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TE TARI MAHI



Engaging young people/young
adults in literacy, language and
numeracy skill development

Authors

Prepared for the Department of Labour by Jenny Whatman, with Sandie Schagen, Karen Vaughan, Josie Lander, Juliet Twist, Keren Brooking, Sally Robertson and Lorraine Spiller.

New Zealand Council for Educational Research

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Department of Labour

PO Box 3705

Wellington

New Zealand

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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Young people/young adults, LLN skills and the labour market

Young people are already a vulnerable group in the labour market and their lower literacy levels are likely to mean they suffer differentially in terms of employment status, income and in social and personal domains. In this section we set out to determine: benefits to employers and the economy; benefits to individuals; social outcomes of engagement in LLN; trends in employment; transitions into the labour market; and employability for young people/young adults.

We found that LLN skills are becoming more desirable in emerging knowledge societies or 21st century societies. There is some evidence that high LLN skills are associated with higher income levels, better labour market status and security and social and personal benefits. However, it is difficult to quantify the benefits—though some studies have tried.

A number of initiatives exist to support young people in the transition from school to labour market and some of these address the needs of at-risk and young people not in employment or education and training (NEET) specifically. There is little research evidence about where LLN skills development fits in here but there is some evidence about young people's changing ways of thinking about the world beyond school and the kinds of approaches which might connect with those and thus recruit, retain and engage young people. There is evidence that we need to provide better ongoing career counselling and advice to young people/young adults.

We could find no definitive evidence for the economic impact of improving levels of LLN. Improving LLN skills may matter for those who are least skilled to start with (Tyler, 2004). Tyler's recommendation is that schools and adult LLN programmes need to pay attention to developing skills in youth with low education and little or no work experience.

LLN outcomes

One of the clear messages from some of the research (for example, Rahmani et al., 2002) is that it is difficult to measure in the short term whether LLN gains have a positive effect on employment. Policy objectives to improve LLN gain in pre-employment programmes in order to enhance employment opportunity are worthy but not always easy to achieve. LLN gain in its own right should be seen as a worthwhile goal. The authors also highlight another issue with measuring LLN outcomes which relates to time. Improving literacy and numeracy is a slow process; indicators of success are more profitably determined over longer periods of time. Unfortunately many research projects, especially evaluations of programmes, don't measure long-term gains.

The most obvious outcome from LLN learning is improvement in LLN skills, but this can be hard to measure and is not always evident. Other wider benefits include attitudes to learning, personal growth (improved self-confidence and self-

esteem) and social capital. Ideally, LLN engagement begun in pre-employment programmes would continue during and beyond employment.

Young people/young adults as learners

The key informant interviews produced an interesting range of perspectives on young people/young adults. These ranged from key informants' concern about what some informants saw as "selfish" Gen Y behaviour or young people/young adults' apparent lack of motivation and readiness for "the real world", to key informants' strong advocacy for the skills and abilities of young people/young adults, who they saw as more ready (than older adults) to adapt to and embrace the 21st century.

The learners we met and heard about were, in the main, young people/young adults who had not succeeded at school. They were enrolled in a variety of programmes, all of which included preparation for work, short-term work experience or a combination of work and education and training. We found that young people/young adults who were apparently unmotivated at school can be motivated in vocational programmes which embed LLN. Those previously NEET young people who were compelled to attend pre-employment programmes because of the social welfare benefits they were drawing, appeared motivated, and reported enjoying learning and that they were making progress.

It was obvious to us that whilst LLN was being embedded into pre-employment and vocational programmes, measuring LLN success could not be separated from social and personal outcomes. Young people/young adults were learning skills such as motivation, persistence, decision making and problem solving, responsibility, self-confidence, reflection on actions and co-operation with peers and employers. At the same time they were gaining unit standards or entry to further education and training or to employment.

Some key informants and people we interviewed during the case study research recognised the unique qualities of young people/young adults as a group and asked that they be treated with respect and that their facility with ICT be acknowledged. The informants and case study participants considered young people/young adults to be different from, but no better or worse than, older adults. Some asked that recent encouraging brain research into adolescence be heeded in policy and programme planning.

The different programmes that the young people/young adults are enrolled in cater for a range of needs and skills. It is critical for young people/young adults to have easy access to programmes that acknowledge individual learning needs. Getting young people/young adults into such programmes is half the battle—most young people we spoke to had been referred from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) or had heard via word of mouth. Retaining learners is also an issue as many have multiple demands on their lives. Once they are engaged, it would appear that the young people flourish. We need to retain the variety of options currently available and to consider ways to expand them and to encourage other disaffected young people to participate.

Young people/young adults and engagement

Research on young people/young adults and adult participation, motivation, recruitment, retention and persistence shows that motivation and persistence in particular are highly relevant to young people/young adults as a general group. A key theme appears to be that young people/young adults are harder to motivate and/or less motivated than other adults. Four features are distinct for young people/young adults:

1. the importance of extrinsic motivation which appears to be more heavily weighted to paid work rather than learning (separate from paid work)
2. "hooking in" to learning through different kinds of approaches, including involving parents
3. the importance of mentoring and counselling
4. the attitudes to anything that is like school.

A fifth important point is that young people/young adults need the opportunity to access LLN programmes. Thus NEET young people could be seen to be in a position to readily access LLN and may just need the motivational support to engage.

An important Scottish study (Hall, Maclachlan, Tett, & Edwards, 2008), identified that young people were recruited and retained through activities that covered a very wide range: examples included digital photography, magazine making, cinema visits and outdoor pursuits. Goals included those that would improve young people's health, employment, housing and educational prospects. With reference to persistence, The Quality Improvement Agency (2008) acknowledges that some of the practical barriers to persistence (for example, travel costs, shift patterns) can be extremely hard to tackle. They cited evidence suggesting that incentives could play a part, but teaching and good teachers were more important. They considered it was vital to take a "holistic" approach to the learner in addressing lack of persistence.

There are some indicators developed from the key informants and the case studies that provide further evidence about what works specifically for young people/young adults. We found that learners' motivation is enhanced by employment preparation or with/for work-related contexts. Learners who reported being unmotivated by the school curriculum appeared to be keen to improve their LLN skills because they could see the value of the skills in work and adult life. Productive tutor-learner relationships and the organisation creating a sense of belonging were obviously very important to young people/young adults. As well as valuing being treated as an adult (for example, no unnecessary rules), young people responded to being treated as an individual—being able to work at their own pace, at work which was meaningful and having ready access to one-on-one help.

Adults who work with young people/young adults

The literature review identified the importance of the staff who work with young people/young adults. A majority of the factors that lead to successful engagement of young people/young adults in LLN learning involve good teachers and good acts of teaching. Factors are shown in a table in the next section on "effective

programmes.” The adults we talked to who work with young people/young adults appear to be dedicated and to have a genuine affection for and rapport with the young people/young adults they work with: the “unsung heroes” of education. They have to be able to deal with the “whole person” and to attend to social and emotional issues as well as academic. Our observations indicated a good staff:learner ratio and frequent one-on-one and small group interactions. Staff are often working with minimal or inappropriate resources and with a very mobile population of learners. Many of the tutors and their colleagues are undertrained or untrained. Most appreciate new learning opportunities that the Government’s focus on embedding LLN presents and are enrolled in study relating to LLN teaching and learning. Most tutors are poorly paid compared to teachers in the Early Childhood Education (ECE), primary and secondary sectors and many in the tertiary sector. There are likely to be issues with attracting qualified staff when organisations are not able to reward appropriate qualifications and experience. Young people/young adults who have not succeeded at school and who are beginning further education and training or employment need expert teaching.

Effective programmes

Whilst we could not categorically say that the literature indicates that effective programmes must have all the factors outlined in the following table, the factors listed as having strong and moderate association with success were identified consistently across reports. We did not find anything about the programmes we visited that contradicted the adult LLN literature we reviewed, with effective teaching being the key to success. We did find areas of strength in approaches which valued the voice of young people/young adults and the success indicators they contributed. We added new columns to the exemplar of effective programmes which we derived from the key informants and the case studies and this chart appears at the end of this section. Some important additions include: a strengths-based approach which includes treating young people/young adults as adults and with respect and valuing them for their unique qualities; tutors being responsive to individual learning needs in a “just in time” manner; and programmes helping facilitate friendships among learners.

Key success indicators of LLN programmes for young people/young adults—key informants and case studies added to the literature

Table 1. Key indicators: strong associations with success

Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Key informants (staff/adult)	Learner level (case study)
Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills	Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills	A strengths-based approach is used	Learning programmes take account of students’ current skill level
LLN is embedded into vocational courses	LLN is embedded into vocational courses	LLN is embedded by “stealth”	
Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best			Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best

Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Key informants (staff/adult)	Learner level (case study)
Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school			Learning environment is seen as hassle-free (no pressure, unnecessary rules, etc) Students are treated as adults
Academic, social and personal services are integrated	Team teaching combines LLN, vocational, and mentoring/counselling expertise Teachers provide emotional support for learners	Young people's needs are addressed holistically	
The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever changing and interrelated		Young people are seen as unique and valued for their particular qualities Schools and families serve young people well	Students are motivated by realistic and achievable career pathways There are productive relationships between all parties involved with young people's work and learning
	Small-group learning is the norm/common		One-on-one teaching is used to meet individual needs
	Contexts and content are authentic and relevant	Learning (including LLN) is contextualised	
	Programmes meet individual needs		Tutors are responsive to individual learning needs in a "just in time" manner
	Goals are achieved within a short timeframe are quickly achieved		Learning goals are achieved quickly and easily
	Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge		
	Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults	Young people are valued as different from (but not better or worse than) older adults	
	Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable	Recent brain research drives LLN approaches	Tutors clearly explain what students do not understand Tutors break learning into manageable steps Learning progresses at students' pace

Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Key informants (staff/adult)	Learner level (case study)
	ICTs are used to enhance good teaching	Young people's facility with ICT is acknowledged	
	Teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches		Learning programmes include fun activities
	Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused		
		Respect is given to young people	There are respectful relationships among everyone in the organisation Friendships with others are facilitated by the programme

Table 2. Key indicators: moderate associations with success

Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Key informants (staff/adult)	Learner level (case study)
Low or no cost for learners		Low or no cost for learners	
Participation is voluntary			
	Young adults' extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged	Learning staircases to achievable qualification—e.g., apprenticeship Employment is a strong motivator for improving LLN	LLN seen as relevant to vocation or career pathway LLN embedded by "stealth" Learning staircases to an achievable qualification
Environments are youth friendly	Programmes are based on youth popular culture	Dedicated learning environments—whānau / marae approach or enabling work environment	The organisation has a "family" environment

Table 3. Key indicators: low associations with success

Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Key informants (staff/adult)	Learner level (case study)
LLN is learnt first, and vocational learning follows		Learning focuses on oral communication	
	Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners		
		Differences between males and females in programmes are acknowledged	

Effective organisations

Again, we did not find anything that contradicted the literature. Learners appreciated organisations that operated in a family-friendly way. Environments were not always ideal but staff helped establish warm, welcoming, learning environments. A variety of organisations and organisational approaches appeared to cater for a wide range of learners. Recruitment appeared to be about matching to learners' specific needs, including access and availability. The PTEs we visited appeared to attract those who don't have clear career intentions (or enough credits to get into a programme of choice) and for whom free access through Youth Training and Training Opportunities was important.

Discussion

There are four key areas that we think should be further debated, either because there is not enough conclusive evidence, or because there is conflicting evidence. These are:

1. a 21st century conceptualisation of literacy and numeracy including LLN outcomes
2. a focus on young people/young adults who are "most at risk"
3. a consideration of specific teacher education for people working with young people/young adults
4. an acceptance of multiple approaches to integrating LLN into vocational training and work.

These are all expanded on in the following section which is a summary report of the literature review but key points are included here.

The question remains about what it really means to be literate in the 21st century. Currently we address one aspect—albeit an important one—of the LLN needed for an individual to succeed in the present and for the country to prosper in the immediate future. But we are not taking account of how young people/young adults' facility with ICTs and their approach to living with technology can be harnessed to improve their LLN and help with New Zealand's longer term prosperity. There would seem to be a place for government to invest in developing specific resources and assessments that are tailored to young people/young adults' needs and interests, and which utilise phone and other digital technologies and other ICTs.

Quality of teaching and teachers is an issue that needs further exploration for adult LLN in New Zealand. We suggest that any research or investigation into teaching should include specific focus on skills and qualifications for teaching young people/young adults. What does seem to be critical for young people/young adults, especially those who are NEET, in New Zealand and internationally, is having a single point of contact—a trusted and constant mentor/counsellor who is very much involved in addressing social, personal and attitudinal issues which are often the main barriers to learning.

We would also urge that vocational plus LLN teaching and learning opportunities for young people/young adults are not locked into a single "best practice" way of doing things, as we have not found any evidence that there is one best way. The

inconclusive evidence over whether young people should be taught separately from other adults is a case in point. Decisions on good practice need to be made at the organisational level with shared decision making between all stakeholders.

The case studies and the key informants provided the New Zealand context that indicates that there is no one right way to approach LLN and the engagement of young people/young adults. PTEs, ITPs, apprenticeships and workplace learning all have their place. We would like to see more focus on recruiting the young people/young adults who most need to engage in LLN to the most appropriate place to further their learning. We know that WINZ plays a significant role in referring people and that word of mouth is also important. What we cannot be sure of is if young people/young adults are being given good advice and being helped to make good choices for beginning and further employment and post-school education.

As well, the status and conditions for employees in organisations where there are learners at lower levels of LLN do not align with importance of the job. Therefore these jobs do not attract enough of the highly skilled teachers that young people/young adults need. This situation is similar to that which faced ECE almost 20 years ago and the LLN teaching situation now may require the same wide-ranging approaches that are being put in place in the early childhood sector (for example, teacher education, training and registration.)

Further research

A full list of possible research questions generated by the literature can be found at the end of this report. Key questions we think need to be addressed are:

1. What do we know about young people/young adults' wider literacy skills, especially with ICTs (including cellular phone technologies)? How can these skills be harnessed to improve LLN in more traditional contexts?
2. How can negative experiences of schooling best be addressed in engaging young people/young adults in LLN?
3. How can young people who are most at risk best be reached? What kinds of programmes will be most effective at retaining them and improving their LLN skills?

1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Labour (the Department) is responsible for a cross-government programme of research and evaluation on workforce literacy, language and numeracy skills. Its purpose is to build the evidence base to inform practice and policy development around improving adult literacy, language and numeracy skills. This is in partnership with the Tertiary Education Commission, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development.

Between February and October 2009, NZCER carried out a research project for the Department on the engagement of youth in literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) skills development. The objective of the project was “to enhance the knowledge base on the engagement, recruitment, retention and support of youth in literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) skills development”.

The project covers four distinct and overlapping approaches: a literature review; the development of exemplars; key informant interviews; and six programme reviews (case studies). These have been brought together in this final report. The project sought to answer three questions about young people/young adults’ engagement in LLN:

- How do young people best develop their LLN skills postschool (including in specific senior secondary school contexts)?
- What are the different ways LLN is delivered to young people through training and education programmes, and what evidence is there for the effectiveness of these programmes? (To what extent do programmes embed/integrate LLN?)
- How are young people best engaged, recruited, retained and supported in education and training programmes, so as to meet their LLN needs?

We completed a literature review and an annotated bibliography in June. We also began producing a draft exemplar of success indicators for engaging young people/young adults in LLN based on the review findings. The exemplar is a table that lists factors associated with successful LLN learning according to whether there is strong, moderate or low association with success. The first column shows indicators of success derived from the literature review relating to effective programmes. The second column shows indicators of success derived from the literature review relating to effective organisations. We used our key informant interview analysis and the case studies data to create columns three and four for the exemplar. This exemplar was included at the end of the executive summary. A final exemplar at the end of the report combines all findings into two columns—programmes and organisations.

