tertiary sector and also in workplaces and the wider community.

By 2019, we will also create:

- more industry-specific and contextualised modules and pathways inside Pathways Awarua
- more targeted and contextualised items in the Assessment Tool
- more pathways and modules appropriate for learners who present below Step 1 on the Learning Progressions
- an 'app' for smartphones and other mobile devices, and other ways to increase accessibility of TEC-supported resources such as offline access.

...by ensuring an appropriately qualified workforce

We need to ensure that tutors and trainers have the capability and skills to help all learners to succeed. We know from the sector that there is significant 'churn' in the foundation-level workforce and that high-quality professional development is an on-going need.

To support tutors and trainers to be as effective as possible, the TEC will continue to:

- ensure all tutors and trainers who teach foundation-level courses to hold an appropriate qualification, such as the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Vocational) - known as NCALNE (Voc)
- fund high quality high relevance professional development opportunities for tutors and trainers, such as through the National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults and Ako Aotearoa's 'He Taunga Waka' programme.
- seek ways to improve the training and professional development of workplace assessors and vocational educators
- support ways to increase the sharing of good practice and the development of connections throughout the tertiary sector.

Workstream 4: We will support and influence other agencies' work...

While the TEC is the main government agency that funds interventions designed to improve adult literacy and numeracy, we need to work with other agencies to ensure that our actions are well coordinated and that we support other agencies to reach adults with low skills that we cannot directly support.¹⁷ Many of these actions are included in the other three workstreams in this Strategy, particularly Workstream 1.

...by sharing our knowledge and resources with the Ministry of Education (Ministry)

We need to work particularly closely with the Ministry to ensure that policy settings and implementation are well coordinated, and that our resources are used in the compulsory sector to help support young people to become adults with high literacy and numeracy skills.

We will work with the Ministry to ensure that:

- its policy advice reflects our knowledge and supports our activities. The Ministry supports Ministers to make decisions on policy settings for literacy and numeracy.
- young people leaving school have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to participate fully in further education and employment opportunities. This will include sharing our resources (such as TEC-funded research, the Assessment Tool and Pathways Awarua) for use within the compulsory sector, as appropriate
- further innovative opportunities to bring the compulsory sector and tertiary providers closer together are explored. This would help more learners benefit from the successes like the Trades Academies programme.

Glossary

The Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool

The Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (the Assessment Tool) is the key diagnostic tool of literacy and numeracy competency for adults in New Zealand. The online Assessment Tool helps tutors know and understand their learners' needs against the literacy and numeracy competencies in the Learning Progressions. There was no nationally recognised diagnostic assessment for literacy and numeracy before the launch of the Assessment Tool in 2010.

The Learning Progressions

The Learning Progressions are a standardised theoretical framework of literacy and numeracy skills introduced in 2009. They detail competencies in adult literacy and numeracy, including what adult learners know and can do at successive points as they develop their skills. They provide a common language to describe competencies and shape teaching.

Pathways Awarua

Pathways Awarua is an online self-directed literacy and numeracy learning tool made up of pathways of modules for learners to complete at their own pace, based on the competencies set out in the Learning Progressions.

Skills Highway

The Skills Highway programme promotes workforce upskilling and helps employers address basic literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace. Raising the literacy and numeracy skills of the workforce is a key government priority for tertiary education. These skills provide the essential base for building a capable, skilled and productive workforce that is able to adapt to the increasingly sophisticated demands of the modern workplace.

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¹ http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/data/assets/excel_doc/0003/144084/Learners-summary.xls

² The TEC considers its current definitions of adult literacy and numeracy as still fit for purpose. These definitions can be found on page 5 and 6 of 'Adult Literacy and Numeracy: An Overview of the Evidence, An Annotated Bibliography' published in 2013. Our Strategy will continue to focus on the basic building blocks of adult literacy and numeracy, because other literacies (such as financial, digital, health, community, family/whānau and cultural) depend on a good foundational base of skills and knowledge.

³ This includes: Youth Guarantee (\$121m), Student Achievement Component Levels 1-2 (\$96m), Industry Training Fund Levels 1-2 (\$39m), Workplace Literacy Fund (\$21m – of which almost \$5m directly funds employers), Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) fund (\$13m), ILN Targeted English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) fund (\$11m), Refugee English Fund (\$2.2m), and Adult Literacy Educator Grants (\$0.4m).

The total figure of \$303.6m does not include funding for courses with embedded literacy and numeracy at SAC Level 3, the Industry Training Fund at Level 3 or funding for the 22 Trades Academies.

⁴ The OECD Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALLS) results for New Zealand were released in 2006. It measured the prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills of a representative sample of respondents aged 16-65. The literacy and numeracy skills measured in ALLS survey can be grouped into very low and low skills (Levels 1 and 2) and higher skills (Levels 3,4 and 5). Research reports on the results are available here: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/ALL>

⁵ PIAAC is a comprehensive international survey that measures the skills and competencies regarded as necessary for individuals of working age to participate in society and for economies to prosper. This survey builds on previous international surveys of adult skills. It will update results from the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey undertaken in New Zealand in 2006 and allow some degree of historical comparison over the period since the International Adult Literacy Survey in 1996.

⁶ Adult Literacy and Numeracy: An Overview of the Evidence, Annotated Bibliography', TEC, 2013, p31.

⁷ Targets for 2019 are interim and are subject to change once final data for 2014 is confirmed.

⁸ Finalised data for 2014 is not yet available. The 2013 data has been used in the interim but will be updated with 2014 data when the final agreed strategy is published.

⁹ http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/data/assets/excel_doc/0003/144084/Learners-summary.xls

¹⁰ The Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tool was introduced in late 2010, with the first full-year's assessment data available in 2011. This is why we compare our current achievements and 2019 targets to 2011.

¹¹ This rate applies to all learners that tertiary education organisations are required to assess.

¹² This target is subject to decisions following the review of literacy and numeracy funds by the Ministry of Education.

¹³ And eligible for funding.

¹⁴ The broader spectrum of outcomes includes: individual changes in practices, behaviour, and psychological changes (such as confidence, ability and willingness to communicate, and 'soft' skills'); economic outcomes such as improved productivity, income, employee progression, workplace efficiency and safety, and workplace satisfaction; and social outcomes such as improved individual and community wellbeing, increased family/whānau/aiga engagement, inter-generational benefits and increased civic participation.

¹⁵ Assessment Tool data indicates that our Tertiary Education Organisations are or have been working with around 275,000 learners between 2010 and 2013.

¹⁶ The TEC has created an embedding literacy and numeracy (ELN) practices table to help TEOs identify their own ELN practice. The table enables organisations to reflect and then plan for what can be achieved to improve embedded practice. It can be found by searching 'embedded literacy and numeracy practices table' at www.tec.govt.nz.

¹⁷ Including, but are not limited to: The Ministry of Education, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry for Business, Innovation, and Employment, New Zealand Transport Agency, Department of Corrections, Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori – Māori Language Commission, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs.