

**Literature Review of New Zealand Adult Literacy
Research**

Commissioned by the Ministry of Education

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August, 2003

This report is dedicated to the memory of **Liz Moore**

- a truly innovative and dedicated pioneer of adult literacy in Aotearoa

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Section One - Introduction

Adult literacy in New Zealand is currently undergoing considerable change and development following the release of the first national incidence study (OECD, 1997) and the first ever Ministry of Education policy for this area (Ministry of Education, 2001). These developments also come on top of years of work by people in the field to bring this issue to the fore of public notice and into the educational policy arena.

With growing interest in the field, attention has also turned to reviewing what research has been carried out on adult literacy in New Zealand. This review of research is important for both understanding current practices and capacities in adult literacy and indicating what areas should be prioritised in funding future research. While overseas research is often useful in increasing our understanding of adult literacy, it is nonetheless essential to generate New Zealand-based research that recognises the specific social and cultural contexts that are unique to this part of the world.

This report reviews all the research that has been carried out to date on adult literacy in New Zealand.

Criteria for inclusion in review

Defining what constitutes 'research' is problematic both in the academic world and in public debate. It is useful therefore to specify the criteria that I have used in compiling this literature review. These criteria included:

- the inclusion of original data (either quantitative or qualitative)
- focus on New Zealand-based programmes, learners or related issues
- relates to adults (aged 16+)
- available in the public domain.

Much of the research covered in the review is what is termed *grey* or *feral* literature – that is, it is not readily available in the way that more mainstream research is, in conventional forms such as journals, books and formal reports – a characteristic that is in itself symbolic of the field's status to date. Rather, it is often found in limited-circulation, in-house reports and is therefore often very difficult to locate using conventional methods.

On the other hand, I have not included what might be termed 'opinion pieces' of writing where people have written about adult literacy, but the content is limited to the authors' personal opinions or judgements. These sorts of articles sometimes refer to other people's research studies, but they do not include original data. Similarly, I have not included any writing from the popular press about adult literacy that arise periodically (usually in relation to 'the literacy crisis' being (re-) discovered (see for example (Thomas, 1994).

Nor have I included any literature reviews or research commentaries (see for example, (Holland, Hunter, & Kell, 2002; Livingstone, 1994; Reid, 1994; Roberts, 1995), some of which provide relevant and incisive commentary on research, but do not contain original data. Other New Zealand writers have written on adult literacy, but do not refer to New Zealand programmes or learners

Method

In addition to material that I have collected personally, a search was made of *Te Puna* and *Index New Zealand* databases. Thirdly, a number of key people in the field were contacted for their suggestions as to any studies that could be included in the review. Mary Anne Crick of the Clock Tower Library at The University of Auckland, Jane Furness of Skill New Zealand and Maryanne Richardson of Workbase are acknowledged for their help in this regard.

Wherever possible, the original research reports were sighted and read. When this was not possible (some reports are no longer available), information was taken from abstracts or from personal communications with authors. Several older studies are listed, but not reviewed in detail.

Structure of the report

The second section of this report provides a critical analysis of the research that has been located and reviewed. In particular, the analysis classifies the research across a number of dimensions (e.g. topics, type of publication), reviews its coverage of the field to date and discusses possible future directions. This section of the report was circulated to all the key literacy organisations for comment. The third section lists all the research studies identified for this review in alphabetical order of the author(s); in addition to bibliographic details, the contents, methodology and findings of each study are described. A full set of references completes the report.

Declaration of interest

Some of my own research has been included in this literature review (other pieces were excluded according to the criteria listed above) and I have worked in various capacities with many of the researchers listed. In all cases, I have endeavoured to maintain a professional, objective approach to the review, irrespective of the author or the sponsoring organisation.

Section Two – Analysis and discussion of review findings¹

This section begins with some categorisations of the studies that were located, before going on to a more detailed discussion of their coverage, quality and possible areas for future research.

Classification of research

It is probable that the 54 studies listed (see following section for a detailed description of each study) undoubtedly constitute the great majority of research studies on adult literacy in New Zealand. As adult literacy is still best described as an ‘emerging’ educational field, the coverage is, not surprisingly, patchy and of highly variable quality. The following categorisations² provide an overview of what has been done, and also help point to where the biggest gaps are and what should be prioritised in the near future. As with any categorising, the following categories are not absolutely watertight, but do provide a series of benchmarks for comparisons.

Types of research

- Evaluations (18) – including specific courses or programmes (11), computer assisted learning programmes (4) and literacy services (2)
- Surveys (12) – ranging from largely descriptive, with limited analysis through to more extensive and/or theorised studies
- Incidence studies/needs analyses (12) – assessing the degree of literacy difficulties among either specific groups or national populations
- Curriculum development studies (4) – using needs analyses to develop literacy programmes for specific groups
- Ethnographic-style studies (4)
- Historical studies (2)

¹ I have included observations from Professor Allan Quigley of St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Canada in this section who also reviewed the list of studies.

² The two studies not reviewed were not classified.

Topics

- Literacy needs in learner groups (12)
- Impact of programmes on learners (10)
- Adult literacy provision (9)
- Programme/curriculum development (5)
- Computer assisted learning (CAL) programmes (4)
- History of adult literacy in New Zealand (2)
- Learner motivation (2)
- Family literacy (2)
- Reading behaviour (1)
- Qualification Framework (1)
- Labour market (1)
- Health (1)
- Tutor training (1)
- Road safety (1)

Participants/research subjects

- Workplace learners (15)
- Learners (general) (11)
- Unemployed learners (7)
- Community-based learners (5)
- Tutors (4)
- Maori (3)
- Family literacy participants (2)
- Older learners (1)
- Prisoners (1)
- ESOL learners (1)³
- Disabled (1)
- Tertiary students (1)

Sample size

- 0-9 subjects (9)
- 10- 49 subjects (16)
- 50-99 subjects (4)
- 100+ subjects (15)
- Not known/stated (8)

Qualitative/quantitative

- Qualitative (involving text data) (27)
- Qualitative and quantitative (14)
- Quantitative (involving statistical data) (13)

³ Note: this refers to literacy among ESOL learners, not research on ESOL generally.

Type of publication

- Limited-circulation report/paper (32)
- Academic thesis (12)
- Wide-circulation report (3)
- Published journal article (2)
- Published book/chapter (3)

Funding source (some studies had joint funding sources)

- None/individuals (mainly theses) (16)
- Workbase/ARLA Workbase (11)
- Skill New Zealand/ETSA (8)
- Government Departments (other than Education) (5)
- Ministry of Education⁴ (4)
- Literacy Aotearoa/ARLA (2)
- Commercial company/organisation (2)
- Unknown (2)
- New Zealand Council for Educational Research (2)
- Health Research Council (1)
- Voluntary organisation (1)
- Philanthropic organisation (1)

Types of research

The most common type of research to date (accounting for a third of the total) has been evaluations of specific programmes in a particular context. There is debate in the research literature whether evaluation studies really qualify as a form of research because their findings have limited transferability and therefore make little contribution to the understanding of deeper issues. As Allan Quigley says, this problem is not unique to New Zealand – “literacy is plagued by one-shot, small-scale, non-generalisable evaluations that get the label of research.” He observes that the dominance of evaluations helps promote an impression that there is a lot of research about adult literacy, when in fact a large proportion of it is evaluation and not research on broader issues. The role of evaluation as an applied form of research is certainly contentious and irrespective of this debate, it is certainly true that it has been the dominant type of research to date.

While one-off evaluations have questionable value due to their limited transfer to other situations, the collection of multiple evaluations or meta-analyses of studies can considerably increase the usefulness of evaluations. A useful example of this type of report can be seen in the NIACE/BSA evaluations of the Basic Skills Community Fund in Britain (Lavender & Stevens, 2001).