1.1 Reading this report

We have organised the report sequentially according to the order in which the phases of the research were carried out. We start by providing the definitions of engagement, young people/young adults, literacy, language and numeracy that we used. We then provide a summary of the literature review and the key informant interviews. We have included the full case studies next. The case

studies are followed by conclusions and recommendations and a final exemplar derived from combining all phases of the research.

1.2 Definitions used in this report

Engagement

We used a wide definition of engagement, based on the way organisations offer learners a “sense of connectedness, affiliation, and belonging, while simultaneously offering rich opportunities for learning and development. (Harper & Quaye, 2009, p. xxiii). Engagement is also about commitment: according to Bean (1995, 2005, as cited in Harper & Quaye, 2009), students leave institutions when only marginally committed to them. Harper and Quaye consider that engagement is also about how the institution deploys its resources, curriculum and student support to motivate students to participate.

In the literature review we have referred to young people/young adults’ engagement under the following subheadings: participation; motivation; recruitment; retention; and persistence. We focused in particular on motivation as it would appear that this area is where young people/young adults are most likely to differ from other adult learners. In order to understand young people/young adults’ engagement we drew on New Zealand research on school-based programmes aimed at helping young people/young adults move into work or further education and training, as well as on international research on young people/young adults in foundation, basic skills and LLN programmes.

Young people/young adults

We refer to young people aged 16–24 as “young people/young adults”. Research from the UK, the US and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) tends to describe 16–19-year-olds as “youth” and 20–24-year-olds as “young adults”. When discussing or quoting the work of a writer, their usage is followed. We have chosen to use the term “young people/young adults” because of the negative connotations often associated with the word “youth”. Some research we looked at focused on “disadvantaged” or “at-risk” young people/young adults. Many of these young people/young adults are also NEET. We were especially interested in finding out more about how this group of young people/young adults engaged with LLN.

Literacy

We use the definition of literacy described in the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) guidelines for embedding literacy and numeracy (Tertiary Education Commission, 2009): “Literacy is the written and oral language people use in everyday life and work. A person’s literacy refers to the extent of their oral and written language skills and knowledge and their ability to apply these to meet the varied demands of their personal study and work lives” (p. 58). In adopting this definition, we sought to find answers that government departments were interested in. We are aware that much of the literature in the LLN field adopts a broader concept of literacy. Whilst we have confined our analysis to the narrower definition, we consider that in writing about young people/young adults’ learning

in the 21st century, understandings of multiliteracies and new literacies are likely to guide future developments.

Language

The *Literacy, Language and Numeracy Action Plan 2008–2012* (Tertiary Education Commission, 2008) asks “What do we mean by literacy, language and numeracy?” (p. 6) and it offers a definition of literacy and numeracy, and implies effectively that literacy **is** language, “the written and oral language people use in their everyday life and work; it includes reading, writing, speaking and listening” (p. 6). In this literature review, LLN refers to skills in the English language. In order to contain the scope of the research we have not analysed research that arises from exclusively ESOL or te reo Māori contexts.

Numeracy

It is clear that literacy and numeracy, as traditionally and separately defined, are both essential to life and work in the 21st century. It is also clear that they are closely related and often overlapping skills, and it may in some contexts be impossible to draw a sharp dividing line between them. In recognising that numeracy is separate from literacy, we use the definition of numeracy described in the TEC guidelines for embedding literacy and numeracy (Tertiary Education Commission, 2009): “Numeracy is the bridge between mathematics and real life. A person’s numeracy refers to their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and their ability to use their mathematical knowledge to meet the varied demands of their personal, study and work lives” (p. 59).

1.3 Project Methodology

Our preliminary search of the literature identified that there was little research that had explicitly set out to link young people/young adults and their engagement in LLN. We found very few large-scale empirical studies that sought to determine young people/young adults’ engagement in LLN. Three important studies (Ovens, 2002; Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd, 2003; Rahmani, Crosier, & Pollack, 2002) were conducted in Australia. Most of the other research that directly links young people/young adults and LLN has been conducted in the UK by National Research and Development Centre (NRDC) and National Institute of Adult and Community Education (NIACE). Much of this UK research is evaluations of programmes that embed or attempt to embed LLN into general or vocational education and training programmes or workplaces.

We used a backward mapping approach from the Best Evidence Synthesis Guidelines (Alton-Lee, 2004) whereby we identified probable outcomes for young people/young adults engaging in LLN and identified those features of the adult LLN literature, literature on youth engagement and literature on adult engagement to generate indicators that appeared to lead to effective LLN programmes for young people/young adults.

In order to help contain our review of the literature we confined our search to research written in English from New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and Ireland since 2000. We did not seek out literature that specifically addressed English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners or that reported on LLN and

youth in prison or correctional facilities. We did not reproduce material about adults and LLN except where it was pertinent or where data about young people/young adults and older adults were disaggregated. We located a number of literature reviews on adult engagement in LLN or on adult engagement in study and/or work. We did not replicate most of this work but have included it in the annotated bibliography, especially if it was written in New Zealand.

Following the literature review, we interviewed 17 policy makers, researchers, literacy experts and people who work with young people/young adults. We then carried out six case studies of sites offering literacy programmes to young people/young adults. The key informant interviews and the case studies confirmed the findings from the literature review. Participants also provided some new insights and enriched literature review findings by providing a New Zealand textural overlay, in particular through the voices of young people/young adults and the older adults who work directly with them. We deliberately tried to find out about young people/young adults in Private Training Establishments (PTEs) or workplaces to add to the existing or current research about young people/young adults in foundation programmes in other tertiary organisations (universities and Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs)) and apprenticeships. Unfortunately we were not able to arrange a site visit to a workplace where young people/young adults were in LLN programmes.

2. FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE

2.1 Background

Although 16–24-year-olds are the group most likely to be participating in formal education and training (Satherley & Lawes, 2007), the current formal education initiatives and resources designed for young people (Gateway, STAR, Youth Training, Youth Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships and the recent overarching Youth Guarantee programme¹) do not necessarily address LLN or address it to the extent needed. Low literacy levels are not just an individual issue or an issue of scale (i.e., many individuals). Young people are entering, or about to enter, a labour market that demands greater literacy levels (and a more diversified set of literacies) than ever (Hartley & Horne, 2006; Marr & Hagston, 2007).

Despite the many different aspects of a knowledge society discussed by various authors,² there is common recognition of the increased complexity and uncertainty of our times and new demands that we adapt and innovate. LLN is a critical aspect of that learning and participation stance required by a knowledge society. This stance, which encompasses LLN, is critical to New Zealand's productivity. Research on LLN in workplaces has highlighted that employers need *functionally literate* employees who can deal with documentation and compliance issues but employers also need *situationally literate* employees who can deal with understanding "the bigger picture" of a particular situation in the workplace.

The literature review was intended to contribute to the process of identifying:

- good practice approaches
- the theories that underpin these
- the factors that are common to successful engagement of young people/young adults and the factors that are common to disengagement (and that have relevance in the New Zealand young people/young adults employment context).

2.2 Literature Review Methodology

The review took a broad view of the quality of the material available, because there has been little research into:

- the integration of LLN in young people/young adults' training programmes
- the engagement, recruitment, retention and support of young people/young adults in LLN skills development.

¹ A 2008 National Government policy which has taken over from the Labour Government's School Plus policy.

² For example, changes in knowledge production and the implications for education (Florida, 2002); the rise of a new "creative class" of knowledge workers (Pink, 2005); new mindsets and capacities for the 21st century (Appadurai, 1996); "accelerated flows" of people, ideas and money between nations (Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006); fragmentation of structures and institutions and a heightened calculation of life risks (Kenway & Bullen, 2001); and new identities based in patterns of consumption rather than in social class (2006).

We included research on postschool young people/young adults' learning (not necessarily in LLN programmes) and on successful adult LLN programmes. In order to extrapolate from these programmes to create an exemplar of success indicators, we considered ideal LLN outcomes for young people/young adults and then identified those conditions that would need to be in place in order for those outcomes to be met.

The review covers both national and international research (restricted to Australia, Canada, the UK, Ireland and the US that is written in English). If a piece of literature had sustained and systematic enquiry, generated knowledge and understanding and was an original investigation it was included. We included some writings of "professional wisdom"³ or "expert opinion", in our analysis. We also included pragmatic or applied research.⁴ We did not include teaching resources, materials, kits or guides. This means we included evaluations as research; even though they are conducted for the purpose of decision making in a specific setting, rather than generating new knowledge that can be transferred to other settings.

Many of the reports we analysed were evaluations conducted for government departments. This means that there is very little independent research in the field. We are aware of significant literature reviews already undertaken in New Zealand, specifically Benseman and Sutton (2007), Gray (2006) and (Benseman, Sutton, & Lander, 2005). We only replicated these in our analysis if a piece of research specifically referenced young people, or supported key themes in the literature about young people/young adults and LLN.

NZCER librarians conducted searches of the databases associated with adult education, vocational education and training, young people/young adults, young people/young adults' transition, LLN, management and employment. NZCER researchers searched government websites and in Literacy Aotearoa and Workbase libraries and research publications. We also searched the New Zealand theses database. We confined our search to research published since 2000 but have referred to some important research from 1995–99. We searched the major repositories of adult literacy and language research studies in Australasia, the UK, Ireland, Canada and the US.

Because we were aware from the outset that it would be difficult to find research that directly addressed young people/young adults' engagement and LLN programmes, we adopted some of the processes outlined in the guidelines developed to help writers of the Best Evidence Syntheses (Alton-Lee, 2004). This meant that we searched widely for New Zealand material, including that held in

³ Thomas G. Sticht provides this definition: "In 2002, Dr. Grover (Russ) Whitehurst, Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, defined professional wisdom as 'the judgment that individuals acquire through experience' and 'consensus views'." Retrieved 19 December 2005, from <http://wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Scientific-basedEdResearch>, message 6, dated January 2005.

⁴ "Basic research is motivated by intellectual interest alone and is concerned with knowledge for its own sake, while applied research is directed toward solving immediate and practical problems." Source: Comings, J. P. (2003). *Establishing an evidence-based adult education system*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=26>

the theses database. Many of the New Zealand and international research reports we read cautioned about validity of outcomes, especially LLN outcomes where researchers have often found it difficult to measure cause and effect. We found very little research that triangulated a range of different sources of evidence to assess outcomes, before and after learning opportunities, or research that provided evidence of longer term impacts. We looked for duplication of findings (as few studies on their own are strong in their evidence) and also the “outliers” or who was saying something different.

2.3 LLN benefits and young people in the labour market

Young people are already a vulnerable group in the labour market and their lower literacy levels are likely to mean they suffer differentially in terms of employment status, income and in social and personal domains. In this section we drew on New Zealand research in secondary schools and transition from secondary school. We organised the chapter on young people/young adults and the labour market according to: benefits to employers and the economy; benefits to individuals; social outcomes of engagement in LLN; trends in employment; transitions into the labour market; and employability.

We found that LLN skills are becoming more desirable in emerging knowledge societies or 21st century societies. There is some evidence that high LLN skills are associated with higher income levels, better labour market status and security, and social and personal benefits. However, it is difficult to quantify the benefits—though some studies have tried. Young people are most at risk in the labour market because they have the least experience and qualifications. Those with low LLN skills are even more at risk and may move into the NEET category, where those risks are actualised.

Currently a number of initiatives exist to support young people in the transition from school to labour market and some of these address the needs of at-risk and NEET young people specifically. There is little research evidence about where LLN skills development fits in here but there is some evidence about young people’s changing ways of thinking about the world beyond school and the kinds of approaches which might connect with those and thus recruit, retain and engage young people.

Economic benefits to employers and economy

This section drew on research on the benefits of improved LLN for adult learners as we could find little that specifically addressed young people/young adults. Reid (2008) relates the increasing importance of workplace literacy in New Zealand to “high employment, skill shortages and the rising literacy demands in New Zealand workplaces” (p. 99). We could find no definitive evidence for the economic impact of improving levels of LLN. However, as Isaacs (2005) and others have argued, adult literacy programmes do have impacts beyond the purely economic which are important for individuals and for society; these should also be taken into account when developing policy.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2008) carried out an economic evaluation of Adult and Community Education (ACE) outcomes in New Zealand. It is important to note

that this relates to the whole ACE sector, and not specifically to LLN, but it is reasonable to assume that the latter is a substantial part of the former. They calculate a Return of Investment (ROI) of \$54–\$72 for each dollar of funding, estimating that “Each dollar of government funding generates a return of \$16–\$22, but this is further leveraged through private contributions to the sector” (p. 5).

Gray and Sutton’s (2007) interviews with employers highlighted literacy-related needs in a wide range of contexts, including health and safety and quality compliance as well as the introduction of new technology, and support for employees from non-English-speaking backgrounds, although Gray and Sutton’s respondents reported a number of issues with employees with poor LLN skills which, if considered together, could have considerable financial implications. They included the risk of accidents and emergencies (if staff failed to understand or comply with health and safety rules), the extra time spent ensuring that instructions were understood, a high volume of complaints and the risk of legal action.

Economic benefits to individuals of improved LLN

Attempts to calculate the value of the “literacy premium” suggest that it varies from country to country (cf. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2000). In New Zealand, one study estimated that a 10-point increase in literacy score was associated with a 2.4 percent increase in hourly wages (Johnston, 2004). In any case, because people with higher literacy skills (mainly developed while at school) tend to earn more, it does not follow that improving the literacy skills of adults would have the same result. Indeed, the Allen Consulting Group cites a UK study (Silles, 2007, as cited in Allen Consulting Group, 2008) which found that there were no genuine returns to qualifications completed in adulthood.

Improving LLN skills may matter for those who are least skilled to start with. Tyler (2004) studied the data on General Educational Development (GED) candidates in Florida between 1995 and 1998 and determined that numeracy skills do matter for those who are least skilled in terms of economic advantage of first employment. Tyler’s recommendation is that schools and adult LLN programmes need to pay attention to developing skills in youth with low education and little or no work experience.

The Australian Government evaluated the Literacy and Numeracy Training (LANT) programme (Rahamani et al., 2002) to determine the extent to which training improved unemployed job seekers’ literacy and numeracy skills and their participation in the labour market. Employment outcomes did not appear to be influenced by participation in the programme although the authors were cautious about their findings because of the low percentages of people completing their programmes. Rahmani et al. (2002) recommend that flexible approaches to pre-employment programme delivery are needed to take account of “levels of literacy and numeracy, attitudes to training and capacity to learn” (p. vii).

One of the clear messages from the LANT research is that it is hard to measure whether LLN gains have a positive effect on employment. Policy objectives to improve LLN gain in pre-employment programmes in order to enhance employment opportunity could be seen to be counterproductive. LLN gain in its own right should be seen as a worthwhile goal. The authors also highlight another issue with measuring LLN outcomes which relates to time. Improving literacy and numeracy is a slow process; indicators of success are more profitably determined over longer periods of time. Unfortunately many research projects, especially evaluations of programmes, don't measure long-term gains.

LLN and social outcomes

The most obvious outcome from LLN learning is improvement in LLN skills, but, as we have already seen, this can be hard to measure and is not always evident. Other wider benefits include attitudes to learning, personal growth (improved self-confidence and self-esteem) and social capital.

