

**Phase 2 of the
Manukau Family Literacy Programmes
Pilot Implementation**

Interim (Second) Formative and Process Evaluation Report

For the City of Manukau Educational Trust (COMET)

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Report Summary

This second evaluation report covers the first six months of 2003, when the first two pilot sites of the Manukau Family Literacy Programme (MFLP) started operations; this report supplements the first evaluation report (Benseman, 2002) that covered the planning of the MFLP project and a review of family literacy research literature.

Eleven adult participants and their nominated children (attending either the Bairds Kindergarten or Bairds Mainfreight Primary School) started their course in February and completed it in late June. Foundation Studies at the Manukau Institute of Technology provided the adult educator for the Bairds Otara programme and the course was located at Bairds Mainfreight Primary School.

Fifteen adult participants and their nominated children (attending either the Manurewa West Independent Kindergarten or Rowandale Primary School) started their course in May and will continue until late 2003. The Rowandale course is being taught by an AUT adult educator and is located at Rowandale Primary School.

The overall project is under the auspices of the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET), whose MFLP Regional Co-ordinator has overall responsibility for the project.

As with any pilot project, the MFLP has experienced some initial problems, but overall it has proceeded efficiently and effectively. It is clear that many of the issues have arisen because of the innovative nature of family literacy, particularly because of the way it transcends the conventional, age-stratified education system. This report discusses in detail the following issues that have arisen in the development of the MFLP.

- Funding of the adult education component
- Ownership of the MFLP
- Timing of the start-up
- Recruitment of the adult educators
- Selection of adult students
- Synchronising of project partners' administration/timetables
- Duration of participants' participation in the MFLP
- Identification of the child participant in the programme
- Variations in adult learners.

The report also points out specific strengths of the MFLP.

- The role of the lead agency
- Support from partner institutions
- Links into key networks
- Physical facilities.

Much of the report provides detailed evaluative data about the impact of the MFLP on the participants at both sites (one of which has been completed and one of which is still in its early stages). Interviews with the adult participants early in the programme and on completion for the Bairds Otara participants have shown extremely positive outcomes. The impact of the programme has been quite diverse, which reflects the broad goals of family literacy. It is clear that the MFLP has been the most successful educational experience of all the participating adults' lives and has engendered considerable personal confidence, literacy skills and educational ambitions in them. The great majority of the Bairds Otara graduates have enrolled in tertiary programmes in the second half of the year.

In addition to their personal and academic development, the participating adults have reported significant changes in relation to their roles as parents. Many said they have now changed the ways they carry out their parenting, moving away from physical disciplining to a more directed and supportive approach. They reported these changes as more effective and enjoyable for everyone in the family. In addition, they are now more actively involved in their children's education, due primarily to a better understanding of what the kindergartens and schools are endeavouring to achieve and their own personal confidence as learners. No participant reported any dissatisfaction with any aspect of either site's programme; they only had positive feedback to offer. One interviewee said, "I want to thank the people who got me on to this course. They opened my eyes."

The school and kindergarten teachers are extremely supportive of the MFLP. At the official opening of the programme by the Minister of Education in July, the chairperson of the Baird Mainfreight Board of Trustees said that he thought Family Literacy was "the best thing that has happened to this school" in his 20 years of involvement at the school. Feedback from principals and classroom teachers confirm this support and report very positive outcomes for the participating children in the programme.

Evaluation of the Manukau Family Literacy Programme (MFLP)

This is the second formative and process evaluation report on the pilot Manukau Family Literacy project funded by the Ministry of Education and administered by the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET). The first report (Benseman, 2002) provided an overview of family literacy programmes, a literature review of the research on these programmes and a review of the development of the Manukau Family Literacy Programme during 2002, with a particular emphasis on management and structural issues that arose in the initial planning phase of the project.

This second report covers the period of January to June 2003, when two pilot programmes started at Bairds Mainfreight in Otara and Rowandale School in Manurewa. As outlined in the first evaluation report, formative and process evaluation involves the following:

- *Formative evaluation* is essentially about providing a critical perspective of the programme as it develops (by providing a range of relevant information and feedback) in order to improve it as it evolves, rather than waiting until after the programme finishes.
- *Process evaluation* documents what actually happens in a programme (which may differ significantly from what was originally planned) and endeavours to answer the questions of how and why a programme succeeds – or fails.

The second phase of the MFLP evaluation has four main components, which will be reported in this interim and the final report in December:

- documenting the development of the programmes on the two sites and their associated management structures
- providing an initial impact assessment of the programmes using primarily qualitative data
- identifying key issues that have arisen in the development of the programmes and how these issues have been resolved or minimised
- identifying and assessing a range of impact evaluation measures that could be used in New Zealand family literacy programmes in the longer term.

Manukau Family Literacy Programmes (MFLP)

The MFLP grew out of an initiative by the Literacy Taskforce of the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET).¹ The initial planning for the programmes was undertaken during 2002, culminating in two pilot sites starting operation in 2003 at Bairds Otara and Rowandale in Manurewa. The MFLP has been broadly based on the following educational components (usually referred to as the *Kenan Model* of family literacy):

1. An adult education² component designed to extend basic education skills, including teaching adult participants to: think critically and creatively, solve problems, set goals and achieve them and acquire successful interpersonal skills
2. Children's education to promote the growth and development of young children and to engage parents in their child's educational program in order to foster meaningful involvement that will be maintained throughout the child's educational career.
3. Parent and child together time (PACT)
4. Parent time to provide instruction on how children grow, develop and learn to read and write, address issues critical to family well-being and success, connect parents with a wide array of community resources and provide parents with opportunities to network and develop mutual support systems with others in the program.

These four elements are shown in the diagram below. The diagram also illustrates what is sometimes referred to as the fifth element of family literacy programmes – integration. As Potts (No date, p. 4) says

Integration has become a critical, defining characteristic of family literacy services, working to create a system for delivery of curriculum, instruction and assessment. Rather than providing stand-alone, isolated services such as early childhood education or adult basic skills education, family literacy programs bring parents and children together to learn, weaving key strategies and message throughout the four primary components.... Integration of these components is used intentionally as a cohesive system to promote learning within the family unit.

¹ For additional details of the early stages of the MFLP see the first evaluation report (Benseman, 2002).

² The term 'adult education' is often used synonymously with 'adult literacy' in the US.

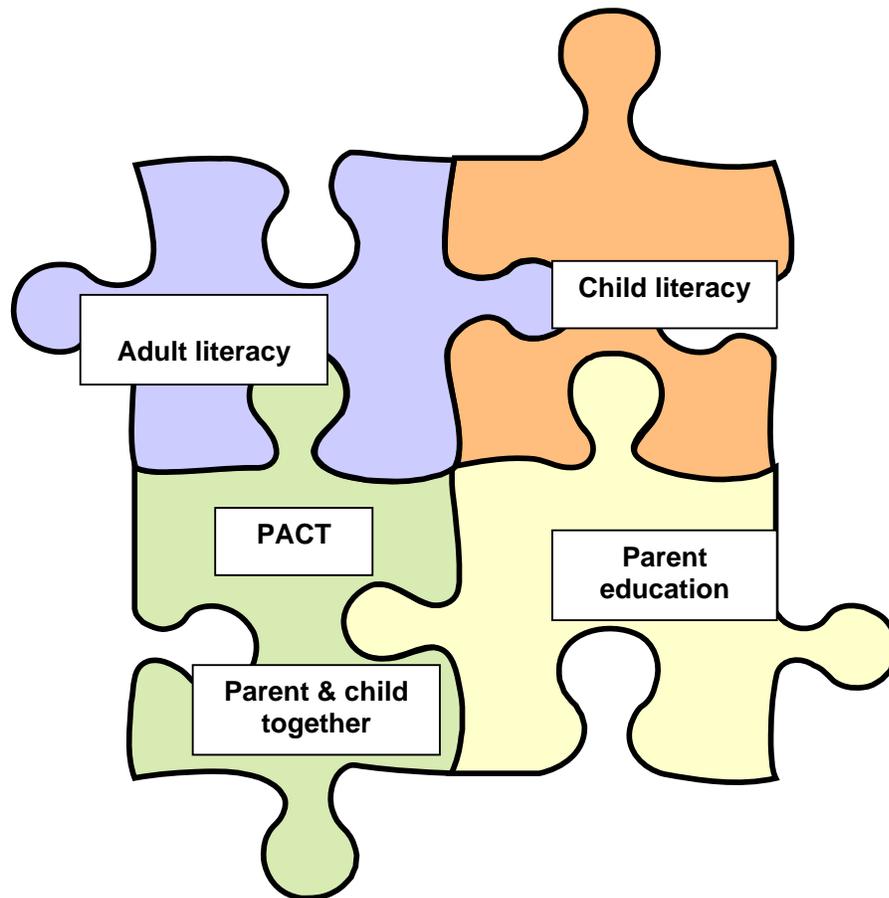


Figure 1 - Family Literacy's four components

Each MFLP site involves three partner institutions – a kindergarten, a primary school and a tertiary provider.³ The kindergartens and the primary schools work with the child participants (one per parent) enrolled in the programme and link with the adult components for key parts of the programme such as Parents and Child Together Time (PACT). The tertiary providers employ the adult educator who is responsible for teaching the adult participants, as well as some involvement in other components of the programme. Both MFLP programmes are located on primary school premises – Bairds Mainfreight and Rowandale Primary.

The overall management structure of the MFLP is summarised in the following diagram provided by COMET.

³ Both tertiary providers have developed a Memorandum of Understanding with COMET.

The development of the two MFLP sites

Bairds Otara

The Bairds Otara site programme in Otara started on February 10th with a powhiri at Bairds Mainfreight School and ran for a period of 20 weeks, ending on June 24th. A second intake is due to start on July 28th and will also run for 20 weeks.

Goals

As a part of the professional development workshops, the Bairds Otara group identified the following goals for their programme. Some goals are specific to adults and some to both children and adults.

Goals ⁴	Adults	Children
Increase literacy skills	X	X
Improve attitudes to reading and learning generally	X	X
Increase the use of books	X	X
Increase and improve reading to and with children	X	
Learn how to learn	X	
Improve self-confidence	X	X
Increase educational aspirations	X	
Increase awareness of opportunities – education and work	X	
Spend more focussed/special time between children and parents	X	X
Demonstrate greater awareness of parental roles and responsibilities	X	
Demonstrate greater encouragement of children	X	
Participate more in school/kindergarten activities	X	
Increase contact with child's teacher(s)	X	
Maintain attendance	X	X
Improve transition to school	X	X
Increase parent/child outings together	X	X
Improve links between school and kindergarten		
Increase and improve child/parent interaction	X	X
Increase parents' awareness of hauora	X	
Show commitment to on-going learning	X	X

⁴ The Bairds Mainfreight principal has indicated that in addition to these goals from the workshop, they also have aims of children achieving academically at school and parents achieving confidence in being partners with the school in their children's learning (private correspondence).

'Start-up'

The starting date for the Bairds Otago programme was several weeks later than originally planned. The delay in starting was mainly because of difficulties in recruiting enough students for the programme, which was due partly to it being a new programme (and therefore requiring recruitment for a programme unknown to potential participants) and partly because of problems of organising things over the Christmas period when schools and kindergartens were closed for the summer break (see 'Start-up' issues discussion later in this report).

Recruitment of participants

The recruitment strategies used for the Bairds Otago programme included Manukau Institute of Technology advertising; the kindergarten, school and COMET co-ordinator distributed brochures⁵ at the Otago Market in January and liaised with agencies such as WINZ. These strategies had generated no firm enrolments by late January. At this stage, additional publicity was undertaken by radio (an interview on *Radio 531 PI* with the MFLP Co-ordinator and the Chair of the school Board of Trustees), through Plunket, direct contact with 54 parents in the junior school and two open sessions (one at the kindergarten and one at the school).

By early February a total of 16 applications had been received, whom Manukau Institute of Technology's Foundation Studies staff then interviewed. Several additional people had also applied for the programme, but were ineligible because they did not have children at either the kindergarten or the school. The interviews for the applicants included some 'placement assessment' tests used in Manukau Institute of Technology Bridging programme interviews. Of the original 16 applicants, 12 people started the programme in February. The other applicants were judged to be too qualified for the programme or withdrew because of other issues, such as childcare⁶ and getting a job.

The process of recruiting participants into a programme is not always straightforward and may require a number of 'layers' of publicity before finally resulting in an enrolment. Feedback from the interviews with the participants in the Bairds Otago programme indicated that while general publicity such as brochures was important in

⁵ A lack of clarity around the recruitment process of students led to a lack of co-ordination among the group. MIT was surprised by the lack of overall response, given that January is traditionally a very successful recruiting period.

⁶ The Co-ordinator reports that lack of childcare or family support for children outside the MFLP is probably the biggest obstacle in recruiting participants.

initially making them aware of the programme, 'shoulder-tapping' from school and kindergarten staff was critical in helping participants to take the last step to enrolment. This experience is consistent with research findings in Britain (Brooks, Harman, Hutchison, Kendall, & Wilkin, 1996).

The Manukau Institute of Technology brochure stipulated that applicants did not require any school qualifications, that entry was dependent on an interview, completing a placement assessment and that applicants "must be committed to studying, prepared to work very hard and know what they want to achieve." Absences from the programme required a letter of explanation and a medical certificate.

The Bairds Otago programme

In order to qualify for EFTS funding to employ an adult educator in the programme, the tertiary partner (Foundation Studies at Manukau Institute of Technology) needed to 'locate' the MFLP within an existing course structure that had been approved by the New Zealand Polytechnic Programme Committee. The publicity brochure therefore referred to the four components of family literacy (adult learning, parent education, children's education programme and parent and children together - PACT), but also listed the 'core subjects' that made up the curriculum for the adults' programme – *Future Focus* (career planning), *Communication*, *Study Skills*, *Foundation Education Computing*, *Parenting in Aotearoa*⁷ and *Personal Money Management* or *Introductory Mathematics*.

The brochure indicated the course level with the following wording:

There are many courses at different levels that can be included in the Family Literacy programmes. The exact levels will be decided in discussion with those enrolling in the programme. Generally courses are similar to those at senior secondary level (NQA levels 1 and 2).

The adult educator has taught most of the programme, although other Manukau Institute of Technology staff have taught some components such as maths and computing (often on-site at the nearby polytechnic campus). The adult educator also has some non-MFLP teaching duties (.3) at the polytechnic.

⁷ Designed specifically for the MFLP.

There were considerable difficulties in aligning the three different timetables of the kindergarten, the primary school and the polytechnic. Furthermore, the kindergarten's sessional licence was for a maximum of four hours per child per day, which did not mesh with the MFLP adult programme of 8.45 to 2.45, Monday to Thursday. Following extensive negotiating and discussions involving COMET, the kindergarten, the Auckland Kindergarten Association and the Ministry of Education a dispensation was granted for a full-day licence, enabling the MFLP children to attend the kindergarten for full days.⁸ The granting of this dispensation was an important step in facilitating the attendance of the parents with early childhood children and was seen as particularly significant by everyone at the Bairds Otara site.

The Bairds Otara site has employed a teacher aide (who has completed most of a teaching qualification) from 11.15 am to 2.15 pm daily to help primarily with supporting the kindergarten children, some administrative tasks involved in running the programme and the transitional period between school and kindergarten. British research has shown that employing such a staff member is one of three key features of achieving impact in adult literacy programmes (Brooks et al., 2001).

The development of PACTT in MFLP

The Kenan model of family literacy includes Parent and Children Together (PACT) as one of the four main components. PACT is intended to

... provide opportunities for positive interactions between parents and children that promote and enhance the role of parents as their child's first and most influential teacher. It is a time set aside for parents and children to take part in activities that promote healthy family relations, demonstrate how parents support their children's learning and strengthen the learning partnership between parents and their children. PACT activities enhance parents' efforts to support their children's literacy development and success in school and are used to transfer learning to the home. Teachers guide parents by modelling positive and constructive behaviour (National Center for Family Literacy, 2000, p. 7).