⁴ The Ministry of Education provides most of the funding for Literacy Aotearoa and Workbase, including their research activities.

It is interesting to note that four of the evaluations involve computer assisted learning (CAL) packages, all of which are different and most of which have since disappeared from common usage in New Zealand. Rather than there being a continuation of this type of study, it would be more useful for a broad literature review (including the four New Zealand studies) to be compiled, leading to a listing of criteria for selecting and using CAL packages. A set of general guidelines based on a wide range of research findings would be more useful for practitioners using this approach.

Over half of the research involves various combinations of evaluations, incidence studies and needs analyses. This dominance is probably attributable to adult literacy endeavouring to 'make the case' for its learners – firstly, by 'proving' the extent of the issue (whether it be across the country or within specific groups) and then 'proving' the value of the programmes offered to meet these needs. In both cases, the 'proving' has either directly or indirectly aimed at funders, politicians and policy-makers who have taken some time to be convinced of the need and importance of adult literacy. With the battle for recognition now largely won (as reflected in the Ministry's strategy and the increasing amounts of funding becoming available), there is much less need to continue with these sorts of studies, apart from well-funded, national incidence studies to periodically monitor longer-term changes in New Zealand adults' literacy skills.

There is little doubt that the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and its various sub-analyses stand out as the most significant piece of research, both in quality (which reflects its level of funding) and the impact that it has achieved in the broader educational and political arenas. In the long term IALS will certainly stand out as a watershed in the development of New Zealand adult literacy and serves as an excellent example of the political influence that good research can achieve.

In strong contrast to IALS, a large proportion of the studies have been small-scale in their scope and sample sizes. While this observation certainly reflects the dominance of qualitative studies, it also reflects the poor level of funding that has been available, which has necessitated many studies to be resourced by the researchers themselves or out of general operating budgets. Apart from the cost of IALS (approximately \$.3m), the great majority of the studies would have probably cost less than \$5000 and many less than \$1000. Such levels of resourcing are minimal in comparison to research in other educational sectors. The funding of larger scale research studies in the future would help produce research findings that can generalised more widely and provide higher levels of confidence about their results.

While Allan Quigley quite rightly points out that the greatest need is to research and analyse deeper issues, a case can also be made for some descriptive research at this stage of the field's development. We simply do not have systematic information about what is currently done in the field. For example there is a need to know how New Zealand adult literacy programmes operate in detail, including their recruitment strategies, teaching methods,

patterns of attendance/withdrawal etc. A large-scale study of this everyday practice would provide useful information for future planning, and most importantly, could provide a guideline for deciding what forms of data need to be collected nationally. Studies of this type have been done in Australia (McGuirk, 2001) and in the US (Beder, 2001). Such a study would also provide a valuable benchmark for future development in areas such as tutor training and provision management.

Data collection is an important related issue. Systematic data collection should exist alongside research, both influencing each other. At present there is no standard, national data collection system for adult literacy in New Zealand. Some national and local organisations collect their own data for internal purposes and for reporting to funders, but none of this is readily available or analysed nationally in a systematic way. A good model for effective reporting of data can be found in the NIACE report on British adult education (Hillage, Uden, Aldridge, & Eccles, 2000). A note of caution should be sounded about data however: if a national system is put in place, it needs to be selective, manageable and reported back to the field in a useful form. A recent analysis of Ministry of Education information sources (Professor John Hattie, personal communication) identified 105 different databases. It would be interesting to speculate how well either the Ministry, or the fields to which they relate, use these databases.

A number of the studies in this review have been carried out with scant or no reference to the extensive adult literacy literature that exists internationally on the topics being studied. Rather, they have referred almost exclusively to literature about children's literacy and used reading tests that were never intended for use with adults. In most cases, this reflects the fact that these researchers' experience has been in school-related research and they have little awareness of adult literacy, either as a distinctive field of practice, or its literature. Most of these studies have been published in schooling-oriented publications and are probably not known to adult literacy practitioners.

The quality of the research varies considerably, from the sophistication of IALS to some that contain little analysis or rigour. This low level of quality probably reflects the 'do-it-yourself' approach that has inevitably resulted from a paucity of resources, a shortage of skilled researchers interested in the field and a professional isolation from other educational researchers.⁵ Improving the quality of future research needs to be a high priority.

Finally, it is important to point out that while there are undoubtedly shortcomings about what has been achieved at this point, there are some positive features also. For example, the collaborative approach between skilled researchers and practitioners (as exemplified in the Power Board study by Cunningham et al. carried out 20 years ago) is one worth emulating and the 'research and development' approach of some recent curriculum projects

⁵ Although this isolation has changed considerably recently with a number of child literacy researchers becoming involved in adult literacy projects.

is also to be lauded. Collaboration between researchers and practitioners is most valuable at the research design and planning stages.

Both of these qualities will help ensure that research is integrated into practice, as it should be.

Content of the research

With such a small number of studies, it is inevitable that there is a long list of areas that have been missed or covered inadequately. What different groups rate as the highest priority will invariably vary according to their philosophies, current priorities and the contexts in which they operate. Below I have endeavoured to list some of the areas across the field that warrant research attention, either because they have not been covered at all or because the coverage so far has been incomplete.

Literacy as an issue/educational sector

At a general level, as well as within specific social groups, we do not know much about how and where New Zealanders use their literacy skills in everyday life (esp. in a world where literacy is taking on many new forms), how they cope with these literacy demands and the consequences of not coping.

Another area to be explored is the role of literacy in relation to other areas of social policy such as health, employment, social welfare, crime, family life, intergenerational links and schooling. Similarly, there is scope for cost benefit analyses along the lines of the Australian study that reviewed the economic costs of inadequate literacy skills (Hartley, 1989).

While there have been two historical accounts carried out to date, there is certainly scope for more in-depth coverage of areas such as literacy in Maori and Pakeha communities in earlier decades, how literacy emerged as an issue in the 1970s and its subsequent development and how the mass media have covered it.

There is undoubtedly much to be documented about Maori perspectives on literacy, the distinctiveness of Maori forms of provision and the role of te reo within them. Similarly, the area of Pasifika adult literacy is severely under-researched. Pasifika were shown to be the group with the greatest literacy need in the IALS survey (Ministry of Education, 1997) and their current provision is largely unknown and not given specific priority by many providers.

Numeracy, oracy and writing

Numeracy, oracy and writing are distinct areas of concern and all have been largely ignored by researchers as specific issues. The issues of writing and numeracy as distinctive areas for teaching and learning with adults warrant particular attention (Gillespie, 2001; Tout & Schmitt, 2002).

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

ESOL often goes hand-in-hand with literacy, whether it is literacy in learners' first language or in English. Unlike Australia, adult literacy and ESOL in New Zealand have not had a particularly close relationship historically (with a few notable exceptions). Despite their close interrelationship in everyday practice for many teachers, the two sets of needs have tended to be taught by different organisations, with little awareness of each other. Given the numbers of immigrants and refugees who do not have English as their first language and have low levels of education in New Zealand, this area certainly has potential for exploration in research.

Learners and the reading/learning process

Coverage of adult literacy learners has been reasonable thus far, but there remains much to be done. We have a reasonable understanding of which social groups are most affected by inadequate literacy skills, but not a lot in any depth about these groups specifically – especially Pasifika, Maori, young adults, older adults and disabled groups. What has motivated these people (some in their later years of life) to seek help for a problem that they have had all their lives? How adequate is the tuition that they receive in the various types of programmes and does literacy remain an issue in the longer-term for them, even after receiving help?

Allan Quigley points out that while we know a reasonable amount about the learners who participate in our programmes, we know much less about the people who don't participate. What hinders or stops their seeking help and what would encourage them to participate? Also, what happens to those who participate briefly, but then withdraw?