For example, authors of the *Monitoring Report on Adult Literacy Interventions* (Clark, Ramasamy, & Pusch, 2006) report that providers noted improvements in participants, including increased confidence, having more positive attitudes, being more involved in community projects and improving personal skills and emotional health. Based on a literature review, Dymock and Billett (2008) identified seven "wider benefits" of learning, chief among which was self-confidence and personal competence: "the extent to which the learner has a sense of self and a belief in being able to put their capabilities into action" (p. 15).

Young people and employment

The position of young people/young adults in the labour market is usually more vulnerable than that of adults aged over 24 years since they have lower levels of experience and are in general more likely to be unemployed. However, it should be noted that they can be relatively better placed to enter/re-enter education in response to this.

A Department (2009a) factsheet shows that unemployment rates generally rose to a five-year high of 4.6 percent. This reflects the recent economic downturn, and the rate is expected to increase further, rising above 6 percent by early 2010. During 2008, the employment rate of young people/young adults fell by 3.5 percent and their unemployment rate went up from 9.7 percent to 11.1 percent. In May 2009, unemployment rates for 15–19-year-olds were 14.3 percent and that figure was predicted to surpass general unemployment rates by three to one.⁵

⁵ The unemployment rate for youth rose to 17.2% in the year to March 2010, which was 5.0 percentage points above its 2009 level, and 7.1 percentage points higher than its 2005 level. Compared with the unemployment rate for all people, which was 6.4% in March 2010, the youth rate is noticeably higher. (Department of Labour, 2010).

Young people at risk and not in employment or education

Some groups of young people are even more likely to struggle in the labour market—those who are defined as at risk and NEET. The OECD (2008) found in a country report on youth and employment that:

- there is a hard-core of youth who are at high risk of poor labour market outcomes and social exclusion (including 11 percent of NEET youth, with high percentages of Māori and Pacific young people)
- there are not enough youth in vocation education and training
- tertiary institutions are not providing youth with the requisite skills
- New Zealand policies make it difficult to reach disengaged youth (for example, benefits and allowances).

Benseman (2006) identified the following as key features of the effectiveness of a Papakura Youthworks programme for NEET young people: committed and skilled Māori staff; “good networks with local employers; ongoing support and mentoring for youth all the way through; the involvement of parents and a close relationship with a local PTE that provides literacy and numeracy training” (p. 4).

Transition initiatives in schools

Regardless of whether LLN skills development is specifically included or not in transition programmes in schools, all of the initiatives have an impact on young people by increasing their motivation, retention and engagement—which are all key aspects of successful LLN programmes.

The Secondary–Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) has been available since 1996 for the purposes of facilitating transition to the workplace, increasing student motivation through the purchase of tertiary-level courses and supporting students to explore different career pathways (and complement NAG 1.6). STAR-funded course types include university papers and polytechnic courses. STAR is also used for industry-related courses which attract credits against the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and Short Introductory Courses (SIC), formerly known as “tasters”.

The TEC’s Gateway programme also aims to facilitate student transition to work. While there are some overlaps with STAR, Gateway courses are work-based and programmes involve students being placed in local workplaces to learn industry-related skills for credits on the NQF. Gateway’s strength is in its capacity to provide clear pathways from school directly to industry for students, and make schooling more explicitly relevant for those students.

Current government policy replaces Schools Plus initiatives (including CaPBL) by proposing a Trades in Schools scheme that includes implementing school-based apprenticeships and establishing Trades Academies. Starting in 2010, the academies will “build on existing successful programmes but offer greater flexibility to students” (Tolley, 2009, p. 1). The Government’s aim with this initiative is to have:

- more young people interested in being at school because they can combine hands-on work, training or further study,

- more young people gaining worthwhile qualifications at school that lead to work, training or further study, and
- more young people being given an opportunity to fulfil their potential. (Tolley, 2009, p. 1)

Although STAR, Gateway and the pilot Youth Apprenticeships are not specifically geared to at-risk students, some schools have used these funds and courses to create specific programmes and focal points for those students. Boyd, McDowall, and Ferral (2006) identified seven factors that support the retention and transition of at-risk students:

- a relevant curriculum
- student-centred pedagogies
- access to careers/transition information/advice
- learning by doing
- bridges to the tertiary environment
- opportunities to gain qualifications
- opportunities to develop life skills.

Employability skill development and assisted labour market entry

Youth Training provides for the almost 10,000 school leavers under 18 years of age in New Zealand with low or no qualifications, and at risk of long-term unemployment (Ministry of Education, 2002). Youth Training courses involve work experience and the chance to gain unit standards and improve literacy skills.

In New Zealand, Loader and Dalgety (2008) analysed government data to examine transition to tertiary education overall and by attainment at school. They found that, in 2005, 13 percent of school leavers had little or no formal attainment, and of these 43 percent went on to tertiary study, mainly at certificate level. Of the 54 percent with some attainment at Levels 1–3, 47 percent went on to tertiary study, again, mainly at certificate level. Of the 33 percent with Level 3/university entrance qualifications, 82 percent went on to tertiary education, mainly at degree level.

In Ontario the College Sector Committee (Glass, Kallio, & Goforth, 2007) surveyed postsecondary and apprenticeship programmes to explore their essential skills (including LLN) to help ensure future successful transitions from school into tertiary study. The essential skills that interviewees thought students needed most to work successfully in their chosen fields were: team work; communication skills (including writing and verbal skills); interpersonal skills; critical thinking skills; analytical skills; time management; research skills; and numeracy skills.

2.4 Engaging young people in LLN

Participation

Benseman, Sutton, and Lander (2006) attempted to map the nature and extent of adult LLN provision in New Zealand in 2003. They point out that “Foundation learning occurs in a variety of contexts and the scale and nature of this provision is so diverse that it is inappropriate to compare all aspects in an undifferentiated

way” (p. 9). They estimate that, in 2003, there were approximately 302,600 learners in foundation (Level 4 or below) programmes, and that just over half of these were enrolled in programmes with a specific LLN focus. About two-thirds of the latter group (111,500 learners) were in Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs); 40,000 in school-based or other ACE provision; 10,500 in Training Opportunity and Youth Training programmes; and a very small number, only about 500, in workplace literacy programmes.

Motivation

Improving participation, recruitment and retention is an issue for both adult and younger LLN learners and many of the same barriers exist for both groups. It is motivation and persistence that single out young people/young adults as a general group. A key theme appears to be that young people/young adults are harder to motivate and/or less motivated than other adults. We identify the following features as distinct for young people/young adults: the importance of extrinsic motivation which appears to be more heavily weighted to paid work rather than learning (separate from paid work); “hooking in” to learning through different kinds of approaches, including involving parents; the importance of mentoring and counselling; and the attitudes to anything that is like school. Being available to access LLN programmes is also important; thus NEET young people could be seen to be in a position to readily access LLN and may just need the motivational support to engage.

A Canadian study (College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading, 2008) reinforces the concept of personal choice in returning to study. Many Canadian youth reported that they had to make considerable sacrifice and overcome barriers to return to study and that they did so because of research they did or because someone influential in their lives persuaded them to.

A NIACE paper (Bynner, 2008) identifies that a key feature of youth with poor basic (LLN) skills was that they tended to leave school as soon as they could. That meant they were ahead of their peers in terms of their employment rates but by the age of 20 they were much more likely to be unemployed. The NIACE studies also showed that young women with poor basic skills were most likely to leave employment early on to have children. Adults with poor basic skills tended to be disadvantaged which included having little or no exposure to computers. This in turn limits their employment options. On a positive note, the paper reports that where adults were aware they had a problem, they were motivated to do something about it. Therefore raising awareness about problems and potential solutions is critical.

An Irish study (National Adult Literacy Agency, n.d.) interviewed 159 students from 16 schemes across the country to promote the adult basic education services for people with low literacy skills. Only a quarter of the participants were aged 18–29. The researchers found that once people began participating in literacy schemes they began to see the links between improved literacy and employment. People who had not participated didn’t make those links. Publicity, promotion and hooking people in to literacy education were seen to be key

government priorities as a quarter of the respondents said lack of information hindered their participation.

Reluctance to engage in programmes was seen to have systemic as well as attitudinal basis. Negative feelings about school and parents' attitudes to education are powerful deterrents, as are young people's embarrassment and a sense of stigma. Benefits of LLN programmes were reported to be "growth in confidence, an ability to take up much coveted promotional opportunities, a willingness to participate in community and voluntary activities, success in various accredited courses, the ability to engage in leisure activities, improve mental health" (p. 39).

Barriers to improving LLN

Jarvis (1995) indicates the most frequently cited deterrents to participation in LLN were:

- lack of time, money and confidence
- the negative effect of school experience
- distance from classes/lack of transport
- lack of childcare
- lack of daytime opportunities/reluctance to go out at night
- education regarded as irrelevant.

New Zealand studies and literature reviews reinforce the first four points. From a UK perspective, NRDC (n.d.) reports that time is a key barrier to progression, since "learners are likely to need on average 150–200 hours of time on task to improve their literacy by one level in Skills for Life" (p. 3). They also note that, compared with school-age learning, socioeconomic factors are less significant for adults, but attitudinal barriers are particularly important.

Recruitment to LLN programmes

In a study of youth literacies practice in Scotland (Hall et al., 2008), "the 'hooks' for getting young people involved were the activities they offered which had an appeal to young people, or an end goal that articulated with their ambitions" (p. 39). The activities covered a very wide range: examples included digital photography, magazine making, cinema visits and outdoor pursuits. Goals included those that would improve young people's health, employment, housing and educational prospects. Providers stressed the importance of creating relaxed, informal settings, and offering "bribes" such as refreshments, visits to places of interest and outdoor activities. The most successful methods for recruiting were word of mouth, referrals from other agencies, working with other providers and other provision in an organisation. Circulating leaflets, outreach work and media advertising were much less successful.

Responses from Hindmarsh and Davies' (1995) interviewees indicated that Māori providers actively sought out potential participants and encouraged them to enrol. "Shoulder tapping" was one of several recruitment strategies used in the Manukau Family Literacy Project, but it proved to be the most successful (Benseman, 2004). It was also anticipated that, once the programme was underway, past and current learners would help to recruit others. The companies involved in Gray and

Sutton's (2007) study of workplace literacy used a variety of strategies to recruit learners. Some strategies were open calls for volunteers (via memos or meetings), while others involved identifying people likely to benefit from such learning, on the basis of supervisors' reports or the results of a needs analysis. Participation was usually voluntary, though some employees were strongly encouraged to participate. A key issue was how the programmes were marketed. Most companies avoided any explicit mention of literacy.

Retention

Once learners embark on a programme, the content and style of the teaching, and the attitude of the teacher, will also be vital in determining whether they wish to continue: "teachers and good teaching are by far the most important factor in the enjoyment of learning, and therefore in motivation and persistence" (Quality Improvement Agency, 2008, p. 23).

Curson (2004) identified that completion of workplace training requires an effective learning culture in a workplace. Having training linked to the strategic goals of the business is the most influential factor in determining whether a workplace environment is effective for fostering successful learning. She also found that having administration processes that effectively monitor and track an employee's progress, a structured approach to meeting the training needs of the employee, providing incentives to learn, providing support services, allowing time for training and learning to occur and recognition that there is not a one-size-fits-all formula to learning in the workplace, are important determinates of completion.

Prebble et al. (2005) looked at how academic staff development programmes and student support services (particularly for students from diverse backgrounds) affect the academic success and course completion rates of undergraduate students. There was not strong evidence for a direct link between academic development programmes and students' study success. However, academic development programmes were found to influence teachers' teaching beliefs and behaviour which in turn affected student outcomes.

Persistence

The Quality Improvement Agency (2008, p. 6) cites a definition of persistence developed in the US by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL):

... adults staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-directed study or distance education when they must stop attending program services, and returning to program services as soon as the demands of their lives allow.

The Quality Improvement Agency (2008) acknowledges that some of the practical barriers to persistence (for example, travel costs, shift patterns) can be extremely hard to tackle. Evidence from the development projects suggested that incentives could play a part, but teaching and good teachers were more important. It was vital to take a "holistic" approach to the learner, offering "pastoral support",

because “when organisations recognise and take active measures to respond to their wider social, economic and cultural needs, learners appreciate it and ... it may encourage them to persist with learning” (p. 12). However, the Quality Improvement Agency noted that offering practical and emotional support to learners requires particular interpersonal skills, and it can be challenging for tutors to balance this with their teaching role.

2.5 LLN programmes that effectively engage young people/young adults

Key ingredients of effective programmes are that they embed LLN into vocational programmes, that programmes are personalised with small classes and the environment is not like school and that effective use is made of ICTs and/or teaching strategies designed to motivate young people. Effective teaching is critical to success, including the relationships established between teacher and learner.

There is little evidence concerning the relative effectiveness of programmes in different contexts; Benseman et al. (2005) note that “very few studies ... have considered this question and the few that exist are of poor quality” (p. 88). There is, however, agreement that LLN skills develop best in contexts that have meaning and purpose for the learner (for example, Ministry of Education, 2005, 2008; Tertiary Education Commission, 2008) and that this context may not be the same for all. There is also agreement in the international literature that embedding LLN in vocational courses is effective and important, although there is no consensus on the best approach to embeddedness.

In an important Australian study, Ovens (2002) reported that success was reliant on a number of factors interacting inside and outside the LLN programme. Included in her findings were that all successful programmes embedded literacy and numeracy, their curriculum allowed for flexible and multiple pathways, the programmes employed a range of activities to engage learners and that some programmes were using innovative approaches that drew on brain research and “complementary and psycho-dynamic therapies” (p. 8).

Philosophies of LLN

We were interested to explore the philosophical or conceptual frameworks for programmes of LLN for young people/young adults, but were somewhat disappointed to find very little material on this aspect of programmes. However, it is clear that the content and style of delivery in LLN teaching will be influenced by what the tutors or organisers understand as the purpose of developing LLN skills. Their philosophy may not be consciously held or fully thought through, but it will be implicit in their practice. It is possible that embeddedness or personalised learning are being seen as proxies for a conceptual framework.

Embedding LLN

LLN skill development works best in a context that has meaning and purpose for the learner, whether this is workplace learning (e.g., Tertiary Education Commission, 2008) or in everyday life (e.g., Benseman et al., 2005). The word “embedded” is common in current usage to refer to LLN teaching in the context of

another subject (usually vocational studies). The TEC (2009) has issued guidelines for embedding literacy and numeracy in vocational training. It states:

Embedding literacy and numeracy in provisions such as vocational training is considered to be the most effective and efficient way to provide direct, purposeful instruction in contexts (settings) that allow both the initial opportunity to acquire new literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills, and plenty of scope for practising them. (p. 6)

There is much support for integration or embeddedness in the international research. Hall et al. (2008) carried out a questionnaire survey of youth literacies' providers in Scotland. They avoided the term "embedded" but instead asked their respondents to classify their approach as either *dedicated* (focuses exclusively and explicitly on literacy or numeracy goals), *integrated* (LLN explicit, but complementary to other activities) or *stealth* (literacies element hidden and not made explicit to learner). They found that the integrated approach was most common (94 percent), but a large majority used some form of dedicated provision (84 percent) and more than half used a stealth approach (54 percent).

The NRDC provides the most significant research on the value of embedding. Casey et al. (2006) collected data on almost 2,000 learners on 769 vocational programmes in five regions of England. Most of these were based in Further Education Colleges all of which had volunteered to be part of the study because they were interested in embedded LLN provision. Their strongest findings were that learners on embedded courses had higher retention rates, and more positive attitudes towards LLN study, than those on non-embedded courses, and that more learners on the embedded courses achieved literacy/ESOL or numeracy qualifications (43 percent and 23 percent more respectively) than on nonembedded courses.