While the Kenan model was the initial model for PACT, the Bairds Otara site has subsequently developed its own model, which they have entitled Parents and Children Together Time (PACTT) and consists of three forms⁹

⁸ This issue was raised in the meeting with the Minister of Education in February.

⁹ A full discussion of the development of PACTT is provided in a paper appended to this report (Appendix C).

- 1:1 (or Tahi : tahi) PACTT involving individual parents working with their enrolled children three times per week
- Classroom PACTT involving all of the parents and their enrolled children together once every fortnight
- Whanau PACTT, held once per term, involving the parents, all of their children and extended family members (the first Whanau PACTT attracted about 40 people).

Rowandale

The Rowandale site programme started on May 12th with a powhiri involving all of the primary school and kindergarten children and will run until the end of the academic year. This site's adult programme has been built around AUT's *Certificate in Introduction to Early Childhood Education*. The Certificate's curriculum covers "child development, observations and play with young children, tikanga Maori, communication studies, personal and career development and practical experience in a range of early childhood centres" (AUT brochure). The Certificate is intended to staircase on to a *Certificate in Early Childhood Education* and then other AUT bachelor degrees such as *Early Childhood Teaching* or *Montessori Early Childhood Teaching*, as well as other social service qualifications. Like Bairds Otara, the Rowandale programme is offered at no cost to the participants.

The Rowandale School and Manurewa West Independent Kindergarten staff identified the following goals for their programme at the professional development days (AUT was not officially involved when these were developed).

Goals

Goals	Adults	Children
Increase literacy skills	X	X
Improve attitudes to reading and learning generally	X	X
Increase use of books	X	X
Increase and improve reading to and with children	X	X
Increase vocabulary	X	X
Reduce transiency	X	
Improve links between school/kindergarten		
Increase parent/child interaction	X	X
Increase parents' awareness of hauora	X	
Increase self-confidence	X	X
Improve attitudes towards school	X	X
Increase & improve help with homework	X	
Increase ECE attendance to min. of 1 yr		X
Maintain attendance	X	X
Increase use of outdoors for educational purposes	X	
Increase use of te reo	X	X

'Start-up'

The start-up of the Rowandale site has been not without its own challenges, but undoubtedly benefited to some degree from the Bairds Otara experience. The recruitment methods for participants used at Rowandale were similar to those used at Bairds Otara and again illustrated the value of key people's networks. While some participants were recruited in the last few months of 2002, the programme itself was delayed in starting due to difficulties in finalising a tertiary partner for the site. All major tertiary institutions in the Auckland area were invited for expressions of interest, but this process meant that the final agreement with AUT was not finalised until March, which meant a delay in the start of the programme of several months from the original planned date.

The recruitment of the adult educator was done within a very tight timetable through AUT's normal public advertisement process, but was completed successfully due to the commitment of staff members of the Rowandale site and AUT. The process culminated in the adult educator appointee arriving from Christchurch the day that the programme started. The Rowandale site will also employ a teacher aide, although this appointment has not been finalised at the time of writing. The Rowandale programme has also adopted the three forms of PACTT first developed at Bairds Otara.

There have been some issues about getting WINZ approvals for participants' claims for childcare, with some inconsistency of approvals from applicant to applicant. Following a series of meetings between COMET staff and WINZ and an on-site visit, two WINZ staff members have been designated for both MFLP sites and these issues have been resolved.

MFLP Professional development

Two MFLP professional development days have been held in the first half of 2003. The first was held on February 11-12th at Rowandale School and the second was held on April 7th at Manukau Institute of Technology. These workshops were valuable for helping develop a 'common culture' across the different partner institutions and providing an opportunity for detailed programme planning. The fact that the workshops involved whole days was important in gaining momentum in the debate and sustained discussion that is simply not possible in the shorter time periods of management and operational meetings. Of particular note was the large

representation of primary and kindergarten teachers (some of whom have enrolled children in their classes and some who don't at present), which represents a large commitment on the part of these schools'/kindergartens' resources. The presence of these teachers was not only indicative of the partners' level of support, but was also invaluable in building awareness of the MFLP and interest in what the programme is trying to achieve.

Initial findings of impact on Bairds Otara participants

Initial assessment of impact

The assessment of the impact a programme has on the participants is a complex undertaking where there are few straightforward answers.¹⁰ Educational programmes usually achieve a range of different impacts on learners, some of which are clearly related to programme goals and some of which are ‘unintended’ outcomes. Both types of impact are important to document in order to gain an overview of what the programme achieves.

The greatest concern about impact however usually relates to the specific programme aims. The aims identified for the two MFLP sites (see previous section) include specific literacy outcomes (e.g. increase literacy skills) and a number of other outcomes that are not directly related to literacy (e.g. improve attitudes towards school). The latter goals are reasonably easy to monitor in a programme evaluation and will be the focus of the evaluation activities particularly in the second half of this year. The evaluation of literacy-related impacts is more difficult however. With the child participants in the programme, a range of assessment strategies is available, although these vary considerably in schools¹¹ and kindergartens.

In relation to the adult participants however, the assessment of literacy gain is more problematic. While there are specific literacy skill components taught and assessed in each of the pilot programmes, there is no valid, universal measurement tool available at present that can be used to measure adult literacy gains. Some researchers have used tests devised for children such as the Burt, but these tests are of questionable validity for adults. There is hope on the horizon however in the development of the Adult Literacy Achievement Framework currently under development in New Zealand. This framework should be able to provide a mechanism for tracking changes in the adult participants’ literacy development and therefore be a useful component of a family literacy evaluation strategy.

In the interim however, the following section reports some qualitative data gathered in two sets of interviews with the Bairds Otara participants; one took place in early

¹⁰ A more detailed discussion of measuring impact will be included in the final evaluation report in December.

¹¹ Running records of reading are probably the measure used most consistently.

April and the second in late June in the final week of the course. In addition, each of the participants also provided a written evaluation of the course using the following questions as prompts:

- what I hoped to get out of this course
- the most important things I have learnt on this course
- what's different about me and my family now
- what I would change about this course
- my future plans.

Responses to these questions are included with data from the interviews.

Recruitment

When asked how they heard about the MFLP,¹² the most frequent replies were a Bairds Mainfreight staff member (5), the brochure (3), a kindergarten staff member (2) and a school newsletter (1).

Characteristics

Ten of the participants are women and one a man.¹³ One participant withdrew from the programme in the first few weeks due to domestic issues. The participants' ethnicities are shown in the graph below.

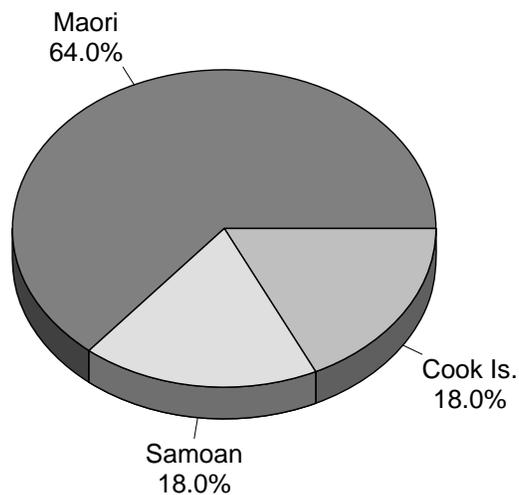


Figure 3 – Ethnicity of Bairds Otara participants

¹² They may have heard about MFLP from a number of sources, but these sources were what the participants identified and are therefore probably the most influential.

¹³ All participants are reported as female to ensure anonymity (given that only one participant is male in each of the programmes).

Numbers of children for adult participants:¹⁴

- Three have one child
- Two have three children
- Five have four children
- One has five children

Of the MFLP adults' 34 children, 12 are under 5 years (of whom five are nominated MFLP children). Although it was originally envisaged that only Years 1, 2 and 3 would be involved in MFLP, two of the nominated children are in Years 4 and 6. Four of the adults are solo parents. One adult was a grandparent of the enrolled child in the programme.¹⁵

Six of the adult participants had attended schools as children in nearby areas, three went to Northland schools and two went to schools outside these areas, which shows strong historical links with the Otara area. There was considerable variation in their school leaving ages; these ranged from 11 to 19, with an average of 15 ½ years. Nine have no qualifications (either at school or since leaving), one had passed one School Certificate paper and one had passed two papers.

Self-ratings at beginning of course

Each participant was asked to rate themselves on a 1 (low) – 10 (high) scale in terms of their reading skills¹⁶ and self-confidence as well as rating their schooling experience. The average ratings for reading skills were 5.5 (with one student rating a 2, two a 3, two an 8 and one a 9); the average rating for self-confidence was 5.6 (two had a rating of 3, one a 4 and one an 8). The average rating of their schooling experience was 4.7 (one had a rating of 2, one a 3 and one an 8).

¹⁴ One adult participant is a grand-parent whose grand-child is the enrolled child.

¹⁵ This person's comments are reported as a parent in order to preserve anonymity.

¹⁶ This question was not well phrased and was changed with the Rowandale participants to identify which specific areas of literacy (maths, reading, writing and spelling) participants have difficulty with.

Initial motivations and expectations¹⁷

Asked what had motivated them to enrol in the programme, the most common response was ‘wanting to be able to help their children’ (in some cases due to specific behaviour problems), often specifically in relation to helping with their child’s homework or maths (5); two said that they “hated sitting at home and wanted to get out of the house”; one wanted “to get a better job”; and the remainder had more general goals such as “getting back into my schooling”, “wanting to know where I am” and “getting my head back on track.”

They were also asked what their expectations were of the course. Four said they expected to learn new parenting skills (“I want to learn different ways of doing things” and “I want to make learning a fun thing” [for her child]); several said they expected to “learn new things” (specifically maths in one case); one expected to make new friends; another expected a new career direction; several other responses concerned expectations of self-growth, usually expressed in terms of self-confidence.

Assessment of the programme - April interviews

In the first round of interviews, the programme had been underway for approximately two months, involving over 200 tuition hours. All of the participants rated the course in extremely positive terms at this point. – “really awesome” was a typical response. None identified any specific issues or criticisms in relation to the running of the course; the only difficulties reported were to do with difficulties around arranging childcare, the demands of shift work and “explaining what the programme is about to my partner” (who initially thought it was a “bit of a time out thing”). Four said that they had some difficulties with their children who are not enrolled in the programme feeling left out and somewhat envious of the child who was. One reported that her child had been ‘clingy’ at school initially, but that this had since improved.

Asked what they had found most challenging about the course to date, the participants identified: the maths component (4), learning to speak in front of a group (3), time management (2), “getting to grips with the course and what the tutor wanted” (1), learning to learn again (1), coping with the slow pace of the course (1), the parenting component (1) and attendance (“I’m not used to having to get up at 7 - I normally don’t get out of bed till 10 or so”) (1).

¹⁷ Not all of the responses in the following sections always total 11 as some participants gave more than one response or none for some questions.

When asked what they liked best about the programme to that point, they mentioned the *Future Focus* component (predominantly goal-setting) (2), the other participants and the tutor (2), “learning new things” (2), setting personal goals (1), “a feeling of self-knowledge” (1) “the environment” (1) and “being able to help with homework (1).

Because participation in a programme often has implications for others in their families, the participants were asked what their families thought about their parent/partner being in the programme. The great majority said that their family had been very supportive (“Mum really pushed me”), although some partners had been hesitant at the beginning – “but now he says, ‘go for it’”. Another said that “my mum’s going to cry [when I finish], ‘cos all she ever wanted was for me to get an education.” One participant reported that her daughter now says to her in the morning, “Come on Mum, it’s school time.”

Impact on participants and family

The participants were asked to identify any changes they felt had occurred as a result of being in the MFLP, either to themselves or their children. All of the participants reported that they felt the course had changed them as people. The most frequent response was a change in personal pride and confidence (6) or self-perceptions – “I’m a different person now” (2). Other comments included:

It’s very exciting. I’ve learnt a lot about myself, the things I’m capable of, my qualities. There are things I’ve never thought about before.

I’m doing things I’ve never ever done, like speaking in front of people. I’m now teaching kapa haka too.

I think I’m quite neat now, I’m quite proud, like being able to walk into the staff room and talk to staff. Stuff like that.

I love it. I never liked school. You don’t have the teacher down your throat all the time. It’s changed me.

A few mentioned literacy-related changes such as writing more easily and increased vocabularies and several identified changes in how they had re-organised their households.

All of the participants also felt that their enrolled children had benefited from being part of the programme. Specific (unprompted) changes they mentioned including improved completion of homework, greater motivation to go to school, becoming

more out-going and less shy, better concentration, improved reading skills, improved listening, more asking of questions, better communications with parent (“we click now”) and greater interaction (“she’s no longer a loner, she wants to do things with me”). One participant who also has older children said that she now knows how to interact better with her grandchildren.

Future ambitions and plans

In the April interviews, all of the participants said that they had identified goals for themselves. These goals included:

- a diploma “in something”
- go to foundation education (at Manukau Institute of Technology)
- become a kindergarten teacher
- go to a wananga course
- do a computer course
- become a social worker
- become a cultural worker
- go into the travel industry
- travel the world
- become self-employed
- complete a business diploma.

Overall assessment of the programme - June interviews

All of the Bairds Otara participants were also interviewed in the final week of the course. These interviews provided an ‘exit’ perspective on the participants and complements the data reported above. A third follow-up interview will also be carried out late November/early December in order to gauge what has happened to participants six months after the programme.

Self-ratings

All of the participants were asked to rate themselves on a one (low) to ten (high) scale with regard to their reading skills and self-confidence – a repeat of what they were asked at the beginning of the course. The average self-rating for reading skills was 7 (up from 5.5 at the beginning); the lowest self-ratings were 5 (two participants) and two had self-ratings of 9. The average self-rating for self-confidence was 8.75 (up from 5.6 at the beginning); there was one rating of 5 and three ratings of 10.

Difficulties in attending course

A few said that they had experienced some difficulties in attending the course due to reasons of sick children, other family crises, tangi and working shifts, but most of the interviewees said that they did not experience any difficulties. Talking with others associated with the course however provided another perspective on attendance. They reported that the course participants often had to grapple with extensive issues at home, ranging from major health crises of extended family members, financial difficulties and conflicts with government departments – in addition to everyday problems of sick children and household management. Despite these difficulties, attendance rates for the programme were very high (see below). One observer commented that “crisis is just part of their everyday life.”

Attendance patterns

Attendance patterns for the adult participants and their enrolled children are shown in the table below. The average attendance rate for the adults was 92% and five participants achieved 100%. The average attendance rate for the six enrolled children at the primary school was 97%, which was slightly up on their attendance rates over the previous six months (93%).

Adult attendance (%)	Child 's primary school attendance (%)	Child's attendance rate over previous 6 month period (%)
70		
77	99	98
100		
100	98	90
100		
88	93	87
88	98	99
100	96	*
95		
91		
100	99	*
Average 92%	Average 97%	Average 93%

- Previously attended kindergarten or another primary school.

Reasons for adult non-attendance included serious illness requiring hospitalisation, death of a family member, serious illness of parent, personal injury and 'the flu'. Only eight of the children's half-day absences were 'unexplained'.

Impact on parenting and family (2)¹⁸

All of the participants reported that they still had strong support from their families for their involvement and this support had steadily increased over the duration of the course. One person reported that her mother (who has been staying with her to help with childcare) said that she "won't go home until you finish the programme." Another said that her husband "does the tea and picks up the kids from kohanga now – we sort of help each other." A third person said that her husband was sceptical about her involvement at first ("you're wasting your time"), but now "they all support me." Her husband was taking a day off work in order to attend her graduation ceremony. About half of the group said that their children were concerned that they (parents) would no longer be at school once that the programme finished.

They all also reported that they felt that the programme had helped them in their parenting skills and improved relationships with their children. They were asked for specific examples of things that had changed or that they do differently now.

I've learnt to put things down – they (things) can wait, but she (daughter) can't. I don't yell at her so much. I used to just plonk her in front of TV, but now we read and so on. We've grown so close.