In addition to focussing on learners, there needs to be explorations of reading behaviours and learning generally – there has been only one such study of this type in New Zealand to date (Taka, 1997). What constitutes effective practice in the various New Zealand contexts in which literacy is taught?⁶ Is there a minimum amount of tuition needed in order for a learner to make progress that is satisfactory to the learner, the tutor and the funding bodies involved? The first-ever national study of impact on learners in Britain (Basic Skills Agency, 2000) found that while most learners made some progress, those who made the greatest progress received well above the average 1-2 hours tuition per week.

Considerable benefit could also be gained by undertaking a literature review on what overseas research can tell us about what constitutes best practice in the teaching of adults in reading, writing and maths. The Ministry of Education has funded this type of study for other areas of education.

⁶ See for example the NCAL study on the characteristics of successful workplace programmes (Mikulecky & Lloyd, 1996).

Another area warranting attention is that of learning disabilities. While this type of diagnosis is common in formal education, it has largely been ignored in New Zealand adult literacy. What can be learnt from the literature on child learning disabilities and some of the material emerging from teaching special needs adults (see for example, Corley & Taymans, 2002; Sutcliffe, 1990)?

*Tutors*⁷

Tutors are the cornerstones⁸ of the educational process and yet we still know very little about the people who teach in adult literacy programmes. In particular, we know very little about what they actually do in their teaching, why they do this, how their beliefs shape their teaching behaviour, how they have learnt their skills and how their teaching behaviours relate to what they have been taught in training courses. Until recently being an adult literacy tutor was almost inevitably a marginal, low-status career, but there has been a relatively big increase in the numbers of full-time positions becoming available in some areas over the recent past. The long-term development of the field will depend largely on having a skilled, committed group of tutors available who regard their work as a career and not something they do at great personal cost or on their way to a 'real career'. For these reasons, tutors are one area that warrants a high priority.

Provision

Adult literacy tuition is available from a wide range of providers and delivered in a myriad of ways. This makes it difficult to even find how much funding is spent on the issue. There would be value in compiling a comprehensive overview of current provision that was readily available and then updated regularly through a national data collection system.

Assessment of learning

As always, assessment is a key issue that warrants constant exploration, although it is receiving considerable attention at present with the development of the Adult Literacy Achievement Framework. In particular, the focus needs to be on the differences between reading and learning behaviours of adults vis-à-vis children – in what ways are they distinctively different?

Research capacity

If New Zealand adult literacy is to generate good quality, rigorous research in the future, the research capacity of the personnel involved will need to be increased and improved. There are simply too few people with high quality, relevant research skills at present to deliver what is needed. If the research funding available is increased, it will undoubtedly attract people with related

⁷ The term *tutor* is probably more commonly used in the field than *teacher* or *instructor*, probably because of its more egalitarian connotations.

⁸ The Basic Skills Agency study (2000) quoted above found that qualified teachers' learners achieved significantly more than those taught by non-qualified teachers.

skills, but care will be needed to ensure that their skills are used in ways that are appropriate to the ethos and characteristics of the field (see following section). Certainly researchers who continue to treat adults as 'big children' should be challenged for their ignoring the distinctive features of the field and its related literature.⁹

Many of the studies in this review have been carried out by practitioners as part of post-graduate qualifications (and are usually the only piece of research they do), so that most of the research has been, and is likely to continue to be, generated by a handful of researchers. A very small number of these researchers are located in universities – academia has contributed very little to adult literacy in comparison with what they have done in other educational sectors. The remainder have been either independent contract researchers or practitioners who have done their research as part, or on top of, their normal jobs.

There is always a temptation to look to postgraduate students to provide the personnel to generate the research identified for priority, but in my experience there are considerable problems with relying on these students for this role. The difficulties include:

- the unpredictable variation in quality of the research (not all students are capable researchers and it is their first piece of research for most)
- the issue of timing research to fit in with the academic year and its bureaucratic requirements
- the fact that most students in relevant degrees tend to be mature-age and already have their own research interests
- research that serves academic purposes does not always mesh well with the purposes of practitioners and policy-makers.

Post-graduate theses are an interesting and useful form of research literature, but they are unlikely to deliver the results that are needed for the field.

Principles and qualities sought

The National Institute for Literacy in the US has established a set of general principles to guide research in the field, following consultation with programme directors (National Institute for Literacy, 1999, p. 5)¹⁰. They concluded that researchers should:

- build on prior work and identify that prior work in the framework of the study
- assess to what extent a research question can be answered and whether it will provide useful information to policymakers, practitioners and other researchers

⁹ Although it should also be said that adult literacy researchers need to be aware of what research on child literacy has to offer (see (Snow & Strucker, 2000).

¹⁰ The specific topics they prioritised can be found in Research Triangle Institute, 1998, pp. 5-10. A similar list generated by practitioners is reported by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (Bingman et al., 1998).

- test the research design before implementation
- assess the availability and quality of the data that can be collected before determining the data collection procedure
- articulate the relevance of the research to key programs and policy issues
- adopt a consistent use of definitions and measures and
- develop a stated dissemination process that takes into consideration the practitioners and policymakers who would benefit from the research and the ways in which research findings can best be communicated to them.

The last of these points is especially important. Research findings have not played a very prominent role in New Zealand adult literacy previously, although there are signs that this is changing in some areas. If effective practices are to be developed in the future, research needs to play an important role in critiquing and understanding present practices as well as provide on-going feedback on new developments. Such research-informed developments will require a close, three-way relationship between practitioners, policymakers and researchers. As the NIFL report (1999, p. 10) says, “all adult literacy research must lead to improvements in practice or policy to be valuable.”

In order for this three-way relationship to develop, all three perspectives will need to be involved in the formulation of the research, how it is carried out and most importantly, how the findings are then disseminated and linked back into policy, practice and subsequent research. There have been efforts to establish research networks for this purpose in Canada (Quigley & Norton, 2001).

Funding sources

In order to generate the level and quality of research needed, there will need to be increased funding made available in comparison with what has been provided in the past. In particular, this funding should be identified specifically for research, rather than being siphoned off other funding categories. While the Ministry of Education and the new Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) will remain the dominant sources for this research (both directly and through provider funding,¹¹ there is potential to seek funding from other funding sources, especially other government departments and ministries where literacy can be shown to have clear implications. Similarly, there should be efforts to include adult literacy as an element of larger scale studies to maximise resources¹² and ensure that literacy is kept on relevant agendas of public debate.

¹¹ If research funding is provided to Other Tertiary Education Providers (OTEP), it nonetheless should be planned in co-ordination with the overall research priorities to avoid duplication and best use of resources.

¹² New Zealand undoubtedly achieved considerable savings by participating in the IALS as part of the OECD, rather than independently carrying out a study.

Conclusion

If we think of research as a map to guide and plan our future practice and policy, then what we have at present is somewhat akin to what early explorers of this part of the world had to guide their journeys. Many important features are missing from the map and the information about known features is not always accurate or complete.

Because there is such a paucity of research available so far, future priorities will need to be chosen carefully to study issues of the greatest concern, especially where overseas research findings are not available or appropriate. The proposed research needs to be realistically funded, ensuring that the research is well done and that it is linked closely with previous research, both in New Zealand and overseas. Above all, the linking of the research back into practice needs to be clearly established and become a dynamic component of adult literacy's development. Research-informed practice can then become a reality; at present, the two are only tenuously linked at present.

Section Three – Alphabetical Listing of Studies

[1] Author: Acheson, F.

Year: 1984

Title: Twenty adult literacy tutors: a case study in volunteering

Place of publication: Dunedin

Publisher: University of Otago

Type of publication: Bachelor of Arts (Hons) thesis

Research method(s): Interviews

Sample size: 20 tutors

Abstract: A study of predominantly middle class, middle-aged and above female volunteers in adult literacy, including their characteristics, motivations and benefits gained.