They also commented that results suggested that additional learning support aided completion of a course, and that it was most effective to have a team of expert staff (rather than having a single teacher responsible for both vocational and LLN skill development).

Cranmer et al. (2004) found that learners improved LLN when the whole organisation believed key skills are essential for learning vocational skills and that learners' motivation and engagement improved where employers were actively involved. A literature review by Wickert and McGuirk (2005) "confirmed the success of initiatives in Australia in integrating literacy, numeracy and vocational skills acquisition through 'built-in' rather than 'bolted-on' methodologies" (p. 8). The authors concluded that literacy should be embedded into workplace and community practice rather than taught in isolation, but that integration was a complex task, and there were varying views as to how it should be approached.

A Canadian study (Fernandez, 1999) identified elements of effective LLN programmes for young people/young adults living in poverty in two areas of Canada (Toronto and Newfoundland). They considered that LLN programmes designed for them should be "flexible, goal-oriented and work-related" (p. 16)

and emphasise computer literacy, job-searching and work experience. One-on-one support from a tutor was valued. The young people thought that staff should be “flexible, open-minded, culturally sensitive, and patient instructors who could help them set realistic goals” (p. 16). Fernandez (1999) considered that additional support such as financial support, transport, mentoring, daycare and work experience would attract young people and help to guarantee the success of a programme.

Integrated or separate classes for young people

There is no agreement among researchers on the question of whether or not young people should be taught in the same classes as older adults. However, there is a lot of discussion on this issue and there is evidence that different age groups perform differently and are motivated by different things.

In a New Zealand study of Youth Training and Training Opportunities programmes, Benseman and Tobias (2003) reported that many participants enjoyed the range of classmates whereas others commented that there was a disparity between younger and older people on the programmes. Some saw the younger ones as less motivated, immature, not interested or people with learning difficulties and psychological difficulties. Older participants were concerned that 16-year-olds disrupted the learning environment.

Weber (2004) also noted that young adult learners are developmentally different from older adults. This recognition, and the fact that Adult Basic Education (ABE) programmes in the US serve an increasing number of young adults, led to the development of the Youth Cultural Competence (YCC) programme, with three major components—youth involvement, positive peer influence and youth popular culture—which “should be viewed as a bridge for reaching young adults ‘where they are’ and connecting them to academic content that might otherwise be boring or abstract” (p. 9).

Personalised programmes (that are not like school)

McMurphy-Pilkington (2008) identified PTE and iwi organisations that set out to include and celebrate Māori identity in a Māori-centred, whānau environment (whakawhanaugatanga). Many staff teaching on foundation programmes in PTEs, wānanga and iwi organisations were whānau-based; students often come from the same whānau. She found that success for young learners was more likely to occur when contexts were “real-life” and where learning was based on practical, “hands-on” activities. This appeared to be particularly important for numeracy. Learners felt comfortable within the physical environment and with the staff: “Comfort comes from the emotional security of ‘belonging to the whānau’” (p. 28). McMurphy-Pilkington (2008) identified that younger learners engaged in learning because the environment is not like school. Classes were small and personalised, learners were trusted and had choices and they were treated as adults (with rewards and bribes, such as being able to smoke at intervals, working well to encourage learning).

Marshall, Baldwin, and Peach (2008) looked at effective teaching and learning and programme design and development in 13 nominated Māori and Pasifika PTEs.

The researchers found that the key elements of success were a whānau/aiga approach, making sure there was a sense of belonging and having a sense of “greater humanity” (p. 7) and cultural inclusivity. Tutors were seen as critical to learner success and being flexible, committed, passionate about teaching, focusing on learners and being able to motivate learners were seen as characteristics of effective tutors. Learners were seen to be motivated by having clear boundaries and expectations and setting goals. Teaching that used an holistic approach, met learners where they were at and used humour and celebration was seen as effective. Successful programmes were flexible and designed around learners’ needs with plenty of opportunity for assessment provided.

Zepke, Leach, and Isaacs (2008) sought to find out how foundation learners experienced their learning, and what they considered to be success and the factors that helped learners achieve success. They found that the strongest indicators of success were considerations for the future, motivation, basic literacy, learning to learn, self-esteem and relationship building. Participants reported being extremely positive about their teachers, for their passion and caring and for the environment they established and maintained. This was in contrast to their school experiences.

Small-group learning

The literature on young people/young adults and LLN emphasises the importance of small-group teaching (Airini et al., 2008; Benseman & Tobias, 2003; McMurchy-Pilkington, 2008; Topper & Gordon, 2004; White, Oxenham, Tahana, Williams, & Matthews, 2009). We found little discussion of one-to-one teaching although a number of studies found that having a mentor or counsellor was important for retention and persistence (see, for example, Fernandez, 1999; Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd, 2003; White et al., 2009).

Assessment and motivation

Some studies referenced the importance for young people/young adults of being extrinsically motivated by achieving qualifications (for example, Fernandez, 1999; Hall et al., 2008), and some references to “test anxiety” (Brittan & Grief, 2005) but we found little research that focuses on the role of assessment in teaching and learning for young people/young adults.

Many existing studies of adult literacy rely at least to some extent on learners’ perceptions of their own LLN skills, and improvements which they believe have occurred during the programme they are following or have completed (for example, see Benseman, 2004; Benseman & Tobias, 2003). Dymock and Billett (2008) looked at how adult learning could be assessed on nonaccredited LLN programmes in Australia. Noting all the variables to be taken into account (including learner goals, tutor competence and expected outcomes or benefits) they anticipated that “a range of instruments and approaches would probably be required to assess and acknowledge learning outcomes that are specific to particular learners or cohorts of learners” (p. 8).

The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The use of ICT and multimedia is highlighted in the research on young people/young adults and LLN (Cooper & Baynham, 2005; Fernandez, 1999; Hall et al., 2008).

Based on their review of research evidence, Benseman et al. (2005) make two other important points. First, "Irrespective of its effectiveness compared with other modes of instruction, CAI [computer-aided instruction] is consistently reported as valuable for motivating reluctant or hesitant learners" (p. 49). Second, "Teachers are central to making CAI programmes work. The programmes work best as a supplement to other forms of instruction, rather than as a stand-alone option" (p. 49).

This view is echoed by the Quality Improvement Agency (2008) findings from 14 development projects, of which "a substantial number ... involved an element of ICT" (p. 17). According to the Quality Improvement Agency:

Feedback from practitioners and learners provides strong evidence that innovations in the use of ICT can enhance learners' experience of learning ... but ... it is not a replacement for personal contact with a teacher. On the contrary ... it is the combination of new online learning materials with additional tutor input, either through face-to-face contact or via telephone or email, that contributes to greater levels of motivation and persistence among learners. (p. 17)

Effective teaching

We highlighted two key themes under effective teaching: having a team approach and having culturally sensitive and emotionally supportive teachers. Krsinich and Roberts (2008) describe three different modes of delivery which they call up-front teaching (the vocational and LLN teachers take turns to teach), roving (the LLN teacher provides support to individuals in workshop or group activities) and tag or tandem teaching (the LLN teacher addresses a specific LLN point at the moment it is required), and as well identify the importance of having drop-in times, and LLN tutorials.

Team-teaching approaches raise the issue of whether all teachers need to be qualified to teach literacy specifically. Lonsdale and McCurry (2004) observe that "All teachers are teachers of literacy. Once seen to be the province of language teachers, literacy is now recognised as being cross-disciplinary" (p. 15). McKenna and Fitzpatrick (2005) note:

Integrated approaches require in-depth knowledge of the culture and practices in the industry, expertise in education, and some knowledge of applied linguistics. It would be rare, although not impossible, to find these skills sets in one facilitator; they are most likely to be found in a team of facilitators delivering a mix of on-the-job and off-the-job training. (p. 51)

Almost every research report we read highlighted the importance of the teacher being highly skilled as a “youth worker”—someone who has the personal characteristics that engender a trusting and caring relationship with young learners. For example, the Quality Improvement Agency (2008) stresses the importance of offering “pastoral support” to learners, but acknowledges that this requires particular interpersonal skills, and it can be challenging for tutors to balance this with their teaching role.

McMurchy-Pilkington (2008) identified success where tutors were caring, approachable, passionate about their work, firm, humorous and committed. Learners regarded them as mentors. White et al.’s (Oxenham, Tahana, Williams & Matthews, 2009) report reiterated these points, and focused on the tuakana-teina⁶ relationship, the particular skills required of tutors who must deal with the social and attitudinal first, the importance of trust between learner and tutor, having an holistic and whānau approach, whakawhanaugatanga⁷ and experiential learning. The researchers identified the importance for students of holistic Māori pedagogical perspectives and practices. Small class size was seen to be critical so that more personal tutor–student relationships, and individual attention are possible.

Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd (2003) discusses the significant role of mentoring as a “basic tool in assisting young people in their acquisition of core skills” and their “continuing engagement in education” (p. 11).

Providers of youth literacies programmes in Scotland (Hall et al., 2008) felt that staff should: be committed and relate well to young people; be good listeners; be nonjudgemental; understand young people’s issues; be able to develop quality resource materials; recognise very small progress steps; be flexible; be trained in youth work and/or specialist skills, including literacies. Learners interviewed during case studies also felt that staff should be nonjudgemental and friendly, and that there should be mutual respect between tutors and young people.

Integrated services

The 11 foundation studies tutors Morgan (2003) interviewed described the close link between the social orientation of adult learners, their emotional predisposition and cognition and the need for personal, group, academic and institutional connectedness. The latter points occur in much of the literature. According to McMurchy-Pilkington (2008), teaching approaches that worked linked LLN to contexts that are real to learners (catering on the marae, for example). The emotional and social environment was as important as the physical one and living as Māori and tautoko or support of learners for each other were critical within this. There is some evidence reported in regard to support outside the learning environment with younger learners identifying that they were not well supported outside the classroom.

⁶ Symbiotic relationship

⁷ Process of relationship building

Specific learning environments

Specific learning environments include residential programmes and workplace literacy. The OECD (2008) country report on jobs for youth recommended that New Zealand consider the Job Corps model for young people who are most at risk. In an evaluation of Job Corps, Schochet, Burghardt, and McConnell (2006) claimed that the "program group had higher average scores on the assessment measures than the control group" and that Job Corps "improved participants' functional literacy" (p. 18).⁸

We could find no research specific to young people and workplace literacy other than that described in the various UK NRDC and NIACE reports or that focuses on apprenticeships or transition to work. This is an area that deserves more attention in New Zealand.

Workplace learning can be particularly valuable for those who have had negative experiences at school, and would never consider returning to formal education (National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, 2007). Moreover, Townsend and Waterhouse (2008), noting the criticisms of employers unable to recruit people with all the skills they require, question whether it is feasible to develop the skills required for a particular context (e.g., a workplace) outside the environment in which they are to be used.

Wolf and Evans (2008, p. 1) report that managers say they most value LLN learning because it boosts morale rather than because it improves productivity: "Workplace learning should be seen as a citizen's entitlement which has multiple long-term benefits rather than a 'quick fix' to improve productivity."

2.6 Discussion

Limitations in research

It is not possible to present a definitive set of factors that will lead to improved LLN outcomes for young people/young adults. As Benseman and Sutton (2007) have already pointed out, there is simply a lack of outcomes-based research in the LLN field that can confidently claim the best approaches to improving LLN. Following from that, we conclude that proving a causal link in any educational teaching/learning context is next to impossible because of the variety of factors that affect the outcomes observed (see, for example, Alton-Lee, 2004; Benseman & Sutton, 2007; Rahmani et al., 2002).

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, many of the studies we reviewed did not have strong research methodology (for example, the methodology was not described in detail, the research could not measure LLN outcomes). For example, projects like the IYPI projects (Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd, (2003) were assessed in terms of the quality of service provision, rather than what happens to the learners. Secondly, many of the projects studied were short term which, as Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd, (2003) point out, is great for testing new ideas but then need to be integrated into a "whole of community, whole of government, whole of problem approach" (p. 12). Thirdly, some studies

⁸ Benseman et al. provide a discussion in the appendices about how to interpret this kind of claim.

had small sample sizes that did not lend themselves to measuring LLN outcomes that could be generalised to populations.

The UK research and development project (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 2002) that looked at success factors in young adults' experiences of LLN in informal learning is one of the significant studies that informed this review. Included in the project's main conclusions were:

- the importance of addressing young adults' needs (rather than focusing on funding and targets)
- the issues of engaging young adults can be more important than addressing LLN
- "personal qualities and attributes associated with effective youth work, such as patience and empathy, were considered essential: whereas literacy, language and numeracy training were seen as desirable, but hard to access and sometimes inappropriate to the cohort" (p. 2).

Embedding LLN was seen to be most effective with young adults. The project did not reach any conclusions about the benefits of being explicit about LLN in programmes as opposed to "teaching by stealth". Nor were participants in agreement about whether assessment and qualifications were motivating or intrusive.

There does seem to be strong support for embedding LLN into vocational programmes for young people/young adults. It should be noted that the strongest support for this comes from the NRDC. The UK approach to LLN is embedding and therefore the research does not query embedding per se, rather seeks to determine the best way to embed LLN in young people/young adults' programmes.

Though we cannot list definitive factors, we can present a summary of factors that are *associated* with successful programmes. In the following table we list these with an indication of the number of studies that support this characteristic. We also indicate factors that *may* be effective (that is, they are not from strong studies or only in one or two studies). We indicate those factors that appear to be more important for young people/young adults than for other adults and we acknowledge where characteristics are also described in the adult LLN literature. The adult LLN references are indicative and not definitive.