Just doing homework together. I read to them, which I never used to do. I understand their work now.

Having the course done at my children's school showed how they have all done at school, how they work with their teachers as individuals – also helping each and every one of them with their homework and knowing that they can all do it is a bonus for them and for me. It shows my children are keen to learn.

I have a very busy life now with work and study, but I still manage to fit in quality times with my children and family – enjoying it. A big improvement in my parenting skills (especially talking to them), communicating.

I have bonded with my children, every day looks more positive.

I understand my children more. Our learning routines have changed, we do homework together. My kids love having me around their school.

¹⁸ Data for this section came from interviews and also written sheets that some participants had written.

Our routines have changed. The two older kids are eager to do their homework, they do it together. They're full of questions, spend a lot more time together.

We understand each other; it's helped both of us – not just as a mother and daughter, but as a friend.

I get them into bed early now.

The difference is when I have homework we all sit down together, talk and discuss what we are doing and also we are all close and happy.

Changes they had observed in their children since being in the programme included:

Cool. I like it when we go home now. He used to take off to the park until 10 [o'clock] or so, but now he reads a book and works on his homework. He loves reading books, he reads different now, more confident. I really like going into his classroom.

It's been really helpful. Before he couldn't read, do his colours, count. But now he's amazing. When I read them out, he knows all of them now. The older ones, they feel good when I'm doing my homework. They come and watch and we ask each other. We share over talking every night.

Especially my son doing Intermediate maths. Sometimes my kids think I can't do it, but I look at it and work it out and they come back next day and say I'm right – "Wow Mum, you can do that!"

[Name] is getting on really well with her schooling. I was quite pleased with the comments from her teacher too. She [daughter] was pleased and said 'And you too, Mum!' It's changed her a lot, knowing she can come to me for her homework.

They've improved with me here, coming to school. I'm not allowed to wag a day!

Hasn't missed class, even when he's sick. He looks forward to PACTT.

She's come out of her shell. She's settled because of PACTT [kindergarten child]. She's speaking clearly about her feelings – she used to cry, but doesn't now. She's made a lot of friends, opened up, she's not shy.

Personal impact

The participants also talked about ways in which they felt the course had changed them as individuals.

It's given me a lot of self-confidence and learnt how to deal with things. I sit and do my homework now, so I don't get much time for my partner – he

says 'it gets a bit lonely'. So now we make times to go out for a meal or things and then Saturday and Sunday is family time!

I learnt a lot. I've done some courses before, but there was never enough time. These are very good teachers.

I understand how valuable education is for myself and others.

Maths was a downfall for me at school, but learning through this course helped me a lot. I learnt that having a good lecturer that's always there for me to ask questions, also to solve them.

I've achieved and found what my career I was after and looking for. I've conquered what I've always dreaded at school [maths] and I feel I've achieved.

I'm a better person all round. I'm doing something for my children and me – a role model.

My self-esteem, communication with the [school] teachers and headmistress. I've learnt how to do a CV, write an essay even though I'm not the brightest. Computers – I'd love to come back and get into maths, I need to do more.

Getting somewhere, getting the certificates. Just achieving – better than sitting at home.

As part of the feedback sheet, they were asked to list what were the most important things they had learnt in the programme.

Trust, respect, keep to the times, confident.

Confidence in myself, self-esteem and just how to understand my children more.

Spending time to read to my children. To support and encourage them to work hard in their schoolwork. Learn more about communications and maths and also parenting.

Overall assessment of the course

Again, there were only positive comments and assessments of the course.

I love it – learning tutors are excellent – they want you to succeed. It's not like back at school, they're 100% behind the work with you and work with you if you need more help.

I'd like to keep going – once you get going, you don't want to stop.

Excellent – I know where I'm going now. I don't care how long it takes me – better than staying at home!

I'm rapt. I've enjoyed every minute of it.

I've enjoyed it very well. What I've learnt, it's eye-opening for people like me who didn't have a good education. I recommend it for anyone, no matter what age you are.

I never thought I'd come back to school. I've got confidence to go further and it's brought me closer to my children.

It was a dream come true. I was thinking 'how can I go back to school?' It was a question mark before, but now I can go on.

The best thing I've done in a long time. It's been fun as well as learning something.

I never thought I'd come back to school, but now I've got the confidence to go further, it's brought me closer to my children and I'm a better person all round. I'm doing something for me – and my children, a role model.

Great. I'm feeling tired, but I'm not tired inside.

Concerns about the course

Specific concerns the participants mentioned about the course were “not long enough” (both in terms of overall duration and per week), the non-involvement of children not enrolled in the MFLP and inadequate time for some assessment.

Future ambitions and plans (2)

It is interesting to note that while the participants' future ambitions and plans had not changed significantly by the end of the course, they appeared less certain about their aims and occupational aspirations and appeared to be considering a wider range of options. A typical response was “I'm still thinking about becoming a primary teacher, but I also want to keep my options open.”

Feedback from teachers

All of the Bairds Mainfreight teachers who had a pupil enrolled in the programme completed a short questionnaire, detailing their feedback about its operation and perceived impact. Each MFLP child and parent spent approximately 40-60 minutes a week in PACTT over three sessions. Three thought the amount of time for PACTT was 'about right'. One commented, “The learning (parent and child) interaction required great concentration for both. Ten minutes focused time is big enough demand on a six year-old (quality vs. quantity).”

But two teachers thought that this amount of time was too short (one of these had only averaged 20 minutes a week), with one adding that, “they tend to stay longer.” Another commented, “Sometimes it was appropriate for the PACTT parent to stay on in class. This was really lovely, participating in our discussions and so on.” One suggested that the PACTT time should be varied during the weeks. All reported having no problems with ‘settling in’ with PACTT.

Overall evaluations of the PACTT for their pupils were very positive - 4.5 on a five point scale. Other general comments they made about PACTT included:

It is so rewarding for the parents to see what is going on in the class. It has so many positive effects – knowledge of the curriculum, PACTT parent expertise on the topics we are doing, PACTT parents can have better knowledge of how to help their child (in class and with homework etc.)

Vary PACTT throughout the week to immerse parent in a more ‘holistic’ view of classroom, i.e. in all aspects of learning. PACTT slotted in immediately into our daily routines. Acceptance from other children good, although, also noticed a certain ‘why not me?’ from non PACTT children.

My children loved having their mums come in. I really enjoyed having them come in so bright, bubbly and eager. The rest of the class also anticipated their arrival and them being in the room. We missed them when they didn’t come.

I will miss them next term!

Initial findings of impact on Rowandale participants

The 15 Rowandale participants were interviewed in early June, some four weeks into their course. The timing of these interviews was chosen so that the participants had experienced enough of the course to form an opinion about it, but also early enough to gather information about their opinions and experiences before these factors were influenced by the course. Follow-up interviews will be held near the end of the course to provide additional data, especially on the course’s impact. This second lot of data will be reported in the December report.

Recruitment of participants

The Rowandale site used similar recruitment strategies to those used at Baird Otara, including two open sessions at the primary school and the kindergarten. A total of 16 adult participants and their children enrolled initially at Rowandale, although this

number did not eventuate until the programme had been underway for several weeks. Like Bairds Otara, the recruitment of participants at Rowandale involved considerable work by project members. Asked how they first heard about the MFLP, the participants identified school/kindergarten teachers (7), the Mormon Church (4),¹⁹ the school/kindergarten newsletter (4), and “a friend” (1).

Characteristics

There are currently 14 participants in the Rowandale programme, one of whom is male.²⁰ Their ethnic groups are shown in Figure 4 below.

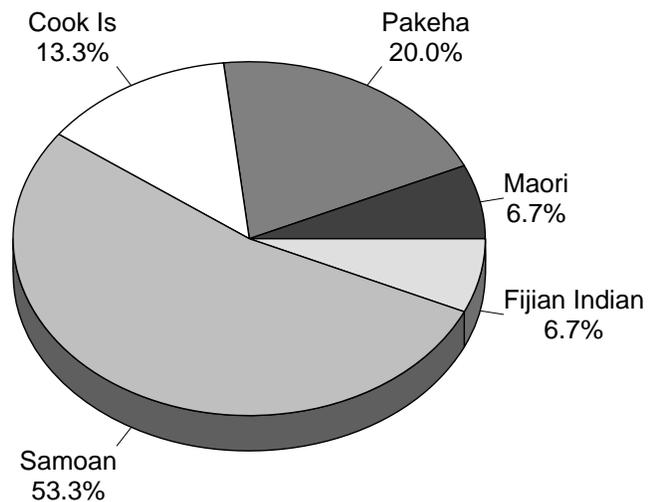


Figure 4 – Ethnicity of Rowandale participants

Their average age is 38 years; seven of the enrolled children are attending kindergarten and seven are at the primary school. The participants have an average of 4.2 children, ranging from one to six children per participant. The great majority have lived in Manurewa for a long period; the average stay is 12 years and only three have lived there for less than two years.²¹

There was a wide variation in their school leaving ages. The ages ranged from 14 (3), and 15 (1), through 16 (2) to 17 (5), 18 (1) and 19 (2), with an average of 16.4

¹⁹ The Church had been involved initially in the planning of the Rowandale site, but has been less involved in 2003. They have still been a valuable source of publicity for the MFLP, as reflected in the number of participants identifying them as the prime source of information (and active encouragement in several cases).

²⁰ As with the Bairds Otara, all participants are reported as females to ensure anonymity.

²¹ One of this programme’s aims was to reduce transiency, but this does not appear to be an issue among this intake of participants.

years. One person had returned to school as an adult student when she was 20. All of those who left school at 17+ years had attended schools in the Pacific. Of the fourteen, only two had gained school exam qualifications (one School Certificate and one with University Entrance). When asked to rate their schooling experience overall on a 1 (low) to 10 (high) scale, their average rating was 6.9, with no ratings below 5, three of 8 and one of 10.

Five of the fourteen had attended some form of post-school education (predominantly Training Opportunities-type courses and some workplace programmes). Over half (8) said that they had been involved in the school/kindergarten prior to enrolling in the MFLP – mainly as parent-helpers.

Self-ratings

Each adult participant was asked whether they “had difficulties with any of the following – maths, reading, spelling, English and writing?” If they responded ‘yes’ they were then asked to rate their level of difficulty on a 1 (considerable difficulty) to 10 (no/few difficulties) scale. Three said that they had no difficulties with any of these areas. Of the eleven who said they had some difficulties with one or more of these areas, their responses and ratings were as follows:

- maths – 4 participants (average rating of 4.9)
- spelling – 3 participants (average rating of 3.6)
- reading – 1 participant (rating of 5)
- English/spelling – 1 participant (rating of 5)
- Writing – 1 participant (rating of 3)
- reading/spelling/writing – 1 participant (rating of 5).

They were then asked how much reading they did and what types of material they normally read at the start of the course. Three said they hardly read at all, five said they read “a bit” (usually newspapers and women’s magazines) and six said they read “quite a bit” (including books, magazines and the Bible). Only three said that they did not used to read stories to their children before enrolling in the course.

Finally, they were asked to rate their feelings of self-confidence at the beginning of the course on a 1 (low) to 10 (high) scale. The group clearly split into three groups; at the bottom end, there was a group of six (one with a rating of 1, two of 2, three of 3),

two in the middle (ratings of 5 and 6) and then a third group towards the top (three with a rating of 8 and three of 10). The average rating was 5.6

Initial motivations and expectations²²

The participants gave a wide range of responses when asked what had motivated them to enrol in the Rowandale programme. Essentially the responses fell into three broad categories:

Personal motivations

- A 'second-chance' (2)
- "To improve my English (1)
- "I want to try things out for myself" (1)
- "It's the right time in my life" (1)
- "To get WINZ off my back" (1)
- "It's for me - and for my kids" (1)
- "It's boring at home" (1)

Family/children motivations

- "I want to keep in touch with what's going on in schools" (3)
- To be able to help their kids (3)
- "I want greater involvement with my child (1)
- "I want to model education things for my kids (1)

Characteristics of the course

- "It's free" (3)

Asked what their expectations were for the course, the responses included:

- parenting skills ("new ways of handling things") (4)
- a qualification (4)
- improved study skills and habits (3)
- greater self-confidence (2)
- a better understanding of what schools do (1)
- "unsure" (1).

²² Not all of the responses in the following sections always total 14 as some participants gave more than one response or none for some questions.

Assessment of the Rowandale programme to date

June interviews (approximately four weeks into the programme)

While a number commented that they had found the course hard-going at the start, all fourteen participants were extremely positive in their assessment of the programme to date –

I just love it

I've learnt heaps

I really enjoy it – good friends and a good teacher.”

Asked if they had experienced any difficulties in attending the programme, most said that they hadn't. Five (especially single parents) said that getting to school on time was often difficult; one had difficulties around working night shifts and one had experienced on-going health difficulties that made attendance hard.

When they were asked what they had found most challenging about the course to date, their responses included:

- “Just taking it all in” – (3)
- English (3)
- Speaking in front of a group (3)
- Learning to work with others (especially different ethnic groups) (2)
- Being challenged about long-established behaviours (1) [“some things I'm learning to go against what I thought were right in my culture like yelling and so on – now the words I use make a difference”].

Finally, the participants were asked what was “the best aspect of the course so far.” This question produced a wide range of responses:

- Being able to help their children (4)
- Meeting and working with others (especially from different ethnic groups) (4)
- “Fun” (2)
- “Studying hard” (1)
- “Learning new things” (1)
- “Others (especially her sister-in-law) noticing changes in me” (1)
- “Being able to do it with my younger kids” (1)

- “A better vision of how things are” (1)
- “Sharing advice among each other” (1)
- “Making me think about things more” (1).

Impact on participants and family²³

Although the course was less than a fifth completed at the time of the first interview, the participants readily identified ways in which the course had affected them. They made comments about their personal development as learners and people

It was a bit slow to begin with, but it's a lot better now. My vocab has improved 'cos I'm using my brain and not stagnating at home. I'm getting it all back.

It's making me think about things I've taken for granted.

It's fun, mixing with other races – I only normally mix with other [ethnic group].

It's working with my family – and finding time for myself.

and many insightful observations about themselves as parents:

Great – instead of sitting at home. I used to lose my temper, now I know I need to listen to her and I know I have to control myself – they always used to get a hiding, and not a little one either.

Talking and listening with my kids, it's very useful.

The way my parents raised me, you do everything immediately – avoiding yellings and hidings – that's what I thought was the way to do it.

There are some things in the course that if I had known ten years ago, she [older daughter] wouldn't have got into trouble.

I like it 'cos sometimes I yell and smack, 'cos I talk to them over and over. It's a big change for me. My four-year-old never used to listen to me, but I'm making progress now.

Half of the group said that their children were experiencing problems with their schoolwork (reading [2], generally [2], maths and English [1], English and speaking [1], listening [1]) and a similar number reported that they had difficulties helping their

²³ All the participants reported that they had received strong support from their families (especially older children in several cases) to attend the programme.

children with their homework.²⁴ Irrespective of whether their children were having difficulties, most of the participants reported that they now felt better able to help their children with their schoolwork generally.

I know what I can do now that helps my child excel in their subject. It's all about communication – you know?

I really enjoy it – friends and a good teacher. It's really helped me and my family with their homework and how to cope with them. No more yelling and that.

Since being at school, things have changed. I want to know what they do [maths procedures etc.], 'cos all my kids have struggled with maths.

Enlightening. It's opened my mind up to how they [kids] learn. Now I watch what they do now, rather than yell at them to clean it [painting] up.

Amazing. Ways to help my kids at home. I don't have patience – after coming to the course I know what I have been doing to them.

Future ambitions and plans

Finally, the participants were asked what they hoped to be doing in five years time:

- a teacher (4)
- a good job (3)
- helping/working with young people (2)
- further education (2)
- community worker (1)
- self-employed (1)
- a social science degree (1)

When asked if they wanted to add anything to her comments, two participants added these comments:

It's a bonus being here at school, I've no problem being here, I'm very comfortable being here.

I want to thank the people who got me to this course. They opened my eyes.