[2] Author: Anderson, J. P. E.

Year: 1979

Title: Functional literacy at the tertiary education level

Place of publication: Hamilton

Publisher: University of Waikato

Type of publication: Master of Philosophy thesis

Abstract: Not reviewed

[3] Author: Baker, G.

Year: 1996

Title: Report of the evaluation of TOP Learning Assistance Services

Place of publication: Wellington

Publisher: Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA)

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews (group and individual) and mailed questionnaire

Sample size: 36 TOP tutors and managers interviewed; 23 (43.3% return rate) returned questionnaire; 29 TOP trainees interviewed in seven groups; 31 Learning Assistance tutors interviewed in five groups.

Abstract: This evaluation sought to critically review the literacy, numeracy and learning skills development tuition offered to TOP trainees by the Learning Assistance Service (LAS), consisting of five organisations who employed 'roving tutors' in the Wellington region. The evaluation reported on the Service's strengths, improvements that could be made to the Service and alternative ways of offering learning assistance. Specific issues identified were the amount of tuition offered, the location of the tuition, LAS tutor training, integration of literacy into overall programmes, the meaning of a 'learner-centred approach' and extending the links between LAS tutors and course tutors.

[4] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 1989

Title: Taking control of their own lives: a study of the Auckland Adult Literacy Scheme, students and tutors.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Auckland Adult Literacy Scheme in association with the Sir Roy McKenzie Trust

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews

Sample size: 39 learners (72% return), 41 tutors (95.5% return)

Abstract: This study was initiated by the Auckland Adult Literacy Scheme in order to gain a better understanding of their programme, their learners and tutors and what impact the programme was achieving. The learners had been in the programme from 6 months to 4 years, typically attended 1-1.5 hours of tuition per week and were generally satisfied with their rate of progress. Tutoring methods varied considerably, partly because most was done on a 1:1 basis. The report also covers the effect of literacy difficulties on the learners' everyday lives, both as adults and as children. The tutors included only one man, were mainly middle-aged, well educated and working as volunteers. All had been through a basic training programme, but most said they would like more training. The tutors tended to be less positive about their learners' progress; both groups reported increased confidence as the most important outcome of their learning. The report concludes with a series of questions arising from the research for the Scheme administrators.

[5] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 1991

Title: Workplace literacy in Bluebird Foods Ltd. Evaluation Report

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: ARLA Workbase

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Face-to-face interviews

Sample size: 12 course participants, 2 tutors, 12 supervisors, 3 managers, 3 union officials and 2 ARLA staff.

Abstract: This research report examined the impact that a workplace literacy programme had on the participants' literacy skills, their personal lives, specific job tasks, their attitudes to training and their general working environment. The evaluation took place a week after the course ended and utilised multiple data sources to increase the validity of the results. The course received consistently high ratings from all of the interview sources and positive outcomes for the learners were reported across a range of areas including greater accuracy in work tasks, increased independence and autonomy, more initiative-taking, greater co-operation and better communications. In the wider work environment, the course was reported to have contributed to workplace morale and improved communications.

[6] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 1992

Title: 'Waking up your mind' - follow-up interviews with Bluebird course participants.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: ARLA Workbase

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Face-to-face interviews

Sample size: 10 course participants, 12 supervisors and 3 managers.

Abstract: This research study was carried out eight months after the initial evaluation (see above) and included the course participants, supervisors and management representatives to assess the longer-term impact of the course. The course was still rated positively by the learners and most reported a range of improvements in their work as a result of their improved skills. Often changes were seen in how the learners "speak up for themselves" and solve problems more readily and confidently. A few had gained promotion, but most were content to stay in their present jobs and a few had been disappointed in not gaining new jobs/promotion. Despite all participants saying in the initial evaluation that they intended to continue their literacy tuition and other education courses, none had carried through with this intention eight months later.

[7] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 1992

Title: Evaluation report to Education and Training Support Agency of the International College of Applied Learning's Computer Curriculum Corporation trial programme

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: AJ Associates in association with Carrington Polytechnic and ETSA

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Learning journals, tutor logs, timed observations, rating scales, questionnaires, Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) data, observations and interviews

Sample size: 19 learners and 2 tutors

Abstract: This study assessed the literacy gains and overall functioning of 19 ACCESS students using a CAL package (*Computer Curriculum Corporation*) over 36 hours of tuition. The package was judged to have “an overall positive effect on the participants’ learning,” despite its short duration. The study used a wide range of data sources, all of which showed clear improvements in the learners’ attitudes towards their learning and themselves generally. Key elements of the CAL were identified as its flexibility, control by learners over pace, individualisation and immediacy of feedback. Problems with the programme included the physical space where the course was held, the need to integrate the CAL into other elements of the learners’ other programmes, the use of some inappropriate parts of the CCC package and ensuring that the learners focus on areas in keeping with their literacy needs.

[8] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 1994

Title: The establishment and operation of the Open Learning Centre Manawatu Inc. at Palmerston North Public Library

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: AJ Associates

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews and document analysis

Sample size: NA

Abstract: This report documents the establishment of an open learning centre primarily concerned with literacy tuition at the Palmerston North Library. The report traces the history of the Centre’s development, its philosophy as an open learning centre, programme details, management structures, the characteristics of its participants and tutors and current issues (funding, future location with the proposed new library and the extent of its provision.

[9] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 1994

Title: Evaluation of the Road Safety Education Programme at the Open Learning Centre Manawatu Inc.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: AJ Associates

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Phone and face-to-face interviews and document analysis

Sample size: 13 Centre staff, 19 key informants from other organisations and 87 learners

Abstract: This evaluation report covered a range of road safety programmes that the OLC had run during 1993 and 1994, including Defensive Driving courses, Learner Drivers' Licence theory, Disqualified Drivers' Special Project, advocacy work and a range of other activities. The results from these programmes and activities were rated as extremely good, especially given the level of funding involved. The main issues identified for the programme were a need to help learners to carry through with sitting their licence tests, a collation of results using Police data and securing longer-term funding sources.

[10] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 2000

Title: Voices from the workplace

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Workbase

Type of publication: Wide circulation report

Research method(s): Interviews

Sample size: 9

Abstract: This qualitative study details nine case studies of workers who have participated in a literacy programme located in a workplace learning centre. The interviewees discuss the implications of their literacy difficulties in their jobs, how they have coped previously and the impact that improving their skills has had on their work, them as individuals, as well as their family and broader community.

[11] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 2002

Title: Phase 1 Family Literacy in Manukau: Infrastructure development. Formative and process evaluation report for the City of Manukau Education Trust.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: UniServices/The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews, observation, data analysis, records analysis.

Sample size: NA

Abstract: This report covers the planning and initial stages of a family literacy programme in Manukau City. Starting with a literature review of family

literacy research, the report reviews the main components of family literacy programmes (mainly in the US), key components of successful programmes, a review of issues that arose in the initial stages of the project and the range of possible evaluation methods.

[12] Author: Benseman, J.

Year: 2003

Title: Phase 2 of the Manukau Family Literacy Programmes pilot implementation. Interim (2nd) Formative and process evaluation report for the City of Manukau Education Trust.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: UniServices/The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews, observation, data analysis, records analysis.

Sample size: 26 adults, 26 children and approx. 20 teachers, administrators and related personnel.

Abstract: The second evaluation report of the Manukau Family Literacy Programme reviews the first six months of the two pilot sites' operations. In addition to identifying issues that have arisen during the programmes' development, it also discusses other key elements that are seen as key to the project's success. A large part of the report details the impact of the programme on the 52 adults and children participants from interviews with the adults, programme teachers, records and other project members.

[13] Author: Benseman, J. & Tobias, R.