Table 4. Engaging youth in LLN

Key characteristic or principle	Level of importance	Young people and LLN research	Indicative adult LLN research
Raise awareness through marketing targeting young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best	Essential	Bynner (2008); Hall, McLaughlan, Tett & Edwards (2008); McGuinness et al. (2008)	Gray and Sutton (2007); National Adult Literacy Agency (n.d.)
Programmes target those most at risk with lowest skills	Highly desirable	Chilvers (2008); OECD (2008); Pemberton (2008); Tyler (2004); Wrigley and Powrie (n.d.)	
Low or no costs for learners	Debated but desirable	Birrell and Rapson (2006); Fernandez (1999); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); OECD (2008); White et al. (2009)	Hindmarsh and Davies (1995) (but see McMurchy-Pilkington (2008))
Voluntary participation	More research required but appears to be desirable	Cooper and Baynham (2005); Hayes (1999); Perin, Flugman & Spiegel (2006); Salisbury (2004); Topper and Gordon (2004)	
Small-group learning	Essential	Airini et al. (2008); Benseman and Tobias (2003); Fernandez (1999); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); Topper and Gordon (2004); White et al. (2009)	
Separate classes for young people or integrated young people/adult classes with youth-friendly teachers	Debated—useful for further research (context specific). Note that programmes for Māori indicate whānau teaching (not separating out)	Collison and Drayton (2002); Fernandez (1999); Garner (2004); Morgan (2003); Salisbury (2004); Topper and Gordon (2004) McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); White et al. (2009)	
Unlike school	Essential	Benseman and Tobias (2003); Fernandez (1999); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); White et al. (2009)	National Adult Literacy Agency (n.d.); Zepke, Leach & Isaacs (2008)
LLN embedded into vocational courses	Essential	Brittan and Grief (2005); Casey et al. (2006); McNeil and Dixon (2005); Ovens (2002)	TEC (2009); Wickert and McGuirk (2005)

Key characteristic or principle	Level of importance	Young people and LLN research	Indicative adult LLN research
Contexts and content are authentic and relevant	Essential	Brittan and Grief (2005); Fernandez (1999); Hipkins, Vaughan, Beals, Ferral & Gardiner (2005); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); MOE (2005); White et al. (2009)	Benseman (2001); Benseman and Tobias (2003); TEC (2009)
Flexible programmes responding to learner needs and circumstance	Essential	Hall et al. (2008); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); McNeil and Dixon (2005); Ovens (2002); Rahmani et al. (2002); Vaughan and Kenneally (2003); Walsh (2005, as cited in Roberts et al., 2005); White et al. (2009)	Benseman et al. (2005)
Personalised programmes meeting individual needs	Essential	Balatti, Balck & Falk (2007); Boyd et al. (2006); Quigley (1997) Krsinich and Roberts (2008); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); White et al. (White, Oxenham, Tahana, Williams, & Matthews, 2009)	
Short-range and achievable goals are set	Essential	Hall et al. (2008); OTEN (2006); Quality Improvement Agency (2008)	
Young people's extrinsic motivations (for jobs, qualifications) acknowledged	Must acknowledge—worthy of further research	Boyd et al. (2006); Collison and Drayton (2002); Fernandez (1999); Hall et al. (2008); TEC (2003)	Zepke et al. (2008)
LLN needs prioritised first in vocational courses	Limited evidence	Cranmer et al. (2004); Sagan, Waite, Cowan, Casey & Evans(2007)	
Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge	Highly desirable	Cooper and Baynham (2005); Fernandez (1999); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); White et al. (2009)	
ICTs used to enhance good teaching	Highly desirable—probably stronger evidence for young people than other adults	Chan (2006); Chan and Ford (2007); Cooper and Baynham (2005); Hall et al. (2008); Fernandez (1999)	Benseman et al. (2005); Lavery, Townsend & Wilton (1998); Quality Improvement Agency (2008)
Programmes based around youth popular culture	US evidence—possibly useful	Garner (2004); Topper and Gordon (2004); Weber (2004)	

Key characteristic or principle	Level of importance	Young people and LLN research	Indicative adult LLN research
Teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches	Highly desirable (robust research base)	Gordon (2008); Ovens (2002); Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd (2003)	
Team teaching to combine LLN, vocational and counselling expertise	Essential	Casey et al. (2006); Eisen and Tisdell (2002); Gordon (2008)	McKenna and Fitzpatrick (2005); TEC (2009)
The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and inter-related	Highly desirable and needs further research	Spielhofer and Sims (2004); Vaughan, Roberts & Gardiner (2006)	
Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults—this is key	Essential	Benseman and Tobias (2003); Brittan and Grief (2005); Cooper and Baynham (2005); Curtis and McMillan (2008); Hall et al. (2008); Manu'atu (2000); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); McNeil and Dixon (2005); NIACE (2002); Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd (2003); Vaughan and Boyd (2004); White et al. (2009)	Benseman et al. (2005); Chandler et al. (2008)
Teachers provide emotional support for learners—including through one-on-one mentoring and counselling	Essential	Fernandez (1999); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); Prebble et al. (2005); Tomoana McNeil and Dixon (2005); Powers and Associates and Heinrich (2005) (Australia) Pty Ltd (2003); White et al. (2009)	
Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused	Highly desirable	Hall et al. (2008); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); White et al. (White, Oxenham, Tahana, Williams, & Matthews, 2009)	
Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable	Essential but worth further research\	McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); NIACE (2002); Weber (2004); White et al. (2009)	Quality Improvement Agency (2008)
Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners	Desirable—worth further research and investigation	Barón (2009); Garner (2004); Ovens (2002); Pemberton (2008)	
Academic, social and personal services and purposes are integrated	Essential	Airini et al. (2008); Cranmer et al. (2004); McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); McNeil and Dixon (2005); Morgan (2003); White et al. (2009)	Anae, Anderson, Benseman & Coxon (2002); Prebble et al. (2005); Quality Improvement Agency (2008); Zepke et al. (2008)

Policy recommendations

The policy recommendations from the countries where we have reviewed research are consistent with many of the policies being adopted in New Zealand. There are four key areas that we would like to see further debated. These are: a 21st century conceptualisation of literacy and numeracy including LLN outcomes; a focusing on young people/young adults who are “most at risk”; a consideration of specific teacher education for people working with young people/young adults; and an acceptance of multiple approaches to integrating LLN into vocational training and work.

We would like to see the conceptualisation of literacy and numeracy debated in terms of 21st century learning and career identities for young people in the future. This is not to say that the current definitions of literacy, language and numeracy are wrong, nor that concerns about poor LLN skills of many young people are not valid. But we need to examine the approaches to funding and teaching and learning LLN so that we focus on what forms of LLN are most important now and into the future and what young people need and want for the future.

Feedback in the consultation phase of the *New Zealand Skills Strategy* included suggestions that “literacy” should be defined to include digital literacy, communication skills, teamwork, interpersonal skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills (New Zealand Skills Strategy, 2008). In other words, there is increasing acknowledgement that the relationship between productivity and workforce development is growing closer in a knowledge society and thus the need for literacy—in various forms—is also increasing. However, as the Treasury’s (2008) recent Briefing to the Incoming Government notes, while a significant proportion of the workforce has low LLN levels, it is challenging to improve these when there is a lack of evidence about cost-effective approaches.

An increasing body of theoretical and empirical literature conceptualises literacy as situated in particular contexts—it is not the same in all contexts; rather, there are different literacies associated with different domains of life. Barton and Hamilton (2000) refer to these domains as communities of practice; that is, groups of people held together by their characteristic ways of speaking, interacting, behaving, valuing, reading and writing. Each domain is perceived as a complex social structure in which literacy is embedded. For example, a literacy event such as a commercial baker baking a loaf of bread will be quite different from that of a farmer selling livestock at auction—and even different from that of a home baker baking bread.

More recent theorising by Gee (2008) builds upon the conceptualisation of literacy as situated in particular contexts by defining a literate person not so much as one who carries out particular literacy practices within a particular context, but one who is recognised as a member of a certain kind of cultural group, someone who knows the rules of the game as a baker, a livestock farmer or a home cook. Literacy, then, is all about enacting a certain kind of identity and not just about practising certain skills within a certain social context.

For Gee (2004), a learner is far more likely to become literate when they are part of a cultural, rather than an instructed, process. Most people are not, he argues, adept at learning via overt instruction, citing examples such as the way young people effortlessly learn how to use digital technologies, not through proscribed exercises, but through assuming an emerging identity as a user of a particular technology while under the discreet guidance of someone more adept.

Chan (2006) suggests we need to rethink the role of knowledge and learning in the workplace. Her study of how eleven 17- and 18-year-old people became bakers in New Zealand investigates processes of belonging, becoming and being through an apprenticeship. Young workers' facility with mobile technology and computers may make them an "expert" in some areas rather than the novice that is usually conferred on apprentices. It is important to think about LLN skills through this lens.

Distance education and training to develop literacy skills for youth (DEADLY) (Open Training and Education Network, 2006) is a distance education online training package developed in New South Wales specifically for young Aboriginal males to improve their LLN skills and to encourage them to consider different industries and potential employment in them. The evaluation of the project reported success in engaging disaffected learners and providing new pathways for them. As well as the multimedia tools being engaging, one-to-one case management was seen to be critical in developing motivation. Similarly, Simmons (2007) reports on the success of the Highland ABE M-Learning Partnership Project in Sutherland where previously disengaged young people have responded positively to a mobile phone trial.

We think it is time to reconsider and broaden understandings of outcomes of LLN for young people (see, for example, Zepke et al., 2008). As the research has shown, it is very difficult to measure literacy and numeracy gains and to separate these out from other social gains, particularly over short time periods. The research we have found has been dominated by government evaluations of short programmes and courses, often where the programmes were not set up to provide effective and discrete measures of literacy and numeracy gains. We think it is also time to again debate the importance of LLN gain for economic prosperity and productivity as opposed to the importance of social and personal gain (which may in time lead to personal economic gain and to productivity).

The literature tells us clearly that we should focus on young people/young adults who are "most at risk"—those whose LLN skills are lowest and who are most marginalised in social and economic ways. Sutton (2009) has identified that young people are overrepresented in the lowest Adult Literacy and Language (LLN) levels for numeracy skills. She has also demonstrated, using UK and Canadian data, that it is people at the lowest levels who take the longest time to make LLN gains. To overcome the issues of NEET young people/young adults, the OECD recommends:

- Improving retention rates at secondary school. The OECD recommends vocational/pre-employment options that allow young people to gain necessary skills before options of apprenticeship.
- Changes to tertiary education so that it meets the requirements of the labour market. This should involve a rethink of the role of ITPs. The Modern Apprenticeships scheme is described as successful but limited in scope and catering for an “elite”.
- Monitoring demand-side barriers to young people/young adults’ employment (for example, the young people/young adults’ minimum wage and benefit payments).
- Improving the design and coherence of policies and strategies for disadvantaged young people/young adults (for example, financial incentives to engage in employment or education).

We should also consider specific teaching approaches that work with young people/young adults and make the appropriate teacher education available. Quality of teaching and teachers is an issue that needs further exploration for adult LLN in New Zealand. We suggest that any research or investigation into teaching should include specific focus on skills and qualifications for teaching young people/young adults. What does seem to be critical for young people/young adults, especially those who are NEET, in New Zealand and internationally, is having a single point of contact—a trusted and constant mentor/counsellor who is very much involved in addressing social, personal and attitudinal issues which are often the main barriers to learning. There would seem to be a place for government to invest in developing specific resources and assessments that are tailored to young people/young adults’ needs and interests, and which utilise mobile technology and other ICTs.

We would also urge that vocational plus LLN teaching and learning opportunities for young people/young adults are not locked into a single “best practice” way of doing things, as we have not found any evidence that there is one best way. The debate over whether young people should be taught separately from other adults is a case in point. Decisions on good practice need to be made at the organisational level with shared decision making between all stakeholders.

Further research

Our literature review highlighted areas for further research, particularly where there is a small and somewhat unreliable research base or where there are opposing perspectives about what constitutes effective practice. There are also groups of young people we have not specifically sought research on, including young people in care or in prison and ESOL young adults. Some questions worth answering include:

1. How can negative experiences of schooling best be addressed in engaging young people/young adults in LLN?
2. Should young people be taught in groups and classes separate from other adults?
3. What kinds of recruitment will most effectively reach young people? How do communities best utilise their local networks and encourage participation of young people/young adults in LLN?

4. How can young people who are most at risk best be reached? What kinds of programmes will be most effective at retaining them and improving their LLN skills?
5. How is LLN best delivered to young people in workplaces?
6. What do we know about young peoples/young adults' wider literacy skills, especially with ICT and mobile technology? How can these skills be harnessed to improve LLN in more traditional contexts?
7. What kind of embeddedness is most effective with young people in New Zealand? To what extent is this different according to whether the young person is in work or education and training?

Since June 2009, a number of additional relevant research reports have been published or have come to our attention. We have not attempted to update the literature review but it is important to note those New Zealand publications that provide further (but not different) evidence (Department of Labour, 2009b; New Zealand Government, 2009; Ross, 2008; Zepke et al., 2008). As well, there are significant international new international perspectives that add to the research base (for example, Spielhofer, Marson-Smith, & Evans, 2009; Taylor, 2009).

3. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

This section summarises key findings from interviews with key informants. We conducted 17 interviews with key informants. Four were with researcher-practitioners, five with practitioners and eight with officials from government departments. Some of the interviews involved more than one participant. Six of the interviews were face to face and the others were phone interviews. All interviews were digitally recorded but not transcribed. All but one of the interviews took place in June 2009 (the last one was in August 2009).

The list of key informants was drawn up with the Department and was informed by the New Zealand literature on LLN and young people/young adults, particularly in apprenticeships, as well as personal and professional contacts. We interviewed employees of a number of government departments. We also interviewed people working with young people in Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs), Private Training Establishments (PTEs), Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) and organisations that provide literacy and numeracy training and teaching for adults.

The questions were designed to check or interrogate key findings or issues from the literature where there seemed to be conflicting findings, such as the nature of embeddedness and the extent to which young people/young adults should be treated differently from older adults.

3.1 Key findings

As a result of the interviews, we have identified a number of points that the vast majority of the informants discussed and were in agreement with. These factors are also prominent in the research literature. Key among these were:

- young people are different from older adults in LLN learning situations, because they are considered to be harder to motivate, and because of their vulnerability, but these issues are not about age so much as stage and maturity. Informants recognise them as uniquely "Gen Y"
- concerns that some young people/young adults were not being well catered for in schooling and often not by their families
- LLN needs to deal with the whole person through an holistic and contextualised approach and young people need strong mentors within the teaching staff
- economic gain is important for the individual young person but cannot and should not be separated from social justice benefits. Employment is a strong motivator with young people/young adults for improving LLN and employers are clear about what they need from young employees.

Factors where informants had different views (and this difference is also substantiated in the literature) included:

- whether or not young people/young adults should be taught separately and differently from older adults
- the degree to which LLN should be explicitly taught (as opposed to "hidden" from young people/young adults)

- how young people/young adults' familiarity with information and mobile technology should be addressed and acknowledged in LLN programmes.

Factors that key informants discussed that were not prominent in the research literature included:

- gender difference, especially in relation to work attitudes and uses of technology
- new research on learning that indicates adolescence is a time where significant new learning can and should be acknowledged and encouraged
- the benefits of LLN learning through apprenticeships as opposed to other ways of learning LLN
- the importance of teaching and learning oral communication.

The interviews reinforced the issues and approaches that are specific to New Zealand and which can impede or promote LLN. For example, informants often mentioned funding and accountability constraints of adult LLN, new government emphases on workplace learning and the effectiveness of Māori-focused whānau or marae approaches.

In the following subsections of the report, indented statements represent the insights of key informants and are not necessarily the opinions of the researcher. The comments are not always written as verbatim, but represent the perspectives of the informant.

Young people/young adults are different

Key informants perceive young people/young adults to be qualitatively different from older adults and to require different teaching strategies. Most informants were reluctant to define young people/young adults' engagement in LLN by age alone, preferring to describe these issues in terms of developmental stage or life experience:

There are different definitions of youth—note the success of wānanga with second-chance learners—who are the rangatahi? Most Māori going in to study are 40—they realise there is latent, untapped potential.

It is not age but the stage when there is motivation to learn and having shorter term life goals. It depends on the developmental stage.

One informant thought young people should be considered separately from older adults because their "vulnerability—emotionally, socially and economically" and their "fragility" meant they had fewer survival skills than older adults.

Young people/young adults were described as:

- impressionable and sensitive to their direct environment
- less focused—can't see beyond the end of the week
- very reactive to peer pressure—can go 'pear shaped' in five minutes
- exhibiting Gen Y behaviour patterns—"I want it now and what's in it for me"
- can be more difficult to engage
- have lost their drive and need to re-establish it

- have lots of social baggage and LLN issues
- are not good advocates for themselves.

The comments cited above are clearly areas of frustration for teachers, organisers and policy managers. However, some key informants pointed out that these areas of frustration may also clash with some of the areas of interest or frustrations that young people experience and could be managed thoughtfully and turned into an advantage in teaching and learning LLN. For example, being impressionable and sensitive to the direct environment is not necessarily a shortcoming in itself; if managed thoughtfully it could provide a way in to teaching young people—by USING the environment. This could, for example, include mobile technology or sporting interests. Some key informants and much of the research acknowledged approaches that turn things around in this way.