²⁴ Several of those said that they had no difficulties at present pointed out that their children were still very young and they could easily cope with it at present.

Impact on partner institutions²⁵

Expectations of the MFLP

All of the partner institutions (kindergartens, schools and tertiary providers) were interviewed and asked what their motivations and expectations were for being involved in the MFLP. The kindergartens indicated that they became involved because they wanted the following outcomes for their parents and children:

- greater valuing and better understanding of what early childhood education is about
- changes in the children's self-esteem and peer relationships
- improved transition to school
- increased awareness of opportunities for both parents and children
- greater awareness of parenting strategies and knowledge – “knowing how to work with children”
- greater support from the parents for the kindergartens' work
- making a contribution to the broader community through the parents.

Expectations for the kindergartens themselves included:

- increased number of parents involved in the kindergarten activities
- increased enrolments.

The primary school partners' expectations included:

- improving parenting skills (“parents want the best for their kids, but don't always know how”)
- to increase children's achievement
- increasing motivation, confidence and self-esteem of parents (“which must then have an impact on what happens in the family”)
- showing parents as learners for role modelling
- increased involvement in school activities (“I've watched other schools try (and fail) to involve parents, but this looked like a good option”). The comment

²⁵ Responses in this section are reported by institution type (e.g. kindergarten) and not individually in order to preserve respondents' anonymity. A more detailed discussion of impacts on tertiary partners will be included in the final report in December.

was also made that most parents have had negative experiences of school and that it is difficult for schools to overcome these attitudes.

Perceived impact to date

Although only one programme has been completed at the time of the interviews, the staff of both kindergartens felt they were already seeing positive benefits as a result of the programmes. These benefits included:

- increased enrolments (of the five children in one programme, two had been enrolled previously and the other three were new enrolments; one kindergarten now has a waiting list where it previously had vacancies)
- improved attendance of the children (of the five children in one of the programmes only one was seen as a 'regular attender', the others were "sporadic"; all are now seen as regular attenders)
- better communication between parents and the kindergarten staff – "they are more articulate and involved in talking to the teachers"
- greater awareness of what the kindergarten is trying to achieve – "it's opened their eyes that we are more than just about playing"
- parents are more supportive of the kindergarten because, (the teachers felt) they better understood their programme
- greater self-confidence of individuals; "they (parents) are more confident in expressing themselves [to us]"
- more involvement in activities such as fund-raising
- better relationships generally with parents – "they're more centred and focussed."

When asked if they had noticed any reactions from the participating adults' partners, the staff at one kindergarten said they had noticed that some fathers are now picking up the children and one partner has enrolled in a tertiary course. From what they saw, all of the partners were very supportive.

A comment was made by one of the kindergarten teachers that "family literacy is great, because it's basically an extension of kindergarten philosophy."

Both schools also reported a range of changes:

- parents being seen as ‘heroes’ for their learning endeavours
- increased physical presence of participants, their partners and relatives around the school (including school assemblies and in the staff-room)
- a feeling of becoming a “learning community” and a “sense of achievement” with the participants
- increased knowledge about the enrolled children and their siblings because of the parents’ close involvement – “we know so much more about the kids”
- closer links between the kindergarten and new entrant classes

All of the participating kindergartens and schools have commented positively on the relationships that have developed with each other as a result of MFLP – “we now know their staff first hand and the sorts of things they are trying to do in their programmes.” Although the kindergartens and schools are physically close on both sites, all the feedback indicated that they had never had as close a relationship as they now do.

One occasion that epitomised the impact of the MFLP was the assembly in the Bairds Mainfreight Hall on April 9th to award the first lot of certificates achieved by the adult participants. On hearing that Manukau Institute of Technology was about to award the certificates, a Bairds Mainfreight staff member suggested that the event be held in front of all the primary school and kindergarten pupils and staff. The event became a full-scale graduation ceremony, with the adult participants as the centre of attention (comments after the event indicated that most had never experienced anything comparable ever in their lives). Children of the participants were clearly delighted to see their parents graduating as shown by one class sending their own certificate to the Family Literacy room after the ceremony expressing how proud they felt of their achievements. A morning tea for the participants and their guests completed the morning’s celebrations.

Issues arising for partner institutions

Overall the relationships between partner institutions on both sites have been very positive. There have been occasional issues arising from the planning and running of the programme however, including:

- the workload involved, especially in the beginning stages
- being unnecessarily 'caught up' in trivial issues
- difficulties in co-ordinating timetables and routines
- poor time management
- inadequate communication between groups ("partly because we have different methods and standards")
- uncertainty over some groups' role in the programme
- problems around informing potential students
- funding implications for resources.

Issues arising in the MFLP

As in all pilot projects, the MFLP has given rise to a range of issues in its development phase. These issues are outlined below and how they have been resolved or minimised by project members. This discussion builds on pages 10-15 of the initial report (Benseman, 2002) that identified issues arising from the initial development stage of the project.

Funding of the tertiary education component

From the outset, the MFLP was planned to fit as much as possible within existing funding structures so that future family literacy development would not be dependent on one-off grants. The most difficult element of the programme in this regard has been the funding of the adult educator position. It has required a tertiary provider to fund a full-time teacher (approx. 25 hours contact time) off-site for a minimum of 20 weeks in the first instance, and later extending to 40 weeks over the full year.²⁶

The tertiary education component for both MFLP sites to date has come from large tertiary institutions. In order to access existing mainstream funding sources however, both institutions were invited to locate the MFLP within the parameters of an existing, pre-planned course. In the case of Manukau Institute of Technology, this has been a bridging education course and with AUT, it has been an introduction to early childhood certificate.

In both cases, these courses were used as the best options available because there appears to be no other funding sources that would enable the programme staff to either pre-plan their own curriculum or develop it in conjunction with the learners over the course of the programme, which is what was originally envisaged for MFLP. In both cases, the content of the course structures that have been used has certainly matched the intent of the family literacy philosophy reasonably well, not least because of the willingness of the teachers to adapt and modify their teaching to the needs of the students.

²⁶ MIT reports that current government funding levels require that tertiary institutions charge fees to cover operational costs and that 16 students is the minimum number necessary to deliver a 'fiscally neutral' Foundation Education programme at MIT. Supplementary income for MFLP has had to be sourced by COMET for fees.

It is interesting to speculate the degree to which using existing Early Childhood and Bridging course structures has influenced the two MFLPs and how they have operated. For example, to what extent have the students been selected for the programmes in keeping with bridging/early childhood anticipated outcomes? Given the 'dual' themes of Family Literacy and Early Childhood/Bridging in the publicity material, which did the participants actually respond to? In other words, to what degree has the need to access funding in the form of existing courses shaped or even diverted the ideals originally envisaged for MFLP?

The answer to this speculation at this point is probably, "to some degree," but not to the overall detriment of the programme. For example, one teacher noted that when she moved on to course content that was not directly linked to the participants she detected a fall-off in their degree of interest and motivation. Certainly, it would be interesting to have at least one future site where the funding was not tied to a specific course and monitor what effect such a 'clean slate' had on the content and tenor of the course. Another alternative would involve the planning of a specific family literacy course that was then put through CUAP, NZQA or NZPPC procedures for formal approval in its own right.

Recommendation: that advice be sought on the availability of alternative funding sources that would enable the MFLP to run at least one site on an 'open curriculum' basis where the content was based solely on the learning needs of the learners involved.

'Ownership' of the MFLP

The issue of 'ownership' is probably inevitable in a programme involving a number of institutions involved in various roles. Each institution has its own legal requirements, administrative procedures and need to promote its work, some of which mesh readily and some that don't. For example, it is important that any promotional material or public presentations gives due recognition to all participating institutions (including COMET) and not convey the impression that the programme is confined to only some of the partner institutions.

This issue was signalled in the initial evaluation report (Benseman, 2003, p. 11-12) and has been consciously debated and discussed within the MFLP Reference Group and elsewhere. At this point in the programme, the issue has probably eased somewhat as mutual understanding develops and common procedures evolve, but

will probably remain an issue for some time yet. The development of Memoranda of Understandings between COMET and partner institutions has been an important step in this respect (a sample MOU is included in Appendix D). There has been some feedback from partners about the lack of clarity on the outputs required of COMET by Ministry contracts.

The Executive Office of COMET has prepared a substantial discussion document around the issue of ownership and is appended to this report for people wishing to examine this issue in more depth (see Appendix E).

Recommendations: that explicit negotiations and policies in the form of Memoranda of Understanding be negotiated and reviewed periodically to clarify the roles and responsibilities of participating institutions in family literacy programmes

That the services schedule of the COMET contract be shared with partners.

Timing of the ‘start-up’

There has been considerable pressure to launch the two pilot programmes in keeping with Ministry of Education contract requirements, but also fitting within the annual timetables of the tertiary providers. In the case of Bairds Otara, this pressure meant trying to start the programme in late January. This start date resulted in considerable pressure to finalise administrative structures, prepare the family literacy teaching space and recruit suitable participants all over a period of time where many people are on annual holiday and some services are difficult to access. While a late January/early February start is a logical time in terms of kindergarten, school and polytechnic timetables, this time is difficult in terms of starting a pilot programme. Even if it had been possible to start the recruitment process in the preceding November/December, the holidays would probably have made for some difficulties, as people can change plans over the intervening period in unforeseen ways (such as changes in employment).

The fact that the programme started on time is of considerable credit to the hard work put in by key project members, often at personal inconvenience. The generous input from a range of people during this period reflected the commitment and support of the participating institutions.

The Rowandale site start-up was also delayed for a number of reasons beyond the original intended date. The longer lead-in time to an April date meant that while things were also hectic prior to the launch, they at least occurred at a time when normal institutional routines were operating and services were more readily available. Although the Rowandale programme is already clearly distinctive, there is also little doubt that they benefited from the pioneering efforts at Bairds.

Recommendation: that a lead-in time of at least 8-10 weeks (not including annual holiday periods) be allowed before the actual launch of new family literacy programme sites. Also, that a detailed planning process documentation be developed to help future programme planners.

Recruitment of adult educator appointments

As the research literature review in the first report showed (Benseman, 2002, p. 7), the adult educator is a key component in making family literacy programmes work successfully. A successful adult educator needs a wide range of skills to fit the multi-faceted requirements that are involved in a family literacy programme. Fortunately, the MFLP has been successful in locating two very skilled practitioners who have considerable experience in such areas as special education, early childhood education and parent education.

Locating and securing the adult educators has not been always straightforward however for a number of reasons.²⁷ Because a 'family literacy educator' is an unknown occupation in New Zealand, it is not readily recognised by people who may have appropriate skills. Secondly, the short-term nature of the contracts offered to teach the courses mean that potential people with appropriate skills in permanent positions are reluctant to take on short-term employment with no future guarantee of employment.²⁸ Thirdly, because the employers for the positions are a polytechnic and a university, they also bring their own requirements into the mix of issues – for example in the case of AUT, the requirement of a bachelor degree, if not a masters, excludes many people in a field where many experienced practitioners do not have this level of qualification.²⁹

²⁷ Locating an appropriate programme co-ordinator for the MFLP overall was also not without its difficulties as was reported in the first evaluation report (Benseman, 2002, p. 12).

²⁸ Based on informal feedback.

²⁹ MFLP has operated an overall policy of employing staff with requisite qualifications for their respective educational sectors.

In the case of Bairds Otara, the involvement of the Manukau Institute of Technology meant that they were able to access a wide range of educators in Foundation Studies and other kindred departments, which meant that they did not have to advertise the position publicly. With AUT, the position was advertised publicly through normal educational channels and the successful applicant was recruited outside project members' networks. Recruitment for future programmes may become easier as the MFLP becomes better known and interest in it grows.

Recommendation: that adult educator positions are advertised widely and all project members actively publicise the positions through their networks. Optimal employment conditions should be offered to ensure high quality applicants.

Selection of adult students

A fundamental question for any educational programme evaluation is whether the recruited participants match the intended, or target, population. The original intention of the MFLP was to recruit adults with poor literacy skills and their children. In the process of getting the programme underway, a number of other influences have come into play that have probably influenced the nature of the student group to some degree.

The first influence has come from the need to locate the MFLP within an existing tertiary course. This requirement has meant that while the partner tertiary providers have opted into MFLP as a family literacy programme by agreeing to participate as programme partners, they still need to satisfy the various requisites and agendas associated with the course being used. For example, the concern that a potential student will cope with the academic level of the courses which are offered at Levels 3 and 4 (with a possible pressure therefore to not accept applicants with low or very low literacy skills).

A second influence has been the various funding sources. While the Ministry of Education has the most obvious literacy agenda in funding the MFLP, WINZ's intentions are more diverse. Firstly they clearly have a greater concern supporting people who are registered with them for a benefit and have less interest for example in potential participants where a partner may be working, but the household still has a very low income. Their interest is also primarily about work outcomes rather than literacy *per se*. Gains in literacy skill may be valued, but probably don't count as much if they are not accompanied at some point by work outcomes. On the other

hand, it is possible to have positive work outcomes after the programme with minimal or no literacy gains, which is likely to be an acceptable outcome for WINZ.

These competing agendas are a simple fact of life for the MFLP because of the diversity of agencies involved and do not necessarily detract from the original intentions of the programme. It is important however to have each of these agendas transparent to all of the partner organisations, rather than assumed or implicit. The debate over what the programme goals are is a related issue and needs to be complemented by an agreement over the criteria for selecting students. While some criteria are explicit now and (e.g. having a child enrolled at the kindergarten or school) are reasonably straightforward, others are less so. It would be valuable for these other criteria to be made more explicit and transparent so that there is a common understanding across all the programme partners. The criteria could cover a range of elements (which is appropriate given the broad dimensions of family literacy) and applicants would not necessarily need to meet all criteria. It is probable that applicants will not meet all of the various criteria, but they should at least meet a reasonable number of them.

My initial interviews with the Bairds Otara adult participants showed that while all of them have had fairly limited and/or negative schooling experiences, at least a third appear to have quite reasonable levels of literacy skill and probably only about half would approximate the types of learners found in conventional adult literacy programmes. For example when asked to self-rate their literacy skills on a 1 (low) to 10 (high) scale, their average rating was 5.5 (usually in relation to one specific area such as maths) and only one student rating a 2, two a 3 and one a 4. While these ratings may appear slightly higher than what may be found in a conventional literacy programme, there is no doubt that the participants were appropriate candidates for the course in terms of other factors such as having children who are struggling with their schoolwork, difficult home situations, poor self-images, health issues, employment difficulties and so forth. Certainly none would have fitted readily into any conventional tertiary programme before attending MFLP. Because pilot programmes often recruit the most capable applicants simply because they are the most confident of the potential applicants, it will be interesting to see how subsequent intakes compare with the first group of participants.

It is important to realise that family literacy is a multi-faceted programme that seeks to address a range of issues ranging from poor literacy skills to various social skills.

The criteria for selecting participants should therefore also be reasonably open across a range of variables and not be tied too readily to any single criterion.

Recommendation: that the partner institutions at each MFLP site develop an explicit and transparent list of criteria and procedures to be used in the selection of participants.

Synchronising of partners' administration/timetables

The MFLP sites have involved three mainly partner organisations – early childhood centres, primary schools and tertiary institutions. Each institution has not only their own 'culture,' but also their own regulations and administrative procedures. One example of this feature and its implications for planning is the issue of timetabling. Synchronising starting-times, breaks and PACTT periods has required careful planning and organising throughout this project.

Again however, the overall management structure provided by COMET and the goodwill and commitment of the partner institutions have been key in minimising this issue and resolving difficulties. In particular, the roles of the Regional Co-ordinator and the site committees have been central to achieving this result.

Recommendation: that the management and operations committees continue as central to MFLP to ensure that administrative issues are recognised and resolved quickly.