Year: 2003

Title: 'First chance for a real education' – an impact study of adult literacy. Follow-up study of Training Opportunities and Youth Training adult literacy students in Christchurch.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: UniServices/The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews

Sample size: 87

Abstract:

[14] Authors: Boyd, V., Cates, J., Hellyer, J., Leverton, M., Robinson, H. & Tobias, R.

Year: 2002

Title: Stopping and starting: why adults return to literacy training

Place of publication: Wellington
Publisher: New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning (in press)

Type of publication: Unpublished paper
Research method(s): Interviews
Sample size: 6

Abstract: This research report covers six case studies of adult literacy students, including their school experiences, how they have coped with their lack of literacy skills since leaving school, why they decided to seek help, their experiences as literacy learners and the impact this learning has had on their lives.

[15] Author: Cartner, M., Hayward, M. & Vaz, H.
Year: 1989
Title: Literacy needs survey
Place of publication: Hamilton
Publisher: Waikato ARLA and Waikato Polytechnic

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report
Research method(s): Survey and analysis of writing sample
Sample size: 380 students

Abstract: This report covers a literacy needs analysis of 380 mainstream students at the Waikato Polytechnic. Results showed that 25% of the students surveyed had some difficulty with the reading material supplied in the survey, 29% had difficulty understanding written text and 39% indicated a reading need when information from the Trades and Foundation courses were included. In terms of writing and spelling, 38% had spelling difficulties (57% in the Trades and Foundations courses), 35% indicated difficulties in writing down what they wanted to say and only half (51%) said they used a dictionary. Less than half (44%) said they knew of the assistance available, 40% said they would like assistance and only 9% indicated they "might request assistance." The report concluded that there was "a definite literacy need" among mainstream students.

[16] Author: Caswell, S.
Year: 1992
Title: Student perceptions of their gains on an adult literacy programme (also published in the *New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning*, 21 (2), 7-22)
Place of publication: Auckland
Publisher: The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Master of Arts thesis
Research method(s): Interviews
Sample size: 20

Abstract: This thesis compares 20 adult literacy learners' perceptions of gains in literacy skills in the six months since they started tuition. The learners were motivated either by a desire to "improve their education" and especially getting a better job. Four of the learners did not feel they had made any improvement in their literacy skills (two blamed themselves for this), eleven made a small improvement and only five reported a large improvement. Nonetheless, a majority of the learners still reported a change in their "affective personal achievement" and self-confidence.

[17] Authors: Cunningham, G., Dawn, S., Mathews, J., Norton, S., Wagner, G. & Williams, M.

Year: 1983

Title: A job-related literacy survey among Electric Power Board workers

Place of publication: Wellington

Publisher: New Zealand Council for Educational Research

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews and observation

Sample size: 20 workers

Abstract: This study was the result of a collaborative project between a group of WEA adult literacy workers, a union and the NZCER. Prompted by literacy difficulties for linemen and jointers in sitting formal exams, the study set out to document the literacy needs of these workers in their everyday tasks. Probably the first workplace-related needs assessment in New Zealand and distinctive for its collaborative approach involving literacy workers, a union and a research institution.

[18] Author: Denny, G.

Year: 2002

Title: Qualifications for workplace adult literacy educators in New Zealand

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: School of Education, The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Master of Education (Adult & Higher) thesis

Research method(s): Semi-structured interviews

Sample size: 4 tutors, 4 staff from three literacy organisations and 4 managers from three companies.

Abstract: This thesis explores the need for a workplace literacy qualification for tutors in New Zealand. Following an analysis of the current industrial context, the role of workplace literacy and the issues that the field currently faces, this thesis then analyses the role of workplace tutors and their requisite skills. The third part then turns to the issue of a possible industry-based tutor qualification, including its structure and how it might be delivered to potential learners. This discussion also reviews what is currently available in New Zealand, international alternatives and where such a qualification could be located. The writer uses discourse analysis as her theoretical framework.

[19] Author: Hill, K.

Year: 1990

Title: The adult literacy movement in New Zealand: its rise and development (also published as From this fragile web. An informal history of the adult literacy movement in New Zealand 1974-1988)

Place of publication: Wellington

Publisher: New Zealand Council for Educational Research

Type of publication: Published book

Research method(s): Interviews, document analysis

Sample size: NA

Abstract: This book is the only documented history of the adult literacy movement in New Zealand. It is particularly valuable for its descriptive detail of the field's development in the early 1970s and 1980s. The appendices contain a range of statistical data and documents written by key figures.

[20] Author: Irwin, A.

Year: 1988

Title: The literacy needs of ACCESS students

Place of publication: Wellington

Publisher: Transition Division, Department of Education

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaires

Sample size: 1680 ACCESS trainees from three areas

Abstract: Angela Irwin co-ordinated this survey of perceived literacy needs of ACCESS trainees for the Department of Education on secondment from her job as computing tutor. Some effort was made to ensure that the sampling was representative, but was not done using any specific strategy. The self-reporting methodology was based on the English National Child Development Study and modified for local situations. Initially a quarter (24.7%) acknowledged reading difficulties, 39.9% writing difficulties and 35.8% maths difficulties. When the interviewers realised that some respondents had answered negatively because they always got help with their difficulties, a second, more focussed set of questions raised the level of difficulties to 51.5% for reading, 70.0% for writing and 69.8% for maths. Of this number, 54% said that they were not receiving help at present and 64.2% would like help if it were available. There was not variation of need across different groups, except for gender (men having greater needs) and ethnicity (greatest need among Pasifika and Asians, although the latter were a small sample size). The report also explored a range of options for providing assistance for the potential learners.

[21] Authors: Jakob-Hoff, M. & Sutton, A.

Year: 1996

Title: Te Whare Ako. An evaluation of a workplace literacy and language programme at the Tasman Pulp and Paper Mill, Kawerau

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: AJ Associates

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Individual and group interviews, observation and document review

Sample size: 21 learners, 10 key informants and 7 workers on one shift, including non-users of the Centre

Abstract: After two years of operation, the Workbase Education Trust commissioned an evaluation of its workplace literacy centre at the Tasman mill in Kawerau - "to determine whether or not, and in what ways, the activities at Te Whare Ako have added value to Tasman Pulp and Paper Mill and its employees." Centre records and feedback from the interviewees indicated the Centre had been a very positive development for the Mill in terms of worker effectiveness, participation in meetings, communications and especially working in teams. The evaluators said that they specifically looked for dissatisfaction or indications of problems, but "it was difficult to find." The only issues identified were the physical location of the Centre, the adequacy of Centre records, the need for more structured programmes for some learners and a concern that some of the Centre staff were over-stretched.

[22] Author: Jenkins, K.

Year: 1991

Title: Te ihi, te mana, te wehi o te ao tuhi

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Master of Arts thesis

Research method(s): Historical document analysis

Sample size: NA

Abstract: This thesis provides an historical analysis of the development of print literacy among Maori in the early 1800s and especially its role in the colonisation process. Jenkins argues that despite some historians' scepticism, there is evidence that there was widespread literacy among Maori soon after the arrival of Europeans and that traditional Maori culture included its own forms of symbolic coding in oral expression and forms such as carving, moko, rock paintings and weaving.

[23] Authors: Kohere, R. & Smith, C.

Year: 1989

Title: He ringa raupa

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Te Whiri Kaupapa Ako and the Research Unit in Maori Education, The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews, observation and document analysis

Sample size: not stated

Abstract: This report documents the historical development of a literacy programme at the Haranui Marae on the Kaipara Harbour. The evaluation details the realities of locating a literacy programme on a marae and provides a detailed list and discussion of recommendations for future development of the programme.

[24] Authors: Lavery, L., Townsend, M. & Wilton, K.