Shifting our understanding of young people’s behaviour is another part of this sort of approach. For example, many young people APPEAR to be unmotivated to learn but this is quite understandable when viewed in the context of their previous negative learning experiences and school underachievement. Apparent disengagement may in fact be more about fear than unwillingness to learn. (The next subsection deals with instances where young people/young adults are not well served by their environment.)

Some other informants took a different stance, highlighting differences within groups of young people. They felt that 16–17-year-olds were more focused and more ready to learn than those aged 18 and over:

The advantages of working with younger learners are that they are open to learning and less distracted. We sometimes need to deal with other issues, for example, health and involve the whole family. There’s not really a big difference. Sixteen and 17-year-olds are easier to deal with—possibly because they’re more committed—they have made a decision.

Schooling and families have let young people down

A strong theme in the interviews was the perception that young people/young adults had been badly served by their school experiences and that many had been poorly served by their families. There was some perception that the situation had grown worse over time:

Over the years the situation has got worse—youth need more LLN assistance. Many youth are referrals from CYPS; they have dysfunctional families, they drop out of school at 12 or so. Some are in survival mode and taking drugs.

Many government policies were also seen to be unhelpful and this point is discussed further at the end of this section and in the final section of the report. One informant, a strong advocate for young people, linked school and family by referring to intergenerational patterning where trust or mistrust in schools is inherited and young people are not encouraged to stay on in school. She felt this affected a significant minority of young people. She felt schools needed to change

their culture as they were often not treating 15-year-olds as adults and those young people resented being treated as children. Many of them had adult responsibilities and worked part-time. Informants thought that where young people had missed out in school, there needed to be multiple pathways to gain LLN skills:

Provide different opportunities and don't put all your eggs in one basket.

A number of informants considered there needed to be better career advice in schools. One informant felt strongly that young people's views should be heeded and that they should be acknowledged as a positive influence on society:

The best environments for learning are noninstitutional—anything that looks like a school is not going to work. It needs to look like real life and an adult world. It needs to be fun to be with a group of other young people, having people who believe in them. I am committed to a strengths-based approach and believing that these kids have great potential with talents and skills in areas to succeed, rather than remedial-based.

A holistic approach that includes strong mentoring

There was strong consistency in messages about the kinds of approaches to teaching and learning in LLN. Despite many young people not having succeeded at school, some informants considered younger people were advantaged in learning compared to older adults: Informants were clear about the kinds of learning environments that younger learners needed to:

- have a vocational emphasis where employment options help shape learning
- be positive, supportive, relevant and enable learners to see the value in what they're doing. Marae learning for Māori is very effective and relevant
- be structured, caring, have holistic support and small classes (1:10 for youth 1:15 for older people—although this depends on the vocation). There should be individual learning plans (IEPs) for everyone
- have relevant learning, goals addressed, immediate needs met and delivered in a meaningful way
- have seamless integration, and be non old-school, contextualised, fun
- have different strategies with different people, catering for individual learning styles in small classes.

Ongoing and meaningful assessment was also seen by informants as important for successful learning. Some expressed concern that the focus on employment meant that education and training could take a back seat:

On-the-job training to gain skills means employees don't always complete qualifications. There's a feeling that if you can demonstrate skills, they will be transferable and you don't need the qualification.

Employment is a strong motivator with young people/young adults for improving LLN

Many informants considered that once young people/young adults had meaningful employment, they were motivated to improve their LLN skills, provided it was relevant and contextualised to the workplace. The informants identified the tensions for employers in providing training at the possible risk of losing employees who would be more sought after, or of losing short-term productivity. Government funding of workplace learning was seen by many in a positive light. One informant suggested that if we wanted productivity in a prosperous society we need to be more innovative and more inventive. We needed to have the courage to try new things and take calculated risks.

Informants also identified the need for ongoing learning more generally. They argued that improved LLN would result in more cohesion in the workplace and more involvement from employees—both in giving something back to the company and in having more opportunities to engage in supporting wider workplace improvements:

Earning money is important to young people—once they're in the job, the team work and family environment is important. I started off thinking LLN was a social justice issue but now see economic benefits are important for young people.

Informants thought that employers wanted a number of LLN-related skills from young employees:

Employers want young people who are up to speed with following instructions, health and safety—with core workplace LLN, not trade specific. Economic gain is their key driver. Employers recognise ability and potential underneath.

One informant highlighted the workplace's importance for LLN in today's changing world:

Attitudes are changing—government is recognising that a terminal qualification isn't a terminal qualification. Learning happens in social contexts and workplaces—one type of learning is not better than another. 'Use it or lose it'—workplace learning has relevance, it's usable and practical and driving things forward and learning needs to lead to transferable critical thinking skills.

Teaching young people/young adults separately and differently from older adults

As with the research literature, informants did not always agree on whether to separate or integrate young people/young adults in LLN teaching and learning. Most preferred a mixture of younger ages (that is from 16 to 24) and some thought mixing young people (16 and 17-year-olds) with older adults had a positive effect on the young people:

Don't treat young people/young adults differently from others—the aim is to normalise the process and counteract peer pressure. Ideally we would like to mix ages but TOPs (18+) and Youth Training (16/17) have different funding pools. Prior to 1990s we could mix them up—the older ones kept younger ones under control. But every person should be treated as an individual. One to one works okay with young people but not small groups.

One informant stressed the importance of 21st century brain research and felt that this should be a powerful incentive for directing policy:

What we know now about brain development for adolescents is that it is an excellent time for learning—if you are learning 'crap' things at this stage they will stick. But you can reverse bad stuff learnt earlier. Brain research has gone ahead in leaps and bounds—the adolescent brain is as critical as the infant's in utero. That is why the impact of drugs and alcohol on the adolescent brain is so worrying.

"Unconscious" learning of LLN

The literature we reviewed was very clear that embedding LLN into vocational courses was the best approach. The literature was less clear on the nature of that embeddedness, and suggested approaches could range from fully and explicitly integrated or embedded to "embedded with stealth". The latter approach does not refer to LLN explicitly but addresses LLN needs in other learning contexts. Most informants considered that LLN was best dealt with by "stealth" or, as one person, put it, by "unconscious learning of LLN":

LLN needs to be part of something else, part of a learner's aspiration. LLN in isolation is a 'passion killer'.

I prefer the stealth approach—if someone is struggling in employment you can wrap support around them. Word of mouth is important for hooking young people in to LLN.

One informant thought the approach depended on the nature of the problem. For example, if it was a literacy issue, one to one was seen as desirable because it saved embarrassment. A group approach with an open LLN focus worked best for ESOL learners because it boosted all learners' confidence to see others asking for, and getting, help. Another informant thought it worked well in most situations to be upfront about LLN *within* an embedded programme:

We're happy to be explicit about LLN learning (through an embedded context). The TEC focus on LLN is good—three of our tutors are doing the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education.

Information and mobile technology

Informants generally considered young people had an advantage over older people in their technological skills and that this advantage could translate into interest in different kinds of literacy:

They will pick up technologies easily—they always have ICT in their pocket and are able to access anything.

Most informants commented that they did not think being technologically literate should replace LLN skills and some did not think technology improved LLN skills:

LLN needs to be visual, short sharp—not necessarily ICT. Any LLN that allows young people to effectively engage in an older person's (the employer's) way of doing business is appropriate. ICT will change the delivery but not the need to be able to communicate. Written work may disappear (voice recognition)—which will highlight the importance of speaking and listening—the people-side of things.

All agreed that information and mobile technology would increasingly be important in education and training and in the workplace:

We will have computer-based training, remote learning, tutorials and self-directed learning. In the short term this could be more expensive; in the longer term it'll be cheaper. Computers will never take the place of one-on-one teaching. It's important to have flexibility to match with individuals' career interests. We need good resources. Options for virtual teaching need to be explored.

Additional points

The importance of teaching oral communication, gender difference, the role of Modern Apprenticeships and skills were all addressed by a number of informants. They were not things that had been particularly central in the research literature. A number of informants commented on the poor standard of many young people/young adults' oral communication skills and the need to teach these as explicitly as reading, writing and numeracy. Some saw changing workplaces as being more focused on team work and therefore that young people/young adults needed to communicate with fellow workers as well as their employer:

Young people/young adults need to understand that communication skills are part of the culture of the job.

Some informants noted gender differences in behaviour and towards learning and working:

Girls are better in a female environment and boys in a mixed one—it's a conundrum. Boys tend to pick up gendered behaviour; they can get frustrated with themselves if they have poor LLN and then can become destructive.

There was quite a lot of enthusiasm for the Modern Apprenticeship model and that included praise for the role of the Modern Apprentices' Co-ordinator, seen to have an important mentoring role:

Apprentices have the best of both worlds—'earn while you learn'. There are no debts and apprentices gain a skill that employers recognise as transferable between employment places and trades even. They learn life skills and so are able to have a change of direction.

The New Zealand Policy Context

Many informants were positive about the Government's emphasis on LLN, particularly in the workplace, and the fact that much LLN teaching was funded:

Learning should be low cost or free. Learning should have obvious links and pathways to employment, and show career outcomes with explicit options. Government should monitor outcomes and NEET figures.

One informant commented that the ultimate goal should be for LLN to be employer-led and not government-subsidised. The government was seen to be receptive to changing schemes that weren't working. However, there was some concern expressed about different funding pools and funding accountabilities. Where outcomes for providers are to get learners into employment or further education and training, the real gains possible in extended LLN learning can be compromised:

There is pressure in WINZ to get people off the benefit and pressure on providers to get people into employment. For learners it's about the importance of attitude. Some learners are entrenched in the welfare system and are not really ready for LLN gain. Funding and accountability measures seem intuitively to be counterproductive.

One informant considered that New Zealand's approach to LLN focused on the economic benefits of LLN programmes but that one could not assume that learning LLN through the workplace would translate/transfer that learning into other aspects of life. He argued that this embedded approach is based on an assumption that LLN is value-free and can simply be embedded into anything. In his opinion, New Zealand's following of the UK model is problematic because the UK is not like New Zealand in terms of its demography, history and culture. He noted that the Government approach is for a silver bullet through a one-size-fits-all approach. He commented that if one criticised this approach, the response was that it was "early days yet". He feared that we could be in danger of falling into a trap as we did with schooling where we cut out the people who need different approaches by standardising everything.

Some of these views were shared by others who agreed that there should be multiple entry sites and that adult community education and work-based training are both important. Several informants made suggestions for further improvements:

LLN needs more money, more recognition of need for people to be productive members of society. Salaries for tutors are low. Government doesn't value education in its broadest sense.

There are issues when young people can't meet the outcomes—they drop out and then the provider doesn't get funded but often the goals are too high. The important thing is to measure where they start and where they finish—value added. There's a conundrum about measuring attitudinal change—a muddled area.

I would prefer students to staircase into further training instead of work but most go into work because the system incentivises work because people get paid.

One informant would like to see more government-sponsored employment options for young people:

Not job creation for the sake of it but making jobs available—upskill people so they can do the jobs they want to do.

Conclusion

Our key informants agree on a number of elements critical to working with young people/young adults in LLN learning and these picked up on many of the themes we identified through the international literature.

It would appear that the interviewees emphasised young people/young adults as a distinct group and how their needs could best be served, rather than effective teaching and learning of LLN. Many of those interviewed were passionate advocates for young people, suggesting that they were often neglected or maligned. They considered young people/young adults to be a distinct group that needed to be acknowledged and celebrated as having skills and knowledge to offer and enhance.

A key theme is the importance of contextualising LLN through work or short-term work experience or simulation of real workplaces. There was consensus that LLN should be embedded but a variety of opinions about how that could best be achieved. Environments that are seen to suit young people/young adults' learning were described as needing to be unlike school and with the learner at the centre. "Environments" appeared to be less about physical plant and more about relationships, ethos and purpose.

Key informants considered that government funding for LLN was a step in the right direction although many felt that current accountability for outcomes was unrealistic considering the learners. Some thought the Government should be doing more to create or find suitable employment for young people/young adults. The discussions with key informants confirmed that there has been very little public debate and little (and emergent) policy in New Zealand about the intersection of young people/young adults and LLN. Everyone saw this as an area needing considerable investment and one which could have very positive outcomes if approached in the right ways. Young people need to be consulted about what is best for them. A key message is that there is no one right way to deliver effective LLN programmes and there should be a range of options for young people/young adults.

These findings correlate well with the Ministry of Youth Development's (MYD) list of *Ten Essential Elements⁹ of a Great Youth Development Programme* and we reproduce that list below with their permission as it could serve equally well as a guide specifically for LLN programmes involving young people/young adults.

Great Youth Development Programmes need:

1. **Staff who are empathetic**, skilled and knowledgeable about young people's development, and who wholeheartedly believe in the potential of all young people to succeed
2. **A clear focus on the goals of the programme**, which are framed in positive terms
3. **High expectations of both staff and young people**; that all will commit to the programme, all are capable of succeeding, and all will respect each other, and observe the rules that have been agreed upon
4. **A programme that is interesting**, interactive, engaging diverse and flexible; that provides young people with opportunities to develop new skills and competencies which they can use to be of service to others
5. **A programme that is personalised to each participant**, recognising and acknowledging each young person's strengths, aspirations and learning needs
6. **An environment that is safe**, stable, warm and welcoming to young people of all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds
7. **Young people have a voice**, play a part in shaping the programme with opportunities and support to take on leadership roles
8. **Life skills** are part of the learning, so that young people are equipped with the practical knowledge and skills to make good decisions about their lives
9. **Community and family links are strong**, so that the programme and the participants benefit from family and community support, and the community and participants continue to benefit from these links after the programme has finished
10. **Regular assessment and evaluation** of the programme occurs, enabling managers to see if the programme is succeeding, whether any adjustments are needed, and to assure funders that the investment is paying off.

3.2 Factors associated with successful LLN according to key informants

To continue developing the exemplar we began producing by drawing on the international literature review. We have added a column to the table below which itemises the ideas that key informants explored.

The following factors are associated with successful LLN learning.

The first two columns are derived from a list of factors determined from the international research. Column three is derived from our key informant interviews. Where the key informants discussed additional factors not identified in the research literature they are indicated in italics.

⁹ Drawn from a series of studies of effective youth development programmes.

Table 5. Factors associated with successful LLN according to key informants

	Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Key informants
Strong association with success	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and interrelated</p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills</p> <p>Small-group learning is the norm/common</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised)</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short timeframe are quickly achieved</p> <p>Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge</p> <p>Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (including one-on-one mentoring and counselling)</p> <p>Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching</p> <p>Teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p>	<p>Respect is given to young people</p> <p>Young people are seen as unique and valued for their particular qualities</p> <p>Young people are different from (but not better or worse than) older adults</p> <p>Schools and families serve young people well</p> <p>Young people’s needs are addressed holistically</p> <p>Learning (including LLN) is contextualised</p> <p>Young people have a dedicated learning environment—a whānau/marae approach is appreciated as are enabling work environments</p> <p>Employment is recognised as a strong motivator for improving LLN</p> <p>There are productive relationships between all parties involved with young people’s work and learning</p> <p>A strengths-based approach is used</p>
Moderate association with success	<p>Low or no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments are youth friendly</p>	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults’ extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p>	<p>LLN is embedded by “stealth”</p> <p>Learning staircases to an achievable qualification—apprenticeship is often a successful model</p> <p>Young people’s facility with ICT is acknowledged</p> <p>Low or no cost for learners</p>
Limited association with success	<p>LLN is learnt first, and vocational learning follows</p>	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p>	<p>Differences between males and females in programmes are acknowledged</p> <p>Learning focuses on oral communication</p> <p>Recent brain research drives LLN approaches</p>

4. THE CASE STUDIES

This section provides the findings from six programme reviews (case studies). The case studies followed a literature review and key informant interviews.