Duration of participants' participation in MFLP

It is inevitable in any programme that the question arises about how long participants should stay in a programme. Not surprisingly, there are obvious variations among the participants. Some participants are clearly keen to move on, while others are cautiously optimistic about being able to continue in the MFLP beyond the initial course. At the Bairds Otara site, the programme has included counselling the participants about future options available at Manukau Institute of Technology and sessions on vocational guidance have outlined other options elsewhere. At the time of writing it appears that only a very small number of participants would opt for continuing in the programme if this option were possible. Initial discussions around this issue with project members indicate that the main hindrance for this option is the financial support, which would need to be negotiated with WINZ.

Even those who are keen to move on to other options outside MFLP at Otara (mainly Bridging courses at Manukau Institute of Technology) have expressed considerable interest in being able to continue at least some elements of the MFLP, especially some form of PACTT, which they see as both valuable and viable while studying as Manukau Institute of Technology students. The MFLP is currently exploring options for how this option can be developed and the means to finance it. The desire to continue PACTT is undoubtedly testimony to the perceived value of MFLP by the participants. It has also been suggested that any 'follow-up' version of PACTT could also be designed to allow for the inclusion of a different sibling from the one that has been officially enrolled in the MFLP (see below). For those who are going on to other educational programmes, there is also an issue of childcare being provided while they study. Many want to continue their child's enrolment at the kindergarten, but this is not possible under the kindergarten's present licensing arrangements. Other options are currently being explored.

Recommendation: that MFLP develop a policy that details criteria for participants who may need to continue in the MFLP beyond the initial course and that appropriate means be secured for their continuation to occur.

Identification of the child participant in programme

As with most American family literacy programmes, the MFLP has required that each participating parent officially nominate one child to be the focus of the various family literacy activities such as PACTT. The reasons for nominating of a single child in the programme are not readily available in the literature, but appear to be done for a number of reasons. These reasons include the minimising of administrative arrangements (changing the children in the programme would necessitate constant re-arranging timetables etc.) and the assumption that involving multiple siblings would 'dilute' the impact of the programme. The assumption is that the impact of the programme on the parent and the nominated child will inevitably filter down to other siblings, largely due to changes in the adult's parenting skills.

Feedback from the Bairds Otara participants however has indicated that many of the parents are uncomfortable with having only one child involved directly in the programme.³⁰ They reported that this arrangement had led to a slight degree of friction and envy by other siblings when they were told that they were not allowed to

³⁰ It is not clear to what extent this is an issue with the Rowandale participants at this stage.

participate in the programme. The parents said that while they accepted that this arrangement was part of the overall MFLP package, they felt somewhat uncomfortable about its implications in their families and urged that the issue be taken up for discussion and possible alternative strategies be developed that would enable greater inclusion of other siblings. It is worth noting that the development of Whanau PACTT is a positive development to involve other members of the participants' whanau, but this only occurs once or twice a semester.

Recommendation: that options be explored that enable non-nominated siblings to participate in the MFLP at some stage.

Variations in adult learners

The adult participants in both programmes vary considerably in terms of their previous educational experiences and academic skill levels. Both intakes tend to fall into three main categories. Approximately a third are quite capable and lack confidence in their abilities initially, but then increasingly come to expect to be challenged as the course progresses; a second third also gain steadily in confidence and skill as the course progresses, but not as readily as the first group; another third struggle noticeably not only because they lack confidence, but also because their basic literacy skills (including English language difficulties) mean that their rate of progress is slower than the other two groups.

They all share a lack of confidence in their own learning abilities at the beginning of the courses. Many comment that they are “feeling a bit rusty and need to get the brain ticking over again” after long absences from organised learning. Once they have gained sufficient confidence (usually after only a few weeks in some cases), the differences within the group tend to exacerbate, with the more capable learners gaining momentum in their learning, while others struggle with their progress in comparison.

Variations in learning speed are not unique to family literacy. It is a constant challenge to all teachers to constantly ensure that those who readily cover course content are challenged while always ensuring that others struggling with the content are supported sufficiently to ensure success also.

[No specific recommendation is made in regard to this issue; it is included to acknowledge that it is an issue and can be included in future discussions within MFLP]

Additional elements of MFLP

As with all programmes, some elements of the MFLP have proceeded in a very positive way and have not resulted in 'issues' to be resolved. In order that other prospective providers can learn from these lessons, the following section therefore details some additional elements worthy of note in the MFLP.

Role of a lead agency

Developing and running a family literacy programme is a complex undertaking and this is particularly true of a pilot project. This project has originated, been scoped and initially planned by COMET. While all of the various partner institutions have played an increasingly important and involved role in the development of the MFLP, COMET's role has continued to be important throughout. Both the Chief Executive and especially the Regional Co-ordinator have had considerable input, including strategic planning, on-going liaison with funding bodies, government departments and other interested organisations, financial administration, publicity, logistical management, professional development and nuts-and-bolts problem-solving. Many of these activities are not always readily apparent, but are nonetheless essential in making the project function and prosper. If the MFLP is to be expanded into other areas, the role of a lead agency should be central to the process and duly recognised.

Support from partner institutions

Because there is a range of organisations and institutions involved in the funding, administration and actual teaching of the programmes, there is a constant need to ensure that everything is planned fully, that participating groups are kept informed and events are carried out in a transparent, co-ordinated manner. The importance of this factor has been illustrated on the few occasions when there has been a breakdown of communications resulting in a degree of dissatisfaction and friction.

The success of the MFLP to date is due at least in part to the support of all the participating groups involved in the two sites, ranging from classroom teachers of MFLP participants through to administrators and support staff. These people's support and commitment have been essential in getting the project up and running successfully.

The professional development days on February 11th, 12th and April 7th were invaluable by giving everyone, including the school and kindergarten teachers involved in the programme, an opportunity to engage with other participants and gain considerable exposure to the MFLP. Those who attended these sessions were enthusiastic about having this opportunity and commented on the usefulness of understanding the MFLP in greater depth.

Links into key networks

As a new programme development, family literacy does not fit readily into conventional educational moulds. Recruiting a Co-ordinator (see first evaluation report) and adult educators (as discussed earlier in this report) for example is not straightforward, but the MFLP's strong network links across all educational sectors has been a valuable asset in resolving these difficulties. These networks operate within the two sites (e.g. when recruiting the participants), among MFLP and COMET staff members and within the MFLP Reference Group. Having a diverse range of representation on the Reference Group in particular has been invaluable in readily accessing information, contacts and resources at various times.

Physical facilities

Schools are fundamentally designed for children. Bringing adults on to school sites as learners therefore can bring with it considerable difficulties. These difficulties are exacerbated when many of the adult participants associate schools with personal dislike and failure. It is important therefore that family literacy programmes are able to provide a welcoming and adult-appropriate physical space for the adult students.

Both sites of the MFLP have been very successful in this respect. While a classroom on the periphery of the Bairds Otara site was considered initially, a very central classroom adjacent to the library and the kindergarten was finally chosen. All the participants have rated this site very positively and its central, prominent location within the school has clearly helped raise the profile of the programme. The classroom was offered by one of the teachers, who moved her class to another location – a move that is indicative of the commitment of the school to having the programme on site. The Rowandale classroom was initially planned to be at the local Mormon church site, which provoked some debate because of its perceived lack of neutrality (Benseman, 2002, p. 13). This option was not pursued however and Rowandale School has been able to allocate one of its classrooms, which is also centrally located. Both classrooms have been equipped with reasonable kitchen

facilities, which have been invaluable in helping build an 'adult environment' on a daily basis and an appropriate venue for course events with families.

Physical facilities are easily overlooked, but the MFLP experience has shown that when appropriate spaces are created they are a valuable component in creating a suitable learning environment for the programme to occur.

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Appendix A - A brief timeline of The Manukau Family Literacy Programme (MFLP) to date

2001

February: COMET's Manukau Literacy Taskforce identified family literacy as a key potential area of work for the city's population

September: COMET hosted seminar on family literacy with Bonnie Lash Freeman from the US National Center for Family Literacy as guest speaker. Bonnie visited a number of locations around New Zealand

2002

January: COMET prepared a proposal for the Ministry of Education to fund family literacy programmes in Manukau City

March: COMET contracted by the Ministry of Education to prepare the infrastructure for two pilot family literacy projects in 2003

April: Bernardine Vester, Executive Officer of COMET included family literacy visits as part of her Eisenhower Fellowship to the US

May: Government budget included specific funding for family literacy programmes
- unsuccessful advertising of co-ordinator position

July: Robin Houliker appointed as Manukau Family Literacy Programme co-ordinator; John Benseman of The University of Auckland appointed as the project evaluator

September/October: Robin Houliker visited the US for family literacy familiarisation and training, courtesy of National Center for Family Literacy; she was accompanied by Corinne Hansell (Ministry of Education) to help ensure alignment with existing Ministry initiatives in Manukau; scoping of options and proposals by Regional Co-ordinator

September: public seminar to publicise the project and call for expressions of interest in participating in the programme

October: extensive briefings by the Co-ordinator about family literacy begun with government departments and other interested bodies

November: Bairds Mainfreight/MIT and Rowandale/Manurewa West Kindergarten chosen as the initial sites for programmes starting in early 2003; Mountain View chosen to start mid-2003, pending availability of funding; planning for a February 2003 start underway

December: detailed planning continued; start dates of late January for the Bairds Otara and April for the Rowandale programme. WINZ agrees to provide funding for the first pilot programme at Bairds Otara to ensure that participants pay no fees. COMET's Family Literacy Reference Group established and meets for the first time

2003

January: recruitment for both programmes start

February 10: first pilot programme started at Bairds Otara with MIT, Bairds Kindergarten and Bairds Mainfreight Primary School; Rowandale site seeks tertiary partner

February 11/12: first MFLP professional development workshop

February 28: briefing of Minister of Education re MFLP

March: AUT confirmed as tertiary partner for Rowandale site

April 7: second MFLP professional development workshop held

May 12: second pilot programme started at Rowandale Primary School in association with MIT and Manurewa West Independent Kindergarten

June 27: first Baird Otara programme finishes

July 1: official opening of MFLP by Minister of Education at Bairds Otara and Rowandale sites

July 28: second intake of students for Bairds Otara site due to start

August 7: MFLP Second Step programme due to start for first MFLP graduates

Appendix B – Papers written based on the MFLP to date

- Benseman, J., Houlker, R. & Vester, B. (2003). Breaking the mould: the development of a family literacy programme in Manukau. Paper accepted for the NZARE/AARE Conference, Auckland, November 29 - December 3.
- Houlker, R., Vester, B. & Benseman, J. (2003, 26 June). Shared perspectives: Parent and Child Together Time PACTT. Paper presented at the Joined up services: linking together for children and families, Fifth Child and Family Policy Conference, Dunedin.
- Vester, B., Benseman, J. & Houlker, R. (2003, 26 June). *Partnership and ownership: perspectives from the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes*. Paper presented at the Joined up services: linking together for children and families, Fifth Child and Family Policy Conference, Dunedin.

Appendix C - Shared perspectives: Parent and child time together (PACTT)



Robin Houlker, Bernardine Vester and John Benseman

A paper prepared for the 5th Child and Family Policy Conference, Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin, 26 – 28 June 2003.

ABSTRACT

This paper describes PACTT as a component of the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes. It identifies the particular adaptations to the original concept made by the participants in the first pilot programmes. Responses of parents and teachers to this component of the programme are reported. The planning framework for PACTT is described. Moves to sustain the PACTT component beyond the programme are highlighted. The paper identifies indicators that might be useful in assessing the value of PACTT for improving child learning and family function, and points to research activities which may support overseas assessments of PACTT as an important tool for creating healthy intergenerational relationships and preventing social services interventions.

About PACTT

Parent and Child Time Together (PACTT) is one component of the four components in the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes.

This component is designed as an opportunity for parents and children to interact together as a family unit. The focus is on intergenerational interaction. It is supported by the family literacy programme teachers, who help the parents support their children's learning through meaningful activities, including play.

The model for this has come from the research work done in the USA with the National Centre for Family Literacy, and from our own best practice searches

(Benseman, 2002). The US component is called PACT. In New Zealand, we have incorporated the complete title – Parent and Child Time Together – into PACTT.

The philosophy of PACTT is that the child's interests and preferences will drive activities. PACTT time can take place in the early childhood centre or school classroom, or at any other venue according to the focus of the PACTT session. While PACTT may not be very long, the emphasis is on regularity.

Enhancing and enriching the child-parent relationship is the primary goal. In summary, PACTT is:

- Regularly scheduled
- One-on-one time for the children with their parents
- Child-centred

PACTT will reinforce for parents that play is legitimate learning. Parents learn to observe their child's development, learn how to praise and encourage, and put into practice literacy development strategies that they have learned or observed during their visits to classrooms and early childhood environments.

The importance of engaging parents in children's emergent literacy has been well supported in many research reports, including in the Report of the Literacy Taskforce (1999, p 24). Smith and Elley (1997, p 10) also note the influence of parents in the development of child literacy skills, particularly in linking the informal learning of home with school-based learning:

Literacy is not a commodity to be transmitted to the child when she walks through the school gate. Instead, literacy already exists in the child's world at home, although the form it takes may differ from the one she encounters at school.

Intergenerational programmes or interventions must take this difference in form into account.

Planning for PACTT – the pilot experience

The implementation of PACTT as a new concept was challenging for the teachers involved in the programme. We needed to think about having a planned introduction at various levels. The steps included:

1. The regional co-ordinator met with all staff both at the schools and at the kindergartens as the programme was launched; and then again immediately prior to PACTT being implemented at each site. It was a helpful strategy to ensure the teachers understood that PACTT was not about parents coming into the learning environment and “teaching” their children; but rather about supporting the child’s learning interest at that time.
2. Both the early childhood teacher and one of the primary teachers spent time in the class of the enrolled adults, talking about the programme in their centre/classroom, to help the parents understand the teaching philosophy. It was an important time for parents to build confidence before they started the PACTT programme.
3. All the enrolled parents subsequently visited both the kindergarten and the classroom during the session/teaching day, again as a means of building confidence before going in by themselves.

The regional co-ordinator took a role in briefing parents about PACTT. There was an emphasis on the pilot nature of the programme, and a desire for parents to have regular input into how PACTT might develop during the year. It has been interesting to observe that this aspect of family literacy has emerged as being critical for the ongoing sense of community that has developed in the first pilot group. As this group completes the adult education component of the programme, plans are under way to extend and develop PACTT for students moving into further tertiary study, which is not directly a part of the family literacy programme.

The rationale behind parental input into PACTT was to develop the “shared perspective” which we know is necessary when parents and early childhood educators co-operate for the benefit of young children. Other commentators also identify³¹ that it is helpful when there is a clear distinction between the role of the teacher and the role of the parent:

“Powell (1996) suggests that continuity and congruity between the setting and the family can be achieved:

³¹ Strategic Research Initiative Literature Review, Early Childhood Education, p. 96

- When there are compatible role demands for children between settings,
- There is involvement by similar people across settings (such as a parent), and
- There is open communication between parents and providers.”

Similarly, Phillips, McNaughton, and Macdonald (2002) comment on differences between home and school practice. They suggest that learning practices need to be understood by the wider community and should reflect the social practice of that community. Opportunities for parents to engage with teaching practice on a regular basis will positively impact on community socialisation to school and early childhood practice.

The PACTT experience offers both teachers and parents the opportunity to develop compatibilities, and in particular, create regular open communication.

In the first pilots, there has been ongoing, regular, intensive work with the teachers involved with daily delivery of the programme, and in particular an emphasis on weekly planning, developing leadership responsibilities, and understanding of the different components that each teacher is engaged in. For example, the adult lecturer has been required to develop deeper understandings of Te Whaariki, the primary teachers have developed a great interest in learning stories as an assessment tool, and the primary and early childhood teachers have each developed an understanding of the adult foundation courses that the adult learners are studying.

The Final Report of the Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan Working Group to the Minister of Education (October 2001) stressed the importance of encouraging schools to incorporate the principles and strands of Te Whaariki into the school curriculum³², particularly at the new entrant level. The Manukau Family Literacy Programme has created an impetus for this to happen.

This has been an exciting opportunity to have adult educators working with their counterparts in the school and early childhood sectors. There is potential here for a whole new area of research, to discover more about the impact of this level of integration on families.