Year: 1998

Title: Computer-assisted instruction in teaching literacy skills to adults not in paid employment

Publication: New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies 33(2), 181-192

Type of publication: Journal article

Research method(s): Reading and numeracy tests

Sample size: 12

Abstract: This study measured the gains in reading and numeracy skills for 12 adults in two Training Opportunities classes. One group used *Readers' Workshop, Maths Concepts and Skills* and *Computer Curriculum Corporation* CAL software packages, while the other received conventional teaching. The programme participants' reading and numeracy skills were measured using the *Burt Word Reading Test*, the *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability* and the *KeyMath Revised* test using an "intact-groups, pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design." The CAL group were calculated to have made three years gain on the Burt, over one year on the Neale and 16 months on the maths test in under two months instruction. During the same time the conventionally taught students made no gains in reading skills and showed a slight decline in maths performance. The authors concluded that there is a useful role for CAL in teaching adults literacy skills, especially when it is supplemented by traditional teaching.

[25] Author: Longmuir, K.

Year: 1993

Title: The availability of health information for people with reading problems.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Anthropology and Continuing Education Departments

Type of publication: Academic report

Research method(s): Interviews and literature review

Sample size: Six health workers

Abstract: This study on literacy issues in health education publications was carried out on a Health Research Council Summer Studentship. It included a literature review of research on this issue and interviews with a group of health educators/workers.

[26] Authors: Maré, D. & Chapple, S.

Year: 1999

Title: Literacy formation and its influence on earnings and jobs

Place of publication: NA

Publisher: Not published

Type of publication: Unpublished paper (3rd draft)

Research method(s): Data analysis of IALS survey

Sample size: 4,223

Abstract: A report on statistical analyses of the IALS data, looking in particular at the relationship between work and literacy skills. The report concluded that “there is the strong suggestion that literacy is associated with better labour market outcomes. We are much more confident about this as a causal relationship than we would have been simply on the basis of the Ministry of Education’s simple cross tabulations.” A final version of this paper does not appear to be available.

[27] Author: McMillan, A.

Year: 1978

Title: The social problem of adult illiterates

Place of publication: Dunedin

Publisher: Anthropology Department, University of Otago

Type of publication: Master of Arts thesis

Research method(s):

Sample size:

Abstract: Not reviewed

[28] Author: Mete, Huhana

Year: 1996

Title: Maori literacy: the local reality.

Place of publication: Palmerston North

Publisher: Dunmore Press

Type of publication: Chapter in Benseman, J., Findsen, B. & Scott, M. (eds) *The fourth sector: adult and community education in Aotearoa New Zealand*, pp. 112-126.

Research method(s): Participant observation

Sample size: Not stated

Abstract: A qualitative study of the daily realities confronting organisers of a Maori adult literacy programme. Describes and analyses the difficulties of fitting a Maori kaupapa within the bureaucratic demands of government agencies that fund the programmes. Includes specific discussion of teaching styles, working with schools, finance, the role of community support, staffing and management. Concludes with reflections on what has been learnt in the process of establishing the programme.

[29] Author: Michel, P.

Year: 1992

Title: The older adult with literacy difficulties – a study of six 60+ year-olds in Auckland literacy schemes.

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Centre for Continuing Education, The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Certificate in Adult Education research report

Research method(s): Interviews

Sample size: 6 learners

Abstract: A qualitative study where the author interviewed six adult literacy learners over 60 who had participated in local adult literacy programmes. Covered their motivation for seeking help, their experience of learning as older adults and the effects it had on their lives.

[30] Author: Ministry of Education (M. Walker, K. Udy and N. Pole)

Year: 1997

Title: Adult literacy in New Zealand. Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey

Place of publication: Wellington

Publisher: Ministry of Education

Type of publication: Wide circulation summary report

Research method(s): National survey

Sample size: random sample of 4223 New Zealanders aged 16-65

Abstract: This Ministry report details key findings from the 1996 IALS done as part of an international series of studies on the incidence of literacy difficulties in national samples of adults. Includes analyses of the total sample, by gender, age, ethnicity, level of educational qualification, labour force status and income level. A much more detailed analysis of New Zealand's findings and comparisons with other OECD countries can be found in the two OECD reports (1997, 2000)

[31] Authors: Moore, L. and Benseman, J.

Year: 1993

Title: Literacy at work. An exploratory survey of literacy and basic education needs in the workplace (also published in the *New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning*, 24(2), 5-38)

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: ARLA Workbase, with funding assistance from Fletcher Challenge Ltd.

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): face-to-face interviews using questionnaire

Sample size: 226 workers, 26 employee relations personnel, 78 supervisors from 17 companies in the manufacturing industry.

Abstract: A workplace survey of reported literacy difficulties among workers using workers' self-report and assessments from others who work with them. The report indicates a rising level of expectation of literacy skills in the workplace at all levels. A third of the employee relations managers reported that they believed that their workforce were not coping well with these increased literacy and numeracy demands. The supervisors calculated that 1 in 6 of their workers have significant reading difficulties, 1 in 4 have significant writing problems and 1 in 4 have significant maths difficulties. The workers' own reports were lower – from 7-15% reported difficulties across a range of tasks. Over a quarter (28%) of those whose English was not their first language reported difficulties with English in their work.

[32] Authors: Moore, L. & Sutton, A.

Year: 1997

Title: Accessing the National Qualifications Framework with low levels of literacy: how enterprises support employees with limited literacy, language and numeracy skills

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Workbase and AJ Associates

Type of publication: Unpublished report

Research method(s): Telephone survey

Sample size: 27 companies

Abstract: This research report looked at how people with low literacy skills were accessing the QF. Three quarters of the respondents in the survey said that they were concerned about literacy skill levels, especially process workers/operators with low levels of schooling. Over half of the respondents said that this group included people with a non-English speaking background. The problem with literacy levels showed up most strongly when introducing quality or team management systems. While many enterprises were offering literacy programmes, very few were linking these to the QF, which was being used mainly by more skilled employees. Most felt that their programmes were inadequate compared to the degree of need and that outside funding help was needed.

[33] Author: Mudford, A.
Year: 1993
Title: Literacy survey of prison inmates
Place of publication: Wellington
Publisher: Department of Justice

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report
Research method(s): Face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaires
Sample size: 3014 (72% of possible 4196 inmates in prison on October 31, 1991)

Abstract: A survey of prisoners' self-reported literacy difficulties, based on Angela Irwin's methodology. The sample included 4% women, 40% Pakeha, 39% Maori, 10% Maori/Pakeha and 12% from other ethnic groups; 12% were aged 15-19, 30% were 20-24, 22% were 25-29, 24% were 30-40 and 13% were over 40; 73% used English as their first language, 4% used English as their first language and 8% did not use English at home. 21% reported difficulties with reading, 32% with writing or spelling and 31% with 'number work'. The report also includes inmates' reported difficulties across a number of everyday tasks such as talking on the phone, using a timetable as well as specific literacy skills (reading newspapers, hire purchase agreements, writing a CV etc.). Reported difficulties were higher among the younger inmates, males (except in maths; the small number of women makes this conclusion about gender somewhat tentative) and non-Europeans (esp. Pasifika men). Over a quarter (27%) said they were not getting help of any sort (26% were getting help from the education service in the prison) and 44% said that they would like further help. A comparison with Irving's (1988) survey of ACCESS trainees concluded that the two groups had comparable degrees of need.

[34] Author: Nagy, M. S.
Year: 1997
Title: An individualised literacy programme for a young adult using home language as a medium of instruction
Place of publication: Auckland
Publisher: Auckland College of Education

Type of publication: Diploma of Education for Students with Hearing Impairment thesis
Research method(s): Interview
Sample size: 1

Abstract: A study that describes the development of a teaching programme for one 20 year-old Pasifika student with hearing impairment.