We carried out the case studies between mid-August and mid-September 2009. Two were in the South Island—one in Christchurch and one in a provincial centre, two in Manukau, and two in the Wellington region. Prior to visiting the sites, we discussed the draft interview questions with Mandy McGirr, Director of McGirr Training, a PTE in Wellington. The sites were recommended to us by key informants as providing worthwhile programmes for particular learners. Five organisations were PTEs and the sixth was Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) where we spent a day with their new TradeSup programme. We wanted to focus on PTEs because our literature review highlighted that almost all relevant research had been conducted in ITPs or with apprentices. We wanted to expand the body of knowledge about young adult learners who were engaged in LLN learning in different contexts. Unfortunately, our attempts to conduct a site visit to a workplace offering in-house training which catered for a number of young people/young adults were not successful.

There were many similarities among the six case study sites and many echoes with the research findings reported in the literature and with the key informants' thoughts and suggestions. The case studies also revealed new dimensions as well as areas where there was divergence. A number of key ideas emerged from the case studies. The major differences between the PTEs and MIT related to government funding and the size of the organisation. MIT learners paid student fees; PTE learners were subsidised by Youth Training and TOPs funding pools. Learners at MIT had access to the resources and plant designed to cater for a very large vocational population; the PTEs were much smaller and had more limited scope in terms of resources although Future Skills PTE was very well equipped with computers. All organisations offered excellent recreation areas for learners that were clearly appreciated and well used.

4.1 Young people/young adults

Many of the young people we spoke to were referred to the organisation by WINZ, although a significant number had enrolled because a friend or family member recommended it. It could be worthwhile exploring further the degree to which motivation to learn and achievement are related to whether or not someone has been referred or chosen to enrol. We found some research that identified that young people/young adults were more likely to be engaged when they were voluntarily enrolled (Cooper & Baynham, 2005; Hayes, 1999; Perin et al., 2006; Salisbury, 2004; Topper & Gordon, 2004) but this aspect didn't seem significant in the case study sites, or to be an issue for key informants.

We heard many stories from young people and staff of difficult family life, being "kicked out of school", having gained few if any credits towards NCEA at school, being made redundant from work or dismissed from work, lack of motivation and addiction and abuse. It made for a gloomy picture of what life can be like for

many young people/young adults. The fact that the young people/young adults we interviewed and observed all appeared involved, cheerful, included and often highly engaged learners, is testimony to the environments they were in.

All the young people/young adults we spoke to enjoyed their tertiary studies and ranked it much higher than being at school. This included their LLN learning where the prospect of employment or studying something that interested them, and where LLN was contextualised and embedded in other learning, provided motivation to improve their LLN skills. Young people valued highly practical and hands-on experience, either in sporting or creative activities or in vocational or trade workshop situations. Another key motivator for young people/young adults was that their place of study accepted them as adult—providing an adult environment, empathetic and friendly tutors who built good relationships and a good balance of support and independent learning. Young people reported on the strength of friendships formed with classmates and the satisfaction gained from working at their own pace through their work (which in most cases involved working towards a National Certificate in Employment Skills). In most cases young people/young adults were in classes which did not have older adults. As with the literature and the key informants, there seems to be mixed feeling about which model is preferred and this seems to depend on the structures within the organisation and the preferences of the staff and managers.

4.2 Staff in organisations

Our impression of staff working with young people/young adults was that they are dedicated and have the interests of the young people at heart. What they may lack in qualifications and teaching experience they make up for in common sense, strength of personality and good humour. These qualities, and the fact that many had similar backgrounds to the young people, are much appreciated by the young people. Managers had all of these attributes and also a keen awareness of how their businesses needed to be run to satisfy young people as well as government.

Organisations deal with a number of systemic issues. Young people's attendance is erratic and they tend to enrol or leave a programme on any day of the year which makes continuity in teaching problematic. In some sites, resources were slim and often had to be prepared by individual tutors. Having ready access to purpose-built texts and workbooks, as well as computers and other ICTs, could help solve problems for many tutors.

Many staff members have undertaken or are undertaking professional development in teaching LLN—most often the *National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education (Educator)* or the *National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education (Vocational Tutor/Lecturer or Workplace Trainer)*. Whilst some tutors appeared to resent having to give up their time to do extra study, most agreed that they had learnt a lot and that their teaching had improved. We saw evidence of new resources and teaching approaches that embedded LLN into programmes in fun and interesting ways across whole organisations.

4.3 Programmes and organisations

It was clear to us how much the tone of the organisation was set by the manager and we were very impressed with the managers we met. Programmes that interwove practical activities and bookwork seemed to work best with learners. Outings and “treats” were clearly very important to learners as was regular work experience. Funding and accountability were key issues for managers. Most would like more consideration given to reporting on noncognitive outcomes and achievement (such as growth in self-confidence and self-esteem). One manager would like the Government to give leeway for a settling in period for individual learners before the organisation has to report on progress. A lot of energy and time seemed to be spent by individual staff chasing up on learners who had left, to ensure they were still in further education and training or employment. This could possibly be done nationally and centrally.

Why do young people who did not flourish at school begin to experience success in foundation learning? Some of the answers lie in: high tutor-to-learner ratios; adult friendly environments; learning set within an accessible and meaningful context where study is likely to lead to employment; and learning that is chunked and which has manageable and rewarding goals, so that success breeds success. And some of the answers lie with the young people themselves and their maturity and the motivation offered by preparation for work and the adult world. This will depend on the young person’s self-efficacy and resilience. We met many young people who had clear goals and directions and who aspired to undertake study at a higher level so they could enter a trade or a profession.

CASE STUDY 1: EMPLOYMENT PLUS (CHRISTCHURCH)

Background

Employment Plus is a PTE run by the Salvation Army in Christchurch, which was recommended to us by a key informant. We visited the site for a day and interviewed six young people, two vocational tutors, one manager and a literacy and numeracy tutor. We attended a morning tea staff meeting where the CEO from national office spoke to staff, and we visited two classroom sites—the early childhood classroom (after hours) and the builders’ site, where we observed students doing carving activities.

The programme

Employment Plus is currently funded in Christchurch for 125 places but in 2010 government funding will be reduced. Fifty percent of the funding comes from Youth Training and 50 percent from TOPs. The majority of students are aged 35–40. On this campus the programmes offered are:

- Early Childhood Education
- Security
- Ready for Work
- Electrical/Pest Control
- On Trak
- Future IT
- Graphics
- Business Services
- Adventure Plus
- Connections
- Building.

LLN is embedded in all programmes. Some programmes are being restructured and redesigned to better suit the learners. For example, Building is being developed as a beginner-level pre-apprenticeship course; graphics is introducing an audiovisual component; and Electrical/Pest Control was in the past broadened to include more plant/horticultural practical components.

Most learners are referred from WINZ. The organisation has a good working relationship with Work and Income, but an Employment Plus manager explained that follow-up with WINZ can be difficult as case managers are not always immediately available. The manager felt that there should be more individual accountability for learners who don’t attend programmes regularly. In addition to catering for WINZ referrals, the organisation does some marketing and goes to Careers Expos; it does some radio and paper advertising, and has found word of mouth works well—learners encourage their friends to enrol.

The Employment Plus vision is described in the organisation’s material as “a vision of hope in action”. In keeping with this vision, the organisation takes learners who may be proportionally more needy than many in other PTEs. A manager we interviewed believes the key to good service delivery is personnel, and that the underlying philosophy should be in understanding good teaching and

learning. She explained that learners are here to get work-ready skills and thus increase their economic wellbeing, although the organisation also focuses on holistic care and support that assists people disadvantaged by learning barriers. The outcomes they are looking for in young people are: being able to function as good citizens; positive attitudinal changes; and social justice measures.

The lecturers/tutors

Staff are often attracted to the organisation through known networks, rather than through advertising. An ideal employee, according to the manager, would have a tutoring/teaching and education background as well as specific programme training knowledge, plus a willingness to learn, and the right people characteristics. She also considered it important that they not be doing a second job and were able to focus their working life on tutoring and its demands. She considers that working conditions are reasonable—Employment Plus pays slightly higher than other PTEs. Tutors also get four weeks' holiday a year and can get unpaid leave.

The manager explained that all tutors are responsible for embedding LLN into their programmes, and LLN teaching is focused on the student's LLN needs. To help achieve this, staff have 10 days' professional development per year, and all staff are required to complete the unit standard 21204 *Develop Adult Learners' Literacy and Numeracy Skills Within a Training or Education Programme*, which is offered by Workbase Training. The main professional development focus for 2009 is on LLN and lesson planning. The team leader oversees moderation and quality assurance of assessment. The manager did say some staff appeared resistant to having extra work imposed on them relating to LLN, even though they acknowledged the needs of many learners. The two staff members we interviewed recognised that their learners have LLN needs. One said the professional development was very useful. One said:

The people here really need help—there are huge gaps in their learning and many have learning problems. All the students have low levels of literacy and numeracy. They often have a score of N3¹⁰ on our diagnostic tests.

Both tutors also talked about integrating literacy and numeracy into their existing subjects and topics in ways that learners found relevant. The trades tutor used mechanisms such as rulers and golf score cards to help students add up numbers, and the ECE tutor did a lot of practical work, such as measuring volume by administering medicine, working out proportions using play dough and milk formula. She also used role plays, modelling discussions, small-group work and scaffolding and said she only resorted to workbooks right at the end of the learning sessions.

Ideally each learner should leave Employment Plus with a job or an arrangement for further training. The manager explained that the organisation aimed for "a job

¹⁰ N3 refers to the organisation's screening assessment test score where N is below appropriate literacy level and N3 is at the lowest (beginner) literacy level.

well done and a job done well”, and for tutors to be working professionally, even if it meant acting outside their comfort zone. She considered that some tutors needed to change their teaching practice because of the increased emphasis on embedding LLN, to put the students’ needs at the centre of their lessons and to deliver “learning-focused learning”, with hands-on learner engagement. Employment Plus wants young people to gain skills as well as a sense of self-worth. Therefore, she said it was necessary for tutors to set high goals for learners and to help them take little steps to achieve them. To achieve this overarching goal required personal accountability and a supportive teamwork approach among staff. The ECE tutor said:

Often these girls lack confidence, when in fact they are often really good. I’m quite demanding of them, expecting and getting high levels.

The manager described designing a learning programme that takes account of what employers want of employees. Thus the programme explicitly encourages learners to become people who have skill, initiative and a good work ethic, and are reliable, punctual, honest and literate (as employers will discard a poorly written application form). The manager explained that there is increasingly less willingness on the part of employers to train someone for a job that they may not stay in—therefore new employees are expected to bring a set of generic skills to a job. She was hopeful that the wider organisation was willing to become more supportive of the needs of the learners; for example helping, with short work experience placements, and with other issues such as drug and alcohol abuse. One of the tutors talked about the wider needs that some of the learners have, and that when they needed extra help it was difficult knowing who to refer them on to.

Both tutors emphasised the importance of establishing good relationships with their students. Both commented that being parents gave them a good understanding of young people and, while this was important, it was even more important to actually like young people and be able to care for them. They also thought it was important to talk to young people—not just about their learning, but about their lives as well—and to have a sense of humour and joke with them.

The learners

The manager explained it was important for learners that the learning be seen as relevant, and that it had to be different from, and not a replication of, school. She described teaching as more informal than school. All the students interviewed backed up these claims and told us that these were some of the things they liked about being in the programme. Most had had bad experiences of secondary schooling—rating the experience as a 1 or 2 out of 5, while being in this programme was a 4 or 5 out of 5. The young people also liked the way that tutors did not put pressure on them (“they don’t breathe down your neck”), let them work at their own pace and gave them plenty of time to complete their workbooks, activities and assessments. They liked having choices about what they did and being treated as adults. They also found it easier to work in smaller class groups than those they had experienced at school (for example, there were 10 people in the Building programme and 17 in the ECE programme). Learners

appreciated the combination of practical and workbook learning. Although they preferred learning through practical activities (for example, making things, discussions, role plays, work experience, hands-on stuff), they also realised that they needed to do the reading and writing and maths for their progression through credits for a qualification. They were therefore quite accepting of the LLN activities in the workbook approach, as one young man said:

I like doing practical work most, but I don't mind doing the course work because I see we need it. We do quite a bit of book work, but if you want the units, you have to do the work.

Good relationships with classmates and tutors were also important to successful learning. All of the young people talked about liking their tutors, who they felt knew them well and were interested in them as people, as well as interested in helping them with their pathways to the future. They felt their tutors understood their learning needs and were good at explaining things they didn't understand, or helping them break learning up into small manageable steps. Mates were described as being "similar to you, and you can relate to them". The culture of the place was seen as non-judgemental and "laid back, making it easy to learn". One student said:

Here I'm confident talking in class. We're all in the same boat so I don't feel silly.

Another said:

It's a step up from secondary school but the learning is much funner and more laid back. You can have some fun with your mates at a slower pace. We take the mickey out of each other in a good way ... listen to music ...

The manager's view was that young people as a group are different from older learners, in that they have different learning patterns and learning styles. She remarked that older learners bring prior knowledge to learning and have different goals. She commented that younger learners have short concentration spans and prefer hands-on, constant stimulation. She believed tutors needed to be able to address the needs of younger learners specifically, in order to deliver effectively. They needed to move learners from a victim mentality to self-accountability, so that learners ask themselves: "What can **I** do?" Several of the young people did point out, however, that they enjoyed being in classes with older people. They liked hearing their opinions and it made learning more interesting. Some said it helped them learn to get on with people better, and they realised they would need this in the workforce where there would be a mix of age groups.

Future prospects for the organisation/Programme intentions

The Employment Plus centre will soon move to a new building nearby. The existing building is cold, damp and a little tired looking, although the location is central and easy to access by public transport. The move is considered important

for the emotional and physical wellbeing of both staff and learners as the new spaces will be light, airy, warm and attractive. The manager discussed some issues of concern about funding and attendance, which she thought could make a difference for future prospects for PTEs offering programmes for young people. She explained that while there are centre rules and guidelines and a structure of warnings for non attendance, attendance is still an issue, as outside agencies are also not always able to assist in resolving the matter.

She believed government benefits were too easy to retain, and that work and study needed to be incentivised. For example, the dole could be reduced for students who were not attending, or better still, there could be incentives for students working and studying well.

She also felt that the Government could do more brokering of the relationship building between industry and employers and training organisations, as part of supporting vocational education and training to adapt to the needs of industry and to better match demand with supply. The manager believes the kinds of outcomes that PTEs are required to report on do not take account of the nature of the learners. For example, the PTE is required to achieve 80 percent occupancy and to have a credit achievement of 20 per year per learner (or 1 and ½ credits per week). Sixty percent of learners need to be in employment or further education and training once they have completed their programme. The manager commented that it can be a delicate act to balance the Salvation Army's Mission Statement with TEC requirements.

Key success indicators

The following factors associated with successful LLN learning at this centre are highlighted in bold type. The first two columns are derived from a list of factors determined from the international research. Column three is derived from our case study findings.