The planning for PACTT has created cross-sector awareness about the policies that underpin each sector. Issues that have arisen have included risk management

³² See section 3.1

strategies, timetabling and programme delivery demands, and the employment structures that apply in each sector. A deeper issue which constantly arises concerns the ultimate responsibility for the families engaged in the programme, as a unit.

Three types of PACTT

While the American model of family literacy maintains PACT as a one-on-one experience of supporting learning alongside the enrolled child, in New Zealand it is necessary to consider broader issues of family composition, as well as the unique structure that is being developed here.

Because Manukau Family Literacy Programmes include both the early childhood and primary sector, it is necessary for PACTT to include opportunities for one-on-one in either centre. At the same time, the total group of enrolled adult students will also need to come together from time to time around the enrolled children. Therefore three types of PACTT have been designed by the programme leaders.

Tahi PACTT

Tahi PACTT enables the adult student to spend a short time in the early childhood centre or the school classroom every day following the learning interests of the enrolled child. Parents write about the experience following the visit, often in a journal.

Class PACTT

Class PACTT takes place about twice a month, and will be a planned learning experience into which the students have had design input. These have included library visits and literature guests, such as New Zealand children's writers. Future class PACTT activities include zoo visits, bus rides, a visit to the harbour; but all are focused around sustaining and building literacy experience for children.

Below is an example of planning for the Class PACTT activities:

CLASS		PACTT	
Monday 31 st March	Shared Lunch	11:30-12:30	
Monday 5 th May	School Library visit	12:00-12:30	K to check library timetable
Monday 26 May	Otara Library visit	1:30-2:45	J-C to organise

Monday 9 th June	Author/Storyteller visit	10:30-11:30	Robin to organise
Monday 23 rd June	Video in FL room: Hairy Maclary	12:45-1:15	

The planning identifies how responsibilities for planning and organisation are shared. The Appendix demonstrates how one of the pilot schools, Bairds Mainfreight Primary School, has incorporated the parent activities (including the tertiary partner activities) into the regular administrative notices of the school.

Whanau PACTT

In recognition of the extended family structure of many enrolled students, it is necessary to include the whole family in PACTT, including grandparents, aunts, and so on. The average number of children in the enrolled families is three to four children, and the enrolled students have indicated a desire to include all their children in the family literacy programme. Whanau PACTT is again a planned experience by the students with the support of all the teachers involved in the delivery of the programme (kindergarten teacher, primary teacher, and tertiary lecturer), and takes place twice a term. Evidence of considerable planning for this evident is in Appendix A.

There are 11 enrolled families at the Bairds Otara site, and at the first whanau PACTT event (which was a barbecue), 40 extended family members attended. All shared food and games, and heard short speeches from the adult students about their future aspirations. A subsequent whanau PACTT experience was a bus trip to the Storylines Festival of Children's Literature, for the families at both pilot sites (see documents Appendix B and Appendix C).

The responses of parents to PACTT

PACTT time has never been something that the parents involved in the programme have struggled to discuss. It is a highlight of the programme for them, and for their children.

Parents report improved learning behaviour, more regular family literacy interaction, and a greater understanding about their children's development.

“I have seen my daughter speaking more clearly and learning different words. All the time she is developing new skills. PACTT is just time for her and me.” Andorra has shared that she has a better perspective of her four-year-old daughter’s learning. “The programme encourages my daughter to keep going, and it gets her ready for school.”

Parents report that relationships have improved between them and their children. Behaviour management is openly discussed, and strategies for dealing with children are practised and modelled during PACTT. This has resulted in very positive and more affirming ways of dealing with their children. One parent admitted that she has not hit her child since PACTT started. And others have commented that the information they have gained in PACTT may have altered the way they would have parented their now-teenage children.

Sustaining PACTT beyond the programme

The support provided by PACTT has been identified as a significant issue as parents move towards graduation from the programme. The value of the parent education programme – alongside PACTT – is important to the parents. Parents have also indicated that they would like to continue PACTT, but to work alongside another child in the family. Therefore, it has been decided as part of the pilot development to seek funding to support the parents in a post-programme parenting/PACTT course.

Issues which are being addressed currently include accreditation issues, parent dilemmas of study timetables and family demands, child care issues, cost to the families, and the demands on the school and early childhood teachers for more planning and resourcing of such a programme, despite their extensive goodwill and their desire to support the families.

Goal-setting and Outcomes measurement for PACTT

How do you measure outcomes from PACTT? International research shows that the direct effects of the Parent and Child Time Together component include increases in

- Time spent reading to children
- The ability of parents to positively guide their children’s freedom of choice
- Adults and children engaging in other forms of learning
- Parents’ confidence as they work and play with their children

- The perception of parents' value of education as viewed by their children (Mickulecky, Lloyd and Brannon, 1994).

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has its own checklist of characteristics of an effective family literacy programme. The characteristics for the PACT component contain the following:

- Includes child-initiated activity
- Provides regularly scheduled opportunity for positive parent/child interaction
- Provides children and parents with opportunity to practice newly acquired skills
- Utilizes staff in supportive role
- Includes activities to support the transfer of newly acquired skills to the home environment (home visit)³³

These characteristics seem obvious from our pilot practice. However, deeper analysis is required if we are to understand the transformation for families. When describing her excitement about the potential of the family literacy programmes for addressing the needs of teenage mothers, one member of the Maori Women's Welfare League in Manurewa reported her concerns about the number of "our babies" that become "lost". They are removed from the home by CYPFS because of poor parenting practices. Could a family literacy programme for our mums help them to keep their babies? she asked. How could a goal around "keeping our babies" be measured?

A family that does *not* come to the attention of social services agencies is not featured in statistics. However, one US programme³⁴ measured the number of social services referrals from family literacy programmes. How can we in New Zealand demonstrate a social outcome which is *prevented* by relationship-development activities in an educational programme? If prevention is one of the goals, does measurement expressed in outputs assist us in establishing whether the programme works?

³³ Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of School Improvement – Federal Instructional Improvement. *Characteristics of Effective Family Literacy Programs – Indicators*. <http://www.dese.state.mo.us>.

³⁴ *Minnesota Even Start and Family Literacy 2001-2002 Evaluation Report*

Our challenge is broad: how to ensure that both social and educational outcomes become part of the discourse for policy-makers and the delivery partners, and become expressed as goals and measures that become useful.

For example, in Minnesota, 80% of parent participants, after attending 16 PACT and 16 parenting sessions, are expected to demonstrate an increase in positive interactions with their child(ren) during the PACT time on those indicators on which they were not already at the highest level. Increases are based on staff observation using a checklist. *Positive change* is defined as improvement on 6 of the 8 items. Results are scored using a pre-test and a post-test assessment³⁵.

Assessments of this nature, in a programme where adults participate voluntarily, would be considered onerous in New Zealand. Data-collection also has a cost. Who of the programme partners would be responsible for collecting the data? And for what purpose? What kinds of changes are reflected in this data? Would this kind of data tell us anything more about outcomes prevention?

Despite these difficulties, there are other goals for PACTT worth evaluating, such as the development of “community” through family literacy and positive peer support through PACTT. At the same time, measuring improvement in children’s literacy outcomes is important. Our early sense from both anecdotal and research evidence in the two pilot programmes in Manukau is that it may be more useful to measure PACTT outcomes through qualitative assessments, such as case studies, which take the community context into account.

The way in which the participating adults support each other in their learning has been striking enough for teachers to comment on in their professional shared conversations, and they also note significant change in some of the enrolled children, particularly in their confidence and social skills. Because the parents have the daily opportunity to return to class and evaluate, write about, and share the PACTT experience with their teacher and peers, there is evidence of deeper change. The journals are personal but powerful documents.

Additionally, a rich sense of shared community has been created, which will sustain ongoing learning and positive relationships, even after the programme is finished.

³⁵ *ibid.*

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Appendix D - Sample Memorandum of Understanding

Introduction

1. The City of Manukau Education Trust has received funds to develop a regionally co-ordinated infrastructure for the delivery of Family Literacy, and to develop pilot programmes for the introduction of family literacy programmes that deliver four integrated components.
2. The four integrated components are Adult Education; Parent Education; Child Literacy; and Parent and Child Time together.
3. The components will be delivered intensively and over a sufficient duration to make a sustained, measurable impact on educational outcomes for all the family members involved.
4. The programmes will acknowledge that adults have multiple roles: as potential members of the workforce, as parents, and as community members; and that those who will enrol in the programme are likely to lack the skills which enable them to properly fulfil all these roles. Therefore, the programmes will target families where the adults already have few or no educational qualifications; are likely to be the recipient of welfare benefits; and for whom the programme will provide goals that allow them to transition to further learning or into work.
5. The programmes will be called *Manukau Family Literacy Programmes*, and the first two pilot programmes are designed to meet the particular needs of families in Manukau City. The programmes have been developed in a consultative manner under the stewardship of the Manukau Literacy Taskforce, and are designed for community ownership.
6. The pilot programmes will have a Reference Group which will provide policy advice and support. The Group will have representation which reflects the partnerships required for integrated development. In addition, each programme site will have a management team, which will be responsible for supporting the delivery of the programme at each site.
7. COMET seeks to develop partnerships with providers, to support and deliver the foundation education component for the adults involved in the programme. This Memorandum of Understanding relates to the delivery of the components of the programme which impact on -----(OPTIONS: *parent education, adult education, early childhood, school / child education*)
8. The partnership will recognise the pilot nature of the programmes, and will work to create collaborations which ensure that the critical integrative nature of the delivery is developed in a manner which meets the needs of all parties.

Role of COMET

9. COMET is contracted to funders to provide “infrastructure development” – that is, to support and pilot an innovative model of literacy development for

adults and their children, in settings and programmes which meet the needs of the family members in a holistic and integrated manner.

Therefore, COMET will fund costs associated with the formation of partnerships, and will become the Lead Agency which enables funds from a range of funding agencies to be appropriately channelled to the parties that are involved in delivering the programmes.

10. COMET will fund all costs associated with site management mechanisms, fund all recruitment and publicity materials, provide resource support, training and professional development support, and evaluation services. COMET will support any curriculum design and development where required for the purposes of the programme. COMET will arrange funding for support for the first two pilot programmes, including teacher aide support and transport costs for the learners where required.
11. COMET undertakes to wherever possible ensure that the programmes are sustainably managed and delivered to be cost-neutral to the learners, and to remove policy or institutional or organisational or other barriers which prevent the programmes from achieving quality outcomes for the learners.

Role of (partner institution)

12. The *partner* will undertake the employer role for *sector* educators at each pilot programme site. The educator will be responsible to the *partner* for curriculum design and delivery, and will be required to meet any quality control mechanisms required by the *partner*. The educator will be employed under the same terms and conditions as other employees of the *partner*.
13. *reserved*.
14. Because of the pilot nature of the programmes, the *partner* undertakes to work with and support the research component of the programme.

Protocols

15. xxx will be represented on the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes Reference Group (*or reserved, as appropriate*)
16. All policy decisions in relation to the programmes will be made by the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes Reference Group. Decisions will be minuted. All decisions will take into account the requirements of the partners, whether funders or programme providers.
17. The first point of contact for all matters related to the programmes will be the Regional Co-ordinator for the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes. The co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring consistency, quality, and sustainability for the programmes, in conjunction with the partners.

18. All materials developed through and for the programme will belong to the *Manukau Family Literacy Programmes*, and will acknowledge the partners. To acknowledge the good faith requirements in pilot development, the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes Reference Group will develop policies and protocols related to intellectual property and programme ownership, which reflect the community vision for the programme and any expansion proposed.
19. A schedule of agreed financial contributions through COMET will be attached to this Memorandum of Understanding for each programme site.
20. Dispute resolution. Where any disputes relating to any matter arise, the parties agree to communicate openly and in good faith to resolve the disputes through the forums provided.
21. Future development. *As agreed*
22. This Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed in July, 2003 and November 2003 and will expire when either of the parties determine in writing that they wish to withdraw.

Signatures

Attach/
Schedule 1: Funding Agreement

Appendix E - Partnership and Ownership: Perspectives from the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes

Bernardine Vester, John Benseman and Robin Houlker.

A paper prepared for the 5th Child and Family Policy Conference, Childrens Issues Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin, 26 – 28 June 2003.

ABSTRACT

A framework for the delivery of an integrated family literacy programme has been established in Manukau City. Partnership activity around the delivery task has created new kinds of relationships between the tertiary, compulsory and preschool education sectors. The partnerships are defined through the structure of the programmes, the formal relationships, and the tasks. In order to meet individual and institutional goals and aspirations, partners have engaged in some risk-taking. The key risk relates to blurred ownership issues. The role of a “lead agency”, a not-for-profit intermediary, can help partners work through their risks and work across boundaries to create a more holistic set of outcomes for families. The programmes have some implications for government policy, such as the ways in which goals and strategies are linked and assessed.

This paper describes the nature of the partnerships required for the delivery of an integrated programme for literacy improvement for families, and the ownership issues that arise out of integration. The paper is based on the experience of a group of organisational leaders and operational managers in constructing a new model of working together for a specific purpose: the improvement of literacy across a community.

The model is an example of an approach which is focused on the whole family; which is focused on the local context; and which is adaptable by communities to fit very local needs.

The paper is written from the perspective of those of us who are working together in Manukau City around the delivery of a pilot programme. It is not intended as an impartial analysis of the operational effectiveness of partnerships, or as a comprehensive assessment of partnership practices and how they might operate in different settings. Our purpose is to make public and explicit our particular set of understandings around partnership and ownership. It is shaped by the collective input of the members of the *Manukau Family Literacy Programmes Reference Group*, a group of committed community leaders and managers with an interest in literacy development, from a range of backgrounds.

The paper begins by describing how we came to be working together. Because of our focus on the “how it works”, we briefly describe the model. We then describe the formal structure in which the partnerships now operate. The different kinds of relationships that exist demonstrate the complexity of multi-partner activity that is focused on a set of concrete outputs and outcomes.

Because of our task orientation, we describe the specific roles and tasks of the partners. We then analyse the questions of ownership that arise as a result of partnership activity. Lastly, we examine some of the policy implications that arise out of partnerships.

Creating the partnership model – the process of community involvement

The pilot work is focused on developing an integrated, mainstream, sustainable and effective process for literacy development that is based on the needs of whanau or

family. Our partnerships started with a process of exploration. This process had several key stages:

1. An assessment of the existing landscape (the Manukau Literacy Forum, September 2000), led by the City of Manukau Education Trust;
2. Identification of need (gap analysis from the Manukau Literacy Taskforce, 2001); and
3. A seeding of ideas (Manukau Literacy Seminar, September 2001)

None of this was particularly scientific or formal. What it did do was bring a group of people together from a range of perspectives, create a network, and initiate a community-driven approach to new ways of thinking about a long-standing social issue: the long-term and inter-generational nature of low levels of literacy and its economic implications. This group, the Manukau Literacy Taskforce, was instrumental in developing proposals for moving a seedling idea about family-focused literacy development to a workable proposition for testing in the educational community.

The seedling idea came from the National Centre for Family Literacy in Louisville, Kentucky³⁶. The model provides, in an integrated manner, for the learning needs of the adult (as the key decision-maker in the family, the 'breadwinner', and the role model for the children) alongside the learning needs of the child.

The programme model

Four components

The Manukau Family Literacy Programme has four components:

- Adult Education
- Parent Education
- Child Literacy
- Parent and Child Time Together (PACTT).

The model is outcome-focused, and goal-oriented. Each component is separately articulated, but delivered in a manner which respects the nature of the relationship of the one with the others.

³⁶ Available from COMET.

Diverse goals

The goals are diverse, and will be articulated at each site in different ways. For example: the achievement of educational qualifications for the adults; the improvement in literacy or pre-literacy measures for the children; the improvement in relationship between a school and its community; the improvement of the relationship between the early childhood centre and the school; the reduction in social dysfunction of the family; improvements in family stability/transience; improvements in child absenteeism/truancy; health-related improvements; careers guidance and goal-setting for employment; manaakitanga; whanaungatanga; etc. Later, we will demonstrate how the diversity goals impacts on the partnership process.