[35] Author: Nemeč, K.
Year: 1990

Title: A process evaluation of a literacy and numeracy programme for unemployed people

Place of publication: Hamilton

Publisher: University of Waikato

Type of publication: Master of Social Science thesis

Research method(s): Participant observation and interviews

Sample size: Not stated

Abstract: This thesis is a process evaluation of the establishment of The Literacy and Numeracy Incorporated Society, which began operations in December 1988. The author has documented the process of establishing the Society and its strengths and weaknesses from key people involved in its development.

[36] Author: OECD

Year: 1997 & 2000

Titles: Literacy skills for the knowledge society. Further results from the International Adult Literacy Survey.

Literacy in the information age. Final report of the International Adult Literacy Survey

Place of publication: Paris

Publisher: OECD

Type of publication: Public report from OECD

Research method(s): National surveys

Sample size: various (New Zealand 4223)

Abstract: These two OECD reports provide analyses of the findings from the International Adult Literacy Surveys (IALS) carried out in the mid-1990s mainly in OECD countries, including New Zealand. The reports are comprehensive, detailed and provide comparisons with other countries (both in graph form and data tables). Both reports are significant publications in the field of adult literacy for New Zealand and internationally.

[37] Author: Ruiz, D.

Year: 1977

Title: Writing for the new adult reader

Place of publication: Massey University

Publisher: Massey University

Type of publication: Master of Arts thesis

Research method(s): Mailed surveys

Sample size: 21 tutors and educators (80% response rate) about need for adult material; 68 adult students (52% response rate) from three programmes to ascertain the interest in reading "leisure or functional materials"; 9 adult students and 6 Standard Two children to test the reading materials developed

by author; 55 adult students to assess the readability of the reading material developed.

Abstract: This thesis is essentially a curriculum development project. The author firstly survey 21 key adult literacy informants about the degree of need for adult reading material in programmes. This was followed by another survey of adult literacy students about their interest in adult-oriented books. The author concluded, “there was found to be a need for New Zealand oriented reading materials at the reading age 8 level prepared specifically for the adult new reader” (p. ii). Based on these findings Ruiz then wrote five short readers using the *Dolch* (1942), *Mitzel* (1966), *Ready to Read* (no date given) and *Elley* (1975) word lists to ensure that the material matched the desired reading age level. Nine adult readers and six Std Two 2 children then evaluated these readers. Among the author’s conclusions is that while the children were more fluent orally, they were “markedly inferior” to the adult readers in their comprehension (p. 76), which confirms in a small way child/adult differences in reading behaviours. The readers were also tested for their readability using the *Dale-Chall*, *Fry*, *Fog* and *Spache* formulae. The readers only varied \pm one grade from the target reading age. Although fairly comprehensive, the thesis is somewhat dated because of the lack of adult-oriented resources that have been developed in recent years.

[38] Author: Selby, D.

Year: 1991

Title: An evaluative study of adult literacy/numeracy progress in the Computer Assisted Learning Unit

Place of publication: Computers in New Zealand schools

Publisher: University of Otago

Type of publication: Academic journal

Research method(s): Pre- and post-course tests (some built into the software packages) and questionnaires

Sample size: 18

Abstract: The article reports an evaluation of five software packages (*Touch Typing Tutor*, *Grammar Gremlins*, *Spell It*, *Funnels and Buckets* and *Ministry of Transport Code-tester*) used in a CAL unit at Waikato Polytechnic for ACCESS students. The evaluation details feedback on the specific software packages and concludes that the programmes were beneficial for the learners, especially the drill and practice components. The author claims “major gains in learning as the result of using the computer,” but does not provide any data detailing these gains.

[39] Authors: Shameem, N., McDermott, K., Blaker, J. & Carryer, J.

Year: 2002

Title: Through language to literacy. A report on the literacy gains of low-level and pre-literate adult ESOL learners in literacy classes

Place of publication: Not stated

Publisher: National Association of ESOL Home Tutor Schemes, UNITEC and AUT

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews, parallel performance tests and observation

Sample size: 8 tutors and 118 students

Abstract: This study assessed the literacy gains for a group of low-level and pre-literate ESOL students (from seven different countries, most of whom were refugees) on a one-semester literacy programme. The assessments were based on “test descriptors which represented eight levels of literacy ability as defined by the programme curriculum” (p. 11). The scale was used for both self-assessments and performance tests, with the latter providing clearer indications of gains. Overall the students made “significant gains.” There were no differences between students taught by native English speakers vs. bilingual teachers and the greatest gains were made by those learners receiving 12 hours of tuition per week vs. those receiving only two hours per week (although this latter group also made gains).

[40] Author: Skill New Zealand

Year: 2002

Title: Enhancing literacy provision in Training Opportunities and Youth Training

Place of publication: Wellington

Publisher: Skill New Zealand

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Questionnaires and interviews

Sample size: 125 tutors from 61 providers

Abstract: A tutor-training curriculum was developed and taught to Training Opportunities and Youth Training tutors through two workshops (22.6 hours total) in three regions. Feedback was gathered from the course participants and other key informants about the training’s effectiveness, the curriculum and its delivery, implementation support, challenges and barriers that arose. Over 90% of the participants changed their views on literacy, anticipated making changes in their literacy practice, anticipated using at least some of the training and were using at least some of the training 2-8 weeks after the course. The report includes recommendations for future courses of this type.

[41] Author: Stephenson, E.

Year: 1993

Title: An evaluation of a videotaped literacy programme for adults

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Psychology Department, The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Master of Science thesis

Research method(s): Tests and interviews

Sample size: 7

Abstract: This thesis reports the literacy gains made by seven adults (5 men and 2 women, one of whom had neurological problems) after using the *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital Literacy Program* [sic] for 100 lessons over an eight month period at the Learning Disability Clinic at The University of Auckland. The learners were referred to the programme by Workbridge and were assessed as having “significant reading, writing and spelling difficulties.” A pre-test assessment showed “patterns of difficulty ... consistent with a dysphonetic – dyseidetic classification of dyslexia.” The post-test used the same tests (the *Boder Test of Reading and Spelling Patterns*, the *Gray Oral Reading Test (Revised)* and the *Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test*) and demonstrated increased phonological skills and an average improvement of two years reading age, plus significant improvements in reading fluency, accuracy and reading comprehension. There were no improvements in the learners’ spelling. The author is cautiously optimistic about the potential of the programme for teaching adults.

[42] Author: Sutton, A.

Year: 1996

Title: Literacy and language skills in the new vocational training environment

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Massey University

Type of publication: Master of Arts (Social Sciences) Thesis

Research method(s): Participant observation and phone and face-to-face interviews

Sample size: 32 ITO managers/CEOs

Abstract: This thesis surveyed a cross-section of senior ITO managers on the extent of literacy difficulties among workers in their industries. While only a small number of the ITOs reported significant problems, most felt that the issue would grow in response to the changing environment and demands. The respondents were not at all clear about how to respond effectively to the need and where programmes were in place, these were often felt to be inadequate. There was also a confusion over how best to integrate literacy skills into existing workplace educational programmes.

[43] Author: Sutton, A.

Year: 1999

Title: The impact of low levels of literacy, language and numeracy on the work of the Industry Training Organisations in New Zealand – a snapshot in November, 1999

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Critical Insight in association with Workbase

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews

Sample size: CEOs of 49 ITOs

Abstract: This survey was carried out as a follow-up study of Alison Sutton's MA thesis (Sutton, 1996) on the extent to which low levels of literacy, numeracy or communications skills were having an impact on different industry sectors and the training environment within Industry Training Organisations. While over half of the respondents agreed that literacy was a concern for their ITO (especially in the upper North Island), only a third saw it as an issue that they should be responsible for. Poor literacy skills were seen as inhibiting training uptake; reading, writing and maths were the most frequently reported difficulties, followed by ESOL and computing.

[44] Author: Taka, M. L.

Year: 1997

Title: Word game Bingo and adult literacy students: sight work acquisition and reading comprehension

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: School of Education, The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Master of Arts thesis

Research method(s): Tests and interviews

Sample size: 6

Abstract: This thesis evaluated the effects of using Bingo sight card games to improve word recognition and reading comprehension (based on the assumption that Decoding X Linguistic Comprehension = Reading Comprehension). A group of six learners from a local adult literacy scheme were recruited and taught the game as part of their weekly one hour teaching session over one semester. The summative evaluation used a "single-case experimental research design, a within-subjects multiple baseline design across materials" methodology. Pre-tests and post-tests used the *Word Identification and Passage Comprehension* subtests of the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (Revised)*, the *Burt Reading Test* (the only one normed for New Zealand), the *Bryant Test of Basic Decoding Skills Test* and the *Roper Phonemic Awareness Test*. The author concluded that the teaching "led to improved recognition of sight words and statistically significant improvements in reading comprehension of stories containing the sight words used." The one learner who attended irregularly made no progress in these skills.

[45] Author: Trainor, P. and Silva, P.

Year: 1992

Title: Reading and writing difficulties in a sample of 18 year-olds: an unpublished paper presented to the ARLA Federation of New Zealand

Place of publication: Dunedin

Publisher: Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit, Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Otago Medical School

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report
Research method(s): Data analysis from reading tests in a longitudinal study
Sample size: 871 (of the original 1139 children born in 1972/1973 in Dunedin)

Abstract: The data for this analysis came from the Dunedin Longitudinal Study (which had under-representation of lower socio-economic and non-Pakeha groups) begun by The University of Otago in 1972. Using the Burt Test (1974 version) and self-report, the analysis commissioned for ARLS was the first attempt at an incidence study in New Zealand. In terms of self-report, 5% (44) reported difficulties with reading, 5.9% (52) reported writing difficulties; one 2% of the sample said that reading difficulties were their "greatest limitation" and 2.2% said this about writing. Using the Burt, 2.4% of the males (11) were classified as 'reading disabled and 8.8% (41) as 'borderline disabled'; the figures for females were 1.6% (7) and 4.4% (19); 11.2% of the males and 6.0% of the females had Burt scores lower than an average 12 year-old. There was a high correlation ($p < 0.0001$) between self-reported difficulties and the Burt scores for both reading and writing.

[46] Author: Vallance, S.
Year: 2002
Title: The adult learner's perceptions of the effect that negative labelling has had on their lives
Place of publication: Auckland
Publisher: Workbase

Type of publication: Conference paper
Research method(s): Interviews
Sample size: 6

Abstract: This research report outlines a small study of how six adult literacy students had been negatively labelled as children at school, how they had endeavoured to cope with this label, the struggles they underwent in order to return as adult learners and their subsequent educational experiences.

[47] Author: van der Neut, L.
Year: 1992
Title: Services available in Auckland to individuals with learning difficulties
Place of publication: Auckland
Publisher: Psychology Department, The University of Auckland

Type of publication: Master of Arts thesis
Research method(s): Document review, interviews
Sample size: NA

Abstract: A masters thesis which documented and evaluated the assessment, remedial and information services available in Auckland at that time to individuals with learning difficulties, including adult literacy.

[48] Authors: Wailes, N. & Haworth, N.

Year: 1995

Title: Skill shortage, training and recruitment: a report on a recent survey of enterprises in the Auckland Region

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Auckland Business Development Board

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Mailed survey

Sample size: 513 companies

Abstract: As part of a larger survey on skill shortages in Auckland Region enterprises, respondents were asked to identify specific types of skill shortage. A total of 230 of the 513 companies said that skill shortages affected their business operations. The respondents identified a lack of spoken, numeracy and reading/writing skills more frequently among new recruits. About one in five respondents reported they often had existing staff with a lack numeracy or reading/writing skill, whereas they identified about a third of new recruits with a lack of these skills.

[49] Author: Walton, V.

Year: 1982

Title: A description and evaluation of an adult literacy group

Place of publication: Dunedin

Publisher: University of Otago

Type of publication: Master of Arts thesis

Research method(s): Participant observation and interviews

Sample size: unknown

Abstract: This thesis monitored the establishment of an urban-based adult literacy scheme over a three-year period, including its operational development, student's motivations, rates of progress and withdrawal rates. It documents how the scheme developed an assessment process based on student input, where self-report was accepted as a valid assessment method. The most significant gains for the students were expressed in terms of self-confidence, which was seen as essential groundwork for the development of literacy skills. The author concluded that some small group work would be an option for improving standards of tuition.

[50] Author: Workbase in association with the Ministry of Education

Year: no date

Title: Literacy skills and the New Zealand workforce

Place of publication: Auckland
Publisher: Workbase

Type of publication: Wide circulation summary report
Research method(s): Data analysis
Sample size: NA

Abstract: This brief report details some further analysis of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) data, specifically in relation to the New Zealand workforce. Analyses include IALS levels by employment/unemployment, industry sectors, occupation types and employment status by age, gender and ethnicity.

[51] Author: Workbase
Year: 1999
Title: Learning in small companies
Place of publication: Auckland
Publisher: Workbase in association with Skill New Zealand

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report
Research method(s): Interviews and document analysis
Sample size: 70 learners, 9 employers/managers, 2 learning advisors

Abstract: This report covers a 'research and development' project around the issue of literacy in small workplaces (which have historically been much more difficult to provide programmes for because of their limited resources and organisational difficulties). Following initial needs analyses, a range of programme responses were developed for each of the companies, trialed and then evaluated.

[52] Author: Workbase
Year: 2001
Title: Literacy Innovation Network Cluster Project
Place of publication: Auckland
Publisher: Workbase in association with Skill New Zealand

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report
Research method(s): Interviews and data/document analysis
Sample size: 5 PTEs

Abstract: The purpose of this year long research pilot project was to work with five private training establishments to develop and increase their literacy delivery capacity and capability by focussing on establishing appropriate systems and processes. The project included an initial needs analysis and data collection, the development and negotiating of action plans, delivering training and carrying out regular site visits, developing organisational systemic development action plans, negotiating implementation and an evaluation of the project.

[53] Author: Workbase

Year: 2002

Title: Literacy in industry project. Final report

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Workbase in association with Skill New Zealand and the Seafood, Competenz, Plastics, Apparel and Textiles and Forestries ITOs.

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Interviews, observation and document analysis

Sample size: 15 managers, 59 operators and 14 assessors for 40 operators

Abstract: This research and development project set out to identify the literacy skills of key processing operators, to develop a matrix of these skills and then develop an assessment tool and training package based on this data for workplace assessors. This skill profile/matrix/assessment tool/training package approach is expected to be extended into other industries through their ITOs.

[54] Author: Workbase

Year: 2002

Title: A quality standard for adult vocational literacy providers

Place of publication: Auckland

Publisher: Workbase

Type of publication: Limited circulation research report

Research method(s): Survey and consultation hui

Sample size: 20 providers for the draft standards and 19 trainee auditors; 36 providers for the feasibility survey

Abstract: This report covers a research and development process to design a set of quality standards for workplace literacy providers. A draft quality standard was developed following consultation with a group of providers and a steering group of adult literacy practitioners. The feasibility of this draft set of quality standards was then surveyed among 36 providers, most of whom supported the general idea of a quality standard and most elements of the draft standard circulated. The report also includes feedback from Maori, Pasifika and disabled groups.

ARLA Scheme Reviews: in the mid-1990s ARLA/Te Whiri Kaupapa Ako undertook a series of reviews which provided multi-faceted evaluations of provision offered by local schemes. Each review was formally written up as a report using a methodology developed by the Federation. For a full discussion of the methodology and its process, see (Benseman, 1999).

Section Four - References

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