Two pilots

Two pilot programmes have been established (at Bairds Otara; and Rowandale Manurewa – both sites in high poverty areas). The outcomes from the programme pilots are being separately evaluated, and are not the subject of this paper.

Three criteria

We identified three important criteria³⁷ for successful outcomes for programmes that deliver change for families, and incorporated them into our proposals for a Manukau-based pilot of family literacy. They are:

- (1) Integration
- (2) Duration
- (3) Intensity

From our research we concluded that long-term and full-time centre-based³⁸ learning for all members of the family on sites where adults and children could work together would only be possible if partnerships could be established around both the adult and

³⁷ These are described in more detail in Powell, D. (1996): *Teaching Parenting and Basic Skills to Parents: What We Know*. Purdue University. [On-Line] www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/title.html. Also, St.Pierre, R. & Layzer, J. (1996). *Informing Approaches to Serving Families in Family Literacy Programs: Lessons from Other Family Intervention Programs*. Abt Associates, Inc. [On-line]. www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/title.html. (from Bonnie Lash Freeman).

³⁸ Children in centre-based services have larger learning gains than children in programmes that emphasize home-based services; in measures of adult literacy in [Even Start] programmes, adults achieve gains comparable or larger in size than those observed in other studies of adult education programmes. US Department of Education (1998): *Planning and Evaluation Service Analysis and Highlights Even Start: Evidence from the Past and a Look to the Future*. [On-line] www.ed.gov/pubs/EvenStart/highlights.html. (from Bonnie Lash Freeman).

the child; with input from across the education sectors; and with the support of multiple government agencies.

Four underlying principles

In presenting a proposal to the Ministry of Education, the Manukau Literacy Taskforce identified some key principles³⁹. These principles were that *collaborative, community-owned, well-structured, fully-implemented* pilots were important. That is, partnerships would have to be built, that the partnerships would need to be generated from the community, that the partnerships needed to be well-supported within a development framework, and that all four components would need to be in place for genuine pilot development.

These components, criteria, and principles determined the nature of the partnerships for structure and delivery, and the shape and direction of the programmes of the two current pilots.

Some assumptions

The need for collaborative approaches was an untested assumption as the model was being developed in the period 2001-2002. The American experience has been that family literacy requires partners to work together, but that the model itself needs to have the flexibility to meet the *individual* goals, aspirations and needs of the partners as well as the *joint* purposes that drive the collaboration. The collaboration is assumed to be necessary because it is difficult for one institution or provider to deliver all four components and meet the criteria outlined above. The collaboration is task-focused and learner-focused.

Implicit in a collaborative approach is the need for supporting structural mechanisms that can give life and sustainability to the partnerships. The facilitation mechanism is itself a partnership activity in our model (see “defining the partnerships” below). That is, the independent “lead agency” is itself part of the partnership-building process.

³⁹ From the Manukau Literacy Taskforce proposal to the Ministry of Education, February, 2002, delivered through COMET.

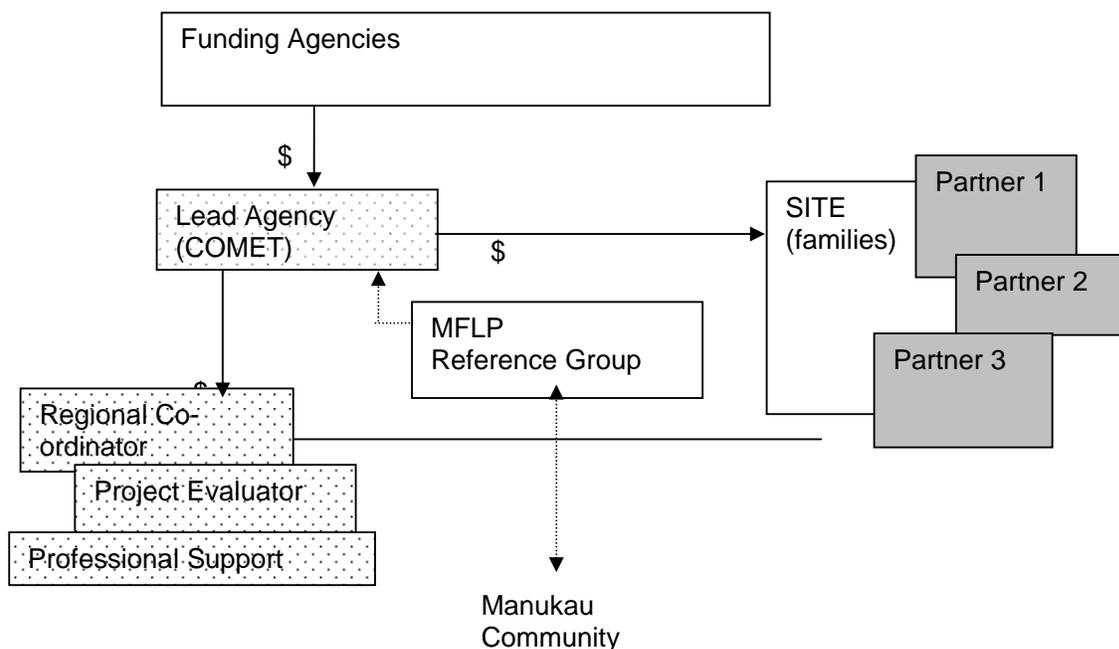
Defining the partnerships

Helen Timperley and Viviane Robinson⁴⁰, in Manukau-based research on educational partnership dynamics, identify the multi-dimensional nature of partnership.

“...partnerships are about relationships that include, but are not exclusively determined by, the way in which power is distributed or organisational incentives operate. Those relationships evolve as the partnership develops, and to a large extent determine its success. However, partnerships are also formed for the purpose of achieving particular tasks or outcomes, such as improving student success or solving difficult problems. In the absence of a task, there is little motivation for the participants to act in partnership. We propose that if partnerships are to realise their potential benefits, both the relationship and task dimensions need to be integrated in ways that establish processes for the partners to work together and to learn from one another about how to achieve the task.” (Timperley and Robinson 2002, p. 14)

Our partnerships developed around the task of delivery of the family literacy programme. We have defined our partnerships through contractual relationships and working processes. There are different kinds of formal relationships, and these may best be described through our structure diagram, below.

Diagram 1: Structure of the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes.



⁴⁰ Timperley, Helen and Robinson, Viviane, 2002: *Partnership: Focusing the Relationship on the Task of School Improvement*. NZCER, Wellington.

In the above diagram, the **delivery partners** are in grey. They are tertiary, school and pre-school institutional partners. Our two pilot sites are both schools. Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the lead agency, the site partners work together to deliver the programme to the families. The **facilitation partners** are lightly shaded. These boxes also represent sub-contractual relationships.

As Timperley and Robinson suggest, the tasks have driven the development of the relationships between the partners. In Timperley and Robinson's definition, tasks and relationships cannot be divorced from one another. The primary purpose for the relationships being developed through the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes was the delivery of a programme that could meet individual institutional goals. Table 1 (below) identifies the secondary purposes which have driven the development of the original relationship into more clearly defined partnership activity.

Table 1: The relationships between the partners

	Relationship	Purpose	Partners	
<i>How the dollars come in</i>	Funding Contracts with Government Agencies	'Infrastructure' provision	Lead Agency (COMET) with the Ministry of Education	Provides for management and co-ordination of all components
		Pilot site programme funding (1)	Lead Agency (COMET) with the Ministry of Education	Provides funding to be channelled to sites for implementation and site-level costs
		Social support	Lead Agency (COMET) with the Ministry of Social Development	To meet the "free to families" principle (for pilot purposes only).
<i>How the partners meet accountabilities & work together</i>	Memorandum of Understanding	Delivery Agreement (1) to cover additional costs and define operational relationships Delivery Agreement (2) Delivery Agreement (3)	Lead Agency (COMET) and tertiary provider Lead Agency (COMET) and early childhood provider Lead Agency (COMET) and school partner	Allows for transfer of funds to provider partners Each site has a 'set' of delivery agreements related to the components of the programme.

<i>Who completes deliverables</i>	Service Contracts	Co-ordination services	COMET with co-ordinator	Option could be to have employment agreements
		Evaluation services	COMET with evaluator	
		Training services	COMET with trainer	
	Enrolment*	Education services	Tertiary provider; school provider; ECE provider.	Enrolment provides funding entitlements
<i>How partners relate to each other and the families on a daily basis</i>	Management Group Operational Group	Site management	Tertiary provider; school provider; ECE provider. (co-ordinator)	The provider partners may vary at each site. Eg. at one pilot site the partner is a church. Role of co-ordinator here important.
<i>How the programmes are steered</i>		Advice and governance	Manukau Family Literacy Programmes Reference Group ; COMET Trustees	The Reference Group represents community experts and voices and makes recommendations to the COMET trustees.
<i>How the programmes fit with mainstream</i>	Formal (implied) partnership*	Funding	TEC with tertiary provider MOE with school and ECE provider	Learners generate funding through mainstream funding sources
<i>How the families fit in</i>	Informal (implied) partnership	Family Enrolment constitutes commitment from the learners to the programme	Adults interact with the teachers of their children Adults interact with their teacher for their own learning.	

The different levels and types of relationships require some further examination.

1. Funding relationships

Table 2 identifies that the relationship for funders is with the *Lead Agency*. Why not fund each programme [site] directly? Doesn't the Lead Agency get in the way? There are several responses to these two questions.

1. Fund-holding and power-sharing

Which partner would receive the funds? What confidence do the partners have that each of their needs will be considered with proper weight? We need

to acknowledge here the different powers and influence of the partners. A kindergarten and a tertiary institution have very different needs. Educational institutions are accustomed to operating horizontally across their sectors. The Manukau Family Literacy Programmes operate vertically. As Timperley and Robinson note, “Although power is likely to be unequal in relation to specific task decisions, we propose that equality is important when negotiating how the power is to be shared. Achieving such equality, however, is often a complex process.” (2002, p24). The needs of each partner will change as the programmes evolve. The complexity of multi-partner funding allocation has been avoided in this phase by placing the management of funding at the lead agency level. This ought to be reviewable once the partnerships have stabilised and the various needs of the partners have become clear. At that point, the various partners will be confident in identifying and expressing their needs to each other, and shaping funding proposals accordingly.

2. Transaction Costs:

The Ministry of Education (or other funding agency) could choose to manage contracts with each of the partners individually. There are ‘transaction costs’ associated with contracts. Transaction costs include the time it would take to arrange multi-partner agreements and facilitate delivery of services, as well as management costs. The lead agency role provides for complex infrastructural development issues to be worked through, without compromising the delivery function, and without involving funders in complex management processes.

It is also more efficient for a pooling of the resources to meet those transactional costs, because individual institutions themselves would not have all the resources required (including expertise) to make the programmes work effectively – see point 3 below.

3. Cross-site efficiencies

Long term, there would be no mechanism for the sensible sharing of professional development, curriculum and resource development, evaluation, co-ordination, sponsorship development, quality standards, etc., from one site to the next without a mechanism for building on experience and developing community expertise. The skills of the professional practitioners in a family literacy programme need to be specifically oriented towards integrated

practice and outcomes-focused delivery. It is sensible to provide structures which enable these practitioners to learn from each other, and to receive support targeted to their particular needs. Already our Reference Group has touched upon the scenario of a “Centre of Expertise and Excellence” to support family literacy delivery.

4. Leadership and Independence

The initiative for the programmes was external to the institutions involved. Could the partnerships to deliver the programmes have happened without the co-ordination of the lead agency? The suggestion that independence is a critical factor can only be affirmed through external evaluation. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the perspective of providers in the formation of partnerships is coloured by their understanding of marketing advantage in a competitive environment. It is less difficult to establish partnership activity around a concept that is being championed by a non-competitor.

2. Facilitation relationships

In our pilot process, these have been formalised through Memorandums of Understanding with the Lead Agency, COMET; or through service contracts.

The ***Memorandum of Understanding*** (MoU) attempts to outline the purpose for the partnership, the nature of the delivery partnership, the responsibility of each partner, and the structures and protocols that will operate. A schedule attached to each MoU outlines the funding that will be delivered to each partner in return for participation in the pilot, and in return for costs expended. The schedule becomes the “audit trail” for the expenditure of funds.

It is in developing the Memorandums that particular issues of ownership and responsibility have surfaced for the partners. We refer to the issue of ownership again later in this paper.

The ***Service Contract*** has become a mechanism for the delivery of specialist tasks on behalf of the Lead Agency. These contracts could equally well be designed as employment agreements. Examples of these are the contract for regional co-ordination; and the contract for evaluation. The principle of “community ownership” made it difficult (but not impossible) to commit to long-term employment relationships. The preference of the parties was a

factor in the eventual decision. Elements of the professional development programme are now also being delivered as service contracts. The way in which these services are delivered became an “in-house” decision for the Lead Agency.

3. Operational relationships.

These relationships are less formalised, but are nevertheless important for effective partnership delivery. The partners who are required to work together to deliver the programme need to meet regularly at two levels: (1) at a management level to make decisions which facilitate an integrated approach for the families; and (2) at the teacher level to ensure that working relationships are soundly established.

In effect, this means that the principal of the school, the kindergarten lead teacher, and the tertiary programme manager must meet regularly; and the tertiary lecturer, the school teachers, and the kindergarten teachers must also meet. The regional co-ordinator plays an important role in supporting the establishment of this relationship, and ensuring that processes are established for smooth and integrated delivery.

Examples of activities that are part of this include:

- Establishment of regular meeting schedules, so that time is set aside for communications
- Minutes are kept of all meetings and circulated for approval
- Goal-setting – since each partner must understand the goals sought by the other partners
- Identifying different tasks and responsibilities, so that schedules and timetables are met
- Budget-setting
- Programme planning and delivery

Having a “quality control” through the regional co-ordinator has enabled the overall purpose of the pilots to be maintained. In establishing the processes, all of the partners have been required to “write the manual” from scratch. A Handbook to support the establishment of similar programmes elsewhere will be an outcome of the regional co-ordination role.

So why would the partners spend time on this? As noted above, there are “transaction costs” associated with the partnerships. It makes sense to conclude that the willingness of partners to do this must be related to the rewards that the partners find in the relationship. Those rewards may be related both to the task of delivery of the Manukau Family Literacy Programme; and to the goals for entering into the partnership in the first place.

There must also be financial rewards. That is, engagement with family literacy must be a sound “business” decision for the institutions involved. The formal independent evaluation – to be released in January, 2004 – may say something more about whether the model can deliver those rewards sufficiently for enduring partnership operation.

4. Formal implied relationships.

We will define these relationships as those where the delivery partners (the tertiary institution, the school, and the early childhood centre) obtain resources through their core business mechanisms. For the tertiary partner, funding for the delivery of the programme will come through EFTS, delivered through the TEC; for the school or the early childhood institution, enrolments determine staffing resources. The implied relationship therefore is between the tertiary institution and the TEC; or between the school and the Ministry of Education; or between the early childhood centre and the Ministry of Education.

Another implied relationship is with the Ministry of Social Development, because funding support for the families to participate in the programmes is required. The childcare subsidy for child enrolment in the early childhood centre is an example of this relationship.

It is important to identify these formal implied relationships, because government agencies have strategic goals which will determine whether ongoing support for the programmes will become available; and whether any policy implications arising out of the programmes will be placed on agendas for consideration.

5. Informal implied relationships.

None of the programmes will work unless the families commit to them. Why would an adult wish to enrol in a family literacy programme? As part of the programme, the adults will be working with the teacher of their child or children: the purpose and nature of that interaction is dependent on the quality of the relationship that the teacher has both with the adult and the child in the family. The students *are* the programme. They are investing in themselves by being there, and they are the key players for their own success. There is potential for them to graduate to become leaders for other families. They can help shape the programmes, since the goals of the programmes will coincide with their personal interests.

Task-orientation

We have already discussed the initial task orientation of our partnerships. We can demonstrate this task-oriented nature by drawing up a grid which identifies the tasks or roles that each partner plays in the delivery of the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes (Table 2). We are aware, however, that there may be other reasons why partners might wish to work together, aside from the task itself.

Table 2: Roles and Tasks for the Partners

Partner	Tasks / Roles	Notes
Tertiary partners [eg. MIT/AUT]	Employer of the tertiary lecturer Accredited programme approvals management (for access to tertiary funding streams and qualifications accreditation)	The adult is enrolled in the programme owned by the institution.
School partners [Bairds Mainfreight Primary School, Rowandale School]	Employer of the teachers of the children involved. Programme management Site and facilities governorship Community leadership	The adults are parents of the students in the school, therefore part of the school community. The child's literacy development is shared with the adult
Early Childhood partners [eg. Auckland Kindergarten Association, Manurewa West Independent Kindergarten]	Employer of the early childhood teacher involved in the programme Programme management	The adults are parents of the children enrolled. The child's early literacy development is shared with the adult.

Community partner	Links with family networks May provide facilities or funding support	Not an education provider. May not be funded for any literacy services .
Lead Agency COMET	Catalyst / incubator / conduit Contract management Partnership development Evaluation Professional development Community engagement	A legal entity, but not an education provider.
Ministry of Education	Funding Supporting educational opportunities for adults and children Supporting government strategies for literacy	The Ministry is a “purchaser” of services.
Ministry of Social Development	Funding Supporting positive social outcomes for families Supporting employment opportunities for adults Supporting government strategies for families	The Ministry is a purchaser of services. A long-term focus on employment outcomes.
TEC	Funding Supporting [foundation] skills development (strategic links to TEC strategy)	Responsible for community and adult education. A funding and advisory agency.
Manukau Family Literacy Programmes Reference Group	Responsible for design, support, and leadership Advice	“intellectual” ownership; not a legal entity
Libraries	Making an investment in literacy and supporting the community. May have facilities.	Librarians are not educators. Libraries not accredited providers.

Ownership

Who owns the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes?

The Reference Group has identified that different functions and tasks require different levels of ownership. Different functions identified by the group include:

Designing the model

Implementing the model

Managing the model
 Funding the model
 Providing the facilities
 Being responsible for the delivery
 Facilitating participation from the families
 Being accountable for the outcomes
 Making contributions (financial or other)

Ownership-level questions that have been identified to date include:

- The parents have children enrolled in the school or the early childhood institution, so therefore they are part of the school or parent community: is the programme therefore owned by the school? By the early childhood institution?
- The adult education component is delivered by a tertiary provider, and the parents are enrolled as students of that institution. Is the programme therefore owned by the tertiary institution?
- The funding contracts are with COMET as the Lead Agency: therefore, does COMET own the programmes?
- Who is accountable for the delivery of outcomes?
- How will the programme be marketed to the learners?
- In gaining sponsorship for the programmes, to what extent will the sponsors wish to be identified with the programmes?
- How will community – i.e. family - ownership of the programme be created? To what extent will the families be involved in the decision-making about the programmes?

While this is not an exhaustive list, it does highlight the shifts in thinking that are required when collaboration involves *joint* responsibilities and decision-making. Those collaborations will be required at many levels. Four examples demonstrate the extent of activity and commitment needed.

Firstly, at the enrolment point it is not sufficient to assume that responsibility for providing enrolment information to learners and to enrol them in the programme will rest with one partner. The strength of the network of each partner provides different opportunities for families to become engaged in literacy. For this reason, it is possible that a community-level partner – such as a church - can become engaged as a

partner in programme establishment and support ongoing enrolment and participation.

Secondly, curriculum design is generally considered as a specialist activity at each sector level. However, a wrap-around approach to the learners requires all the delivery partners to be involved in evaluation of the overall programme for both the adults and the children, and to have input into curriculum decision-making, *even though the quality management and control processes will rest with one or other partner.*

Thirdly, shared professional development activities become an opportunity for the teachers from each sector to work together to understand sector-specific processes. For example, the kindergarten teacher is learning how to use a new tool for assessing child learning. The tertiary teacher can use her understanding of this tool to support the adult learners to work alongside their child's teacher in completing the assessment. This collaboration can lead to deeper parental commitment to the child's learning, and full involvement in the early literacy development process; as well as providing real opportunities for the adult learner to practice his/her own literacy skills.

Fourthly, the families have begun to be part of the design process for the PACTT time. At our first pilot site, the families and the school are now discussing how to sustain PACTT activities once the adults move on to further training at the mother institution. The engagement of the *family members* in the process of developing this new family-school partnership indicates something about the way in which "ownership" of the programme is being transferred to the participants. What implications does this have?

Each of these examples highlights how collaborative activity may be able to bring each partner to a new understanding of how their sector practices can be adapted to better fit the needs of families, and how the families themselves can become engaged in their own learning. The programme evaluation will analyse these collaborative activities more comprehensively.

Who owns the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes, then? The answer at the moment seems to be that *parts of* the programmes must be owned by different partners. Because of the new-ness of our programmes, we do not yet know how much of a difficulty this might be for maintaining an integrated approach, or whether

integration through collaboration will prove to be too hard to sustain. What we do know is that we are working “at the borders” of the system.

Risk

Because the education sector is horizontally organised, and not vertically integrated, these ownership questions require each partner to support ‘risk-taking’ activity.

Three examples of such risk-taking activity illustrate our point. The first relates to collaborative decision-making on *appointments processes*. The tertiary lecturer must operate on the partner site. How much involvement will the other partners have in the selection of the tertiary professional? How does having this professional on site impact on the governance responsibilities of the school board of trustees, or the kindergarten council? The second example relates to *media relations*. What permission processes will operate in relation to the publication of photographs and newsletter items? How will each partner be represented and portrayed in brochures and other materials? The third example relates to *research and ethics*. What approval processes will apply? Who will own the research? How will each partner be informed about the outcomes? What will the evaluator measure? What assessment materials will be appropriate, and who controls that? Who is reporting to whom for what purpose?

These are all legitimate questions, and the perspective of each of the partners and the exercise of ownership over the components needs to be respected, even as the difficulties they present are being addressed. As Timperley and Robinson suggest, “Shifting realities demand that opportunities to learn, mutual accountabilities and power-sharing arrangements all evolve along with the task itself.” (2000, p. 143).

Which brings us to the last question: what role does Government play in this partnership process?

Government and Partnership – the Change Agent

In its programme around *Rebuilding America for a New Era*, the Clinton Administration looked more closely at the relationship between those who deliver at the community level and the public service:

“As they strive to improve what they do and how they work, enlightened public sector managers recognize a key fact: while government itself is a critical player, it cannot effectively deliver all of the needed services independently. Government must work with and through the other major sectors, namely business, nonprofit and civic. The most common relationship between government and the nonprofit sector is that of contractor-contractee, where government funds the service and the nonprofit delivers it... Yet, most government managers have only a limited understanding of the nonprofit environment and the interdependence of the two sectors. As the public sector strives to improve performance in meeting the needs of its citizens, public managers should examine and maximize their relationships with both the nonprofit and civic sectors.

In fact, this work has begun. Innovators in various communities are serving as change agents. They are applying new concepts and models for establishing effective, results-oriented partnerships among public, nonprofit and civic organizations. They are testing new criteria for making decisions about the use of community resources and are measuring the impact of their work. They are creating a new generation of public/nonprofit/civic partnerships.”⁴¹

What we particularly want to note here is what the *change agent role*. A re-examination of the relationship between government and community is also occurring in New Zealand. A sustainable difference to the quality of learning for students and their families is not a given from the introduction of new programmes in Manukau schools or for adults in our community. The history of education in Manukau is littered with new ‘initiatives’, few of which can be significantly linked to measurable improvements in outcomes for the whole community.

We are also faced with policy-making around families which is designed from outside the community and which rarely supports community-initiated development. The shape of national decision-making has created expectations that innovation must be framed in particular ways to fit the jurisdictional boundaries of policy development that exist at central government level.

The position that the National Centre for Family Literacy in Louisville has adopted is that literacy is a cultural concept – not a set of skills, but a way of thinking and behaving and responding to one’s environment. Our thesis is that the act of partnership around the development of a community-driven literacy programme will drive the partners (the institutions *and* the families) to new ways of looking at their core tasks and roles. This is not a given from programmes when no partnership arrangements are required. This is one of the things we are testing with the Manukau

⁴¹ http://clinton1.nara.gov/White_House/Publications/html/briefs/

Family Literacy Programmes. It is the belief of the authors of this paper that this process is as contingent upon the effectiveness and independence of the *facilitative mechanism*, that is, the Lead Agency, as it is on the abilities of the partners to step outside their traditional boundaries and look for new ways of working together.

In considering the role of government, therefore, what policies would support the cultural shift being demanded?

Some Policy Implications

The Manukau Family Literacy Programmes have raised many policy implications. This implications discussed below relate most directly to the issues of partnership and ownership, in other words, about *where the borders are*. (Other sector-specific policy implications are not covered here).

Goal-setting, assessment, and measurement

Each delivery partner has different outcomes that it is seeking, which justifies its participation in development and delivery of the programmes. The strength of the programme's structure will be in the adaptability and flexibility to meet those individual goals, and in the differences that the programmes make to both the lives of the families and their educational achievements. However, not only the delivery partners will have goals for the programmes. Each government agency involved in the development of these programmes will also be able to identify different potential outcomes that will meet different strategic priorities.

This multiplicity of goals represents a considerable challenge in determining which outcomes will be measured, and how they will be measured, without creating a bureaucratic imposition on the partners and the participants which overwhelms the programme itself. In attempting to ensure that the programmes align with strategic government policies, the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes now have the challenge of developing measures which sensibly demonstrate progress towards achievement of the strategic priorities.

To illustrate, below is a list of theoretical *possible* goals for the programmes at any given site, and alongside an analysis of which partners would be interested in

measuring whether that goal has been achieved. The third column aligns the goal with government strategies.

Table 3: Linking goals and strategies

Goal	Delivery Partner	Government Strategy
To increase participation in ECE education	Early childhood centre	Early Childhood
To improve the participation of parents in home-school activities	school	?
To trigger enrolment in “mainstream” tertiary education courses	tertiary institution	Skills development strategies?
To develop skills for employability	Ministry of Social Development	Employment strategy?
To improve child attendance at school	?	Truancy reduction initiative (MoE)
To improve child literacy outcomes	school; Ministry of Education	National literacy strategy for schools
To facilitate movement of Maori and/or Pacific Islands adults back into education	Community	Tertiary Education Strategy (foundation skills; Maori achievement; Pacific achievement)
To strengthen whanaungatanga	Ministry of Social Development; TPK	?

There are some things to be noted about this table.

1. Because each site’s programme is theoretically designed around the needs of the families in each community, it will be the delivery partners who will be primarily responsible for identifying the goals. This is not to say that there will not be any “generic” or overarching goals that can be adopted. However, because the focus will be on institutional objectives – at the *community* level – the vision for goal-setting will be limited by the horizon that can be seen from that level, *except where the facilitation mechanism extends that horizon*. In other words, the Lead Agency is critical to the development of measures and assessments which define the value of the integration of components together.
2. Some of the goals that could be articulated by the site partners may not be strategic priorities for government. (So what if the participation of parents in school improves? How does this contribute to child literacy? national goals?)

3. Some outcomes may never be reflected in the goals, and will remain incidental to the main objectives, but will nevertheless have significance for government policy-makers (for example, attendance or completion patterns for the adults following enrolment; truancy patterns for children of adults enrolled in the programme; strengthening of the early childhood-primary links to support transitions for young children). Some of these outcomes will necessarily be limited in influencing the wider sweep of the problem, and may or may not be sustainable. That is, it is likely that any effect on truancy patterns will be limited to only those families enrolled in the programme, and probably not to the rest of the community.

4. What measures could be used for “improvement in child literacy outcomes”? What are the benchmarks? How can a causal relationship be shown between the adult involvement in the programme and the child’s literacy development? Which partner is responsible for measuring this?

5. What focus is on “healthy families and communities” in these goals and measures? Is building ‘whanaungatanga’ an appropriate goal? Are only *educational* outcomes appropriate?

The overarching questions are: what kind of commissioned research will be required to demonstrate the “differences” that a family literacy programme could make to the outcomes for particular families? Does a family literacy programme make *more of a difference* than, say, a Home-School Partnership programme; or a HIPPY programme? And is this a difference that makes a social difference, or an educational difference, or both? What kind of comparative research will be required, and what advantages are there in having an independent partner to steer this?

Criteria for Participation

We have structured the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes around *community* needs, rather than to meet the needs of closely targeted individuals. There are several reasons for this, largely related to the *systemic impacts* of the integrated approach. By targeting communities, rather than individuals, the strengths of integration are not compromised by the rules governing the parts.

Thus, a minimum of 15 families are required for financial viability for the *tertiary* partner. The enrolled families must have children who attend the partner kindergarten and/or school. The programme is required to target a community, not individuals from the community, to meet its minimum enrolment target in order to maintain funding viability.

To sustain the tertiary course (EFTS-based) funding, open entry rules must be met. While the adults will be assessed for their appropriateness for the programme (i.e. few or no school qualifications, or limited literacy), their status as beneficiaries cannot be a factor without breaching the open entry rule.

If the Free to Families policy was linked only to the income status of the participating families, then this will complicate the definition of family income – should a mother be refused participation in the programme because her partner is an income-earner? “Family” enrolment is defined as any adult and any child member of the extended family. A grandmother who is the caregiver for her grandchild, an auntie who is caring for a niece or nephew, a sister caring for a younger sibling, a dad caring for a child, are thus eligible for enrolment. Age cannot be a barrier for enrolment (tertiary policy).

The high intensity platform of the programme requires that the adults commit to 20 hours per week, which compromises their ability to earn income elsewhere.

In urban communities, ethnicities can be very mixed: what are the implications for identifying programmes as being specifically identified for Maori or Pacific Island families? What kinds of partnerships would be required in order to specifically target ethnicity for eligibility into a family literacy programme?

Policy frameworks

Which policy framework will drive these programmes – the social policy framework or the educational policy framework? What funding conduits will apply for developing or sustaining these programmes? How can the tertiary fees component be funded? Will this drive the kinds of partnerships that will be possible?

Sustainability

The programmes require several “platforms” of *commitment* to ensure their sustainability, assuming that they can be shown to be effective in delivery of desired

outcomes. The first platform relates to funding. It is not worthwhile for partners to develop a relationship if the purpose of the relationship disappears within a very short space of time. The transaction costs referred to earlier make it uneconomic to even begin the journey. Therefore, time horizons for funding that extend beyond annual cycles are important.

Secondly, the development of resources and expertise needs to be assured into the future. There is a risk of dependence on key personnel. The co-ordination role is critical to the success of the programmes, and back-up resourcing needs to be put in place. The policy question is: does Family Literacy fit into the policy mainstream for budgeting purposes? Where does it fit?

The second issue of sustainability is the tertiary component. At the moment, the programmes are constructed around EFTS⁴²-generating courses from mainstream tertiary institutions. Those courses attract *student fees*. The 'Free to Families' policy requires the partners to somehow find support for those fees. Should the kinds of partnerships be limited to 'zero-fee' institutions, or 'zero-fee' tertiary courses? Does this limit the potential for credit outcomes for the adult education component?

Conclusion

Our conclusion is simple: partnership tests boundaries. We have shown where those boundaries lie. How effective the partnership process will be in improving outcomes for families is yet to be determined. However, our early explorations suggest that the efforts to cross those boundaries are likely to deliver improvements in outcomes for individuals in families.

We know that these partnerships would not have come about without the role of the Lead Agent. We also know that the sustainability of partnerships will in some measure rely on the structural support frameworks, and on-going co-ordination and facilitation, which will be available to the partners. Partnership development is a complex process. The pool of expertise in this area in New Zealand is still limited, but it is most likely to arise from the not-for-profit or NGO sector.

⁴² Equivalent Full-Time Student funding – a mainstream tertiary funding formula. There are policy rules around eligibility for this funding.

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For further information about the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes, visit:
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