Table 6. Key success indicators: Employment Plus (Christchurch)

	Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Learner Level (case study)
Strong association with success	<p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and interrelated</p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills</p> <p>Small-group learning is the norm/common</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised)</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short timeframe are quickly achieved</p> <p>Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge</p> <p>Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (including one-on-one mentoring and counselling)</p> <p>Some teachers are well trained and knowledgeable</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching</p> <p>Teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p>	<p>Learning programmes take account of learners' current skill level</p> <p>Tutors are responsive to individual learning needs as they arise</p> <p>Learning progresses at learners' pace</p> <p>One-on-one teaching is used to meet individual needs</p> <p>Tutors break learning into manageable steps</p> <p>Tutors clearly explain what learners do not understand</p> <p>Learning goals are achieved quickly and easily</p> <p>Learning programmes include fun activities</p> <p>Learning environment is seen as hassle-free (no pressure, unnecessary rules, etc.)</p> <p>There are respectful relationships among everyone in the organisation</p> <p>Friendships with others are facilitated by the programme</p> <p>Learners are treated as adults</p> <p>Learners are motivated by realistic and achievable career pathways</p>
Moderate association with success	<p>Low or no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments are youth friendly</p>	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults' extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p>	<p>LLN is seen as relevant to vocation or career pathway</p> <p>LLN is embedded by "stealth"</p> <p>Learning staircases to an achievable qualification</p> <p>The organisation has a "family" environment</p>
Limited association with success	<p>LLN is learnt first, and vocational learning follows</p>	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p>	

CASE STUDY 2: EMPLOYMENT PLUS (CANTERBURY)

Background

This PTE is a smaller off-site centre of the Employment Plus Salvation Army organisation, situated in a provincial town. The young people present on the day we did the fieldwork seemed, with the exception of one learner, to be more challenging in their LLN needs than those observed at the larger city centre (run by the same organisation). The centre has been given a certain amount of autonomy from the regional headquarters because of the manager's expertise and LLN background. The centre caters for 11 adults and eight young people. (On the day of the fieldwork there were five adults and six young people/young adults present.) The manager told us they often lose young people before they complete a programme, as some cannot manage financially, but she added that one went back to school recently, which is a good outcome. The purpose of the centre is to provide a "job-ready environment", and the manager would ideally like to set the environment up differently as a more realistic work environment, where there are attendance expectations and paid incentives for working or studying. At present learners are required to attend only one day a week to keep their benefit, which the manager considers does not encourage real-life work practices.

The programme

The programme consists of teacher-led work in the mornings and individual learner work in the afternoons. Learners all had access to computers. The learners are working towards a Certificate in Employment Skills (compulsory), a National Certificate in ECE, a National Certificate in Computing Levels 2 and 3, NCEA Level 1 and/or unit standards towards retail. All learners do work experience for two weeks, twice a year. Tutors attempt to make the programme relevant, and to ground LLN in people's interests. The downside of this, the manager explained, is that if things are too personalised for each learner it becomes too time consuming for tutors.

The manager believed the programme was not meeting the needs of all learners because of TEC pressures to gain unit standards. TEC expects learners to achieve one and a half credits per week, which she considers is "pie in the sky" for most of these learners due to their low levels of literacy and numeracy. She also felt TEC was unrealistic in its expectations about the readiness of these particular learners to achieve to this number of unit standards and that there should be recognition and valuing of the "soft outcomes" (e.g., self-management skills such as personal cleanliness, getting to work regularly and on time, etc.). Ideally learners should be allowed to focus on these skills for the first three months without being accountable for unit standard outcomes. The manager had heard anecdotally that, in some organisations, tutors could be driven to fudge credits to meet the high and unrealistic funding expectations. This of course puts the onus on the organisation to have stringent controls, which, the manager explained, Employment Plus does.

The lecturers/tutors

In employing staff the manager looked for qualifications, enthusiasm to take on a challenge and an openness to change. The organisation offers one day of professional development a month to tutors, and some have done unit standard 21204 *Develop Adult Learners' Literacy and Numeracy Skills Within a Training or Education Programme* which has not always met their own LLN needs.

We were able to interview only one tutor, as tutors work on a rotational basis, and so the others were absent. The tutor said she found it was the individuals at the centre who made the job worthwhile. "What I want is to make the kids smile," she said, and even though she said staff needed resilience for this work, she described the job as a "burn-out type of job". She said she liked the approach to learning that gave learners individualised support and allowed them to learn at their own pace. She said a number of strategies worked to keep learners engaged. These included using encouragement with some, while for others it was necessary sometimes to use "stand-over tactics and bribes". She described the way she had confronted one boy about his personal cleanliness in quite a blunt way, and demanded he wash his clothes. He had done so, and she felt it was a mark of respect for her that he had taken her advice. Some of the learners she described as "misfits" or having behavioural problems, rather than necessarily having numeracy and literacy problems.

The tutor often taught numeracy and literacy "by stealth". She used games such as monopoly and cards and was diversifying away from workbooks as much as she could. However, when learners were using workbooks she got them to highlight what they did not understand and then she got them to think of possible answers rather than just telling them. She also played a lot of memory games and introduced practical work as much as possible. The planning of lessons and strategising about approaches and resources is something she found difficult to fit into her hours as she does 14 hours of teaching a week and is only employed part-time as a tutor at the centre. The strategies for learning and assessment described by this tutor included pretests, spending blocks of time on different topics, developing Individual Learning Plans, and holding regular interviews for formative and summative assessments.

There was room for improvement in this tutor's opinion, and one of the things that she felt was important was the need to measure successful outcomes over a longer time period. She felt that the present requirement of reporting on outcomes at the end of a programme was too short to show progress, as these learners took longer than the time allocated. She said:

You don't always see immediate improvements—it takes a long time. The outcomes make sense but the timing isn't good. The time limits are too tough. I'd like to measure success in the longer term, further down the track.

The learners

Many of the learners are referred by WINZ. Several had been 'kicked out' of school. One had come from an Alternative Education and Youth Justice residential centre, another had only achieved two credits at high school and had been

expelled from school and the YMCA for violence, and another had left school in Year 9. One highly motivated learner, who had achieved Level 1 NCEA, had waggged school because she felt looked down upon by the "rich farmers' kids". The adult learners had recently been split up from the youth for the majority of their learning sessions and this seemed to be working well.

Three of the young people we spoke to were new at the centre (one had been there three days, one a week and one a month), so they had limited experience of the centre to report on. Most, however, were re-engaged in learning and considered their tutors to be helpful, friendly and supportive. Most learners liked coming to the centre and enjoyed it more than school. Two learners rated their experience of the centre as 3/5; the rest rated it 4/5 or 5/5. Several spoke about the tutor's skill in being able to explain things to them in words that they understood, whereas at school they had difficulty understanding what the teacher meant. They liked the one-to-one tuition they received, and enjoyed the relaxed and small-group atmosphere. They also enjoyed doing practical work and one said she enjoyed using the workbooks.

Future prospects for the organisation/Programme intentions

Because it is part of the larger Employment Plus organisation, the managers of both centres shared similar concerns about future prospects, especially around funding and learner attendance. Funding that measures outcomes without taking account of the value an organisation has added to a learner's learning and development disadvantages PTEs that are willing to accept learners with high learning needs such as these. The organisation is trying to work smarter by sharing lesson plans and resources across centres within the region, and the manager believed they could do this nationally which could help to increase the standard and expectations tutors had of learners.

The manager believed that the most effective change to the programme would be to start designing it according to the needs of the learners, rather than in response to requirements imposed from the top (that is, the Government) as it is with the current model. For example, learners may be working towards a Certificate in Employment Skills which provides a structured pathway of unit standards which may or may not take account of learners' basic needs and strengths. But organisations are funded to deliver this to all learners.

Key success indicators

The following factors associated with successful LLN learning at this centre are highlighted in bold type. The first two columns are derived from a list of factors determined from the international research. Column three is derived from our case study findings. Where we found additional factors not identified in the research literature that contributed to success at this centre, they are indicated in italics.

Table 7. Key success indicators: Employment Plus (Canterbury)

	Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Learner Level (case study)
Strong association with success	<p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and interrelated</p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills</p> <p>Individualised and small-group learning are the norm/common</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised)</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short timeframe Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (including one-on-one mentoring and counselling)</p> <p>Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching</p> <p>Some teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p>	<p>Learning programmes take account of learners' current skill level</p> <p>Tutors are responsive to individual learning needs in a "just in time" manner</p> <p>Learning progresses at learners' pace</p> <p>One-on-one teaching is used to meet individual needs</p> <p>Tutors break learning into manageable steps</p> <p>Tutors clearly explain what learners do not understand</p> <p>Learning goals are achieved quickly and easily</p> <p>Learning programmes include fun activities</p> <p>Learning environment is seen as hassle-free (no pressure, unnecessary rules, etc.)</p> <p>There are respectful relationships among everyone in the organisation</p> <p>Friendships with others are facilitated by the programme</p> <p>Learners are treated as adults Learners are motivated by realistic and achievable career pathways</p>
Moderate association with success	<p>Low/no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments are youth friendly</p>	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults' extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p>	<p>LLN seen as relevant to vocation or career pathway</p> <p>LLN is embedded with "stealth"</p> <p>Learning staircases to achievable qualification for some</p> <p>The organisation has a "family" environment</p>
Limited association with success	<p>LLN is learnt first and vocational learning follows</p>	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p>	

CASE STUDY 3: TRADESUP MANUKAU INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT)

The programme

TradeSUP sits within the Foundation Studies department at MIT and is a collaborative venture between Foundation Studies and four technology departments. The first programme was held in semester one of 2009; another programme is starting at the end of August which is oversubscribed. There will be four more intakes in 2010—numbers are constrained by health and safety measures for supervision in the workshop.

There were two main drivers for the programme. Foundation Studies staff felt that many of the foundation programmes were not suiting younger students (especially young males) who came to MIT without firm goals and who dropped out early on. The technology departments were concerned that their programmes were not attracting enough students. TradeSUP was developed as a pathway into Levels 2 and 3 trades programmes with the explicit purpose of getting young people ready for further learning and engaged and with the LLN knowledge and skills necessary to cope successfully in Levels 2 and 3 trades programmes.

The 13-week fulltime programme (four days a week) is designed to give students practical experience across four trades—vehicle technology, building and construction, electrical engineering and plumbing and gas fitting. All classes take place in the workshops on site at MIT in Otara, and for plumbing in Mangere. TradeSUP is a Level 2, 40 credit programme that costs each student around \$1,600. Students who complete the programme receive an MIT certificate and are likely to move on to a full-year programme at MIT in one of the four trades. Sixteen males enrolled in the first intake; 15 completed the programme and 10 are currently enrolled in further programmes. The others would have liked to begin a trades programme but these were full and they intend to enrol in 2010. The programme has open entry but requires an English language proficiency of 5.5 on IELTS, physical capability and a positive attitude and commitment to study. MIT targets students who leave school with very few qualifications. Lecturers visit schools, MIT advertises and students hear about the programme from friends and family. Of the original intake, the vast majority were 16–18-year-old males with few school qualifications who were unsure about future career options. All students are interviewed before being offered a position.

The Foundation Studies lecturers were clear that the programme should focus on a unifying project and that the four different technology areas needed to contribute to that project. The Foundation Studies team managed the pastoral care, the orientation phase and the graduation week of the programme when students worked in the computer laboratory to develop a personal portfolio to use in applying for further programmes. As well, they ensure LLN is embedded into all parts of the programme. Students are given literacy and numeracy diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the programme and are advised at the outset of the specific literacy and numeracy they will encounter during the programme and how that learning will be scaffolded for the class and for individuals.

The students were put into four groups to build a quad bike (vehicle technology). Building and construction included making tool boxes for the back of the bike. In the electrical workshops students fitted the electrical components and in plumbing they learnt about and made adjustments to pipes and welding. The courses equate to about Levels 2–3 on the NQF but this is not always a perfect match. There are no assessments or exams; practical work is assessed through observation and a record kept of skills mastered. Students keep a log and produce a portfolio in week 13.

The lecturers/tutors

Lecturers we spoke to were justifiably proud of their “baby” and felt that it had more than achieved the objectives they were trying to meet. The completion rate and the number of students going on to further education are impressive. They acknowledged that planning and delivering a programme across departments required commitment, patience and careful negotiation. We spoke at length to Foundation Studies staff and met Alan, Rich and Paul in the technology workshops. All staff have a Certificate in Adult Teaching and foundation staff have LLN qualifications.

Martin manages the programme. He interviews all applicants, manages orientation and graduation events and has an overall pastoral care role. At interviews, applicants need to demonstrate that they will commit to the programme and “fit in” with other students and staff. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to support the young people and to confirm their commitment to complete the programme.

Grant teaches literacy and numeracy and was brought onto TradeSUP to help tutors embed literacy and numeracy into the trades teaching. His time is flexible within this programme and he has a pastoral care role and helps students with LLN needs in the classroom as they arise. It was originally thought that he would have a more explicit role teaching literacy and numeracy but that teaching has devolved to trades tutors. At the end of the programme students asked Grant: “What happened to our literacy?” LLN teaching is about creating a trusting environment and teaching tends to be embedded by stealth. The LLN focus is that students will understand two to three key concepts (for example, “measure twice, cut once”) from each of the trades and be familiar with the specific numeracy and literacy that will be used in the Level 3 programmes (Ohm’s Law, circuit breakers, volume of a cylinder, were all cited). Grant’s personal philosophy is that vocational tutors should enhance LLN learning but shouldn’t be expected to be LLN specialists. He cited the NRDC case study research: “You wouldn’t expect a maths teacher to teach plastering.” Grant doesn’t believe students’ LLN skills need to be perfect and that prior experiences of learning often make this difficult to achieve.

A lot of energy and commitment have gone into making sure students are welcomed and scaffolded into tertiary study and encouraged to stay and complete qualifications. The teams developed a friendly, competitive rivalry within the tight class structure. Staff organised social events and helped students apply for further programmes. Assessment is low key and relies on team work. The

Foundation Studies team's mantra is that "MIT is a learning institution" and that all tutors need to see themselves as teachers first and experts in their trade second. The following illustrates effective teaching and learning. One tutor used the log books as a tool to recap on the day's learning and a way for students to record key ideas. He questioned students about concepts and learning and wrote their answers on the board. With future intakes, all trades tutors will follow this model as they can see the benefits for students' learning. MIT staff are thinking about offering a further taster programme they have provisionally labelled "ServeSUUp" which could prepare young people for further education in hospitality or tourism.

Whilst the programme caters predominantly for young people, tutors saw value in younger and older people learning together, with older people providing a "moderating" influence which could help with attitudinal issues some young people bring to learning.

The learners

With the exception of one student, everyone in the class is aged 16–19. All are male and came onto the course with few school qualifications. Students pay about \$1,600 for the course but did not seem to be perturbed about fees and potentially building up debt. We interviewed three students who were all enthusiastic about the programme and were enrolled in further trades programmes at MIT. They were all Pasifika people who had come to New Zealand for secondary schooling, which they did not enjoy. One student talked about the MIT programme as being "way harder than college" but appreciated the way the tutors taught. Motivation and participation were not issues for any of the people we interviewed.

All three students spoke enthusiastically about their classmates and the bond established between them. One student said they treated each other like family, helping each other out, even to the extent of staying at each other's places if things were bad at home, and giving each other lunch when money was short. He commented that they still meet for lunch and to hang out together, even though they are now in different programmes. Another student commented on the activities undertaken at the orientation barbeque which helped students meet each other.

The students rated the tutors highly. They were seen to be approachable and to know all the class members well and to be interested in them. They showed interest in their lives and treated them with respect. They take the time to understand what students need, explain things well and are very safety conscious.

A key component of the success of the programme is that all the course work is authentic and relevant and because of this one of the students said he found it really easy to learn and understand maths and literacy. He talked about measuring up the quad bike for the box on the back and reading instructions for the automotive work.

Students are really interested in everything they are learning at MIT, and one said he thought the students here were really lucky. They all commented positively on learning at a pace that suits them although one said he would have liked more time on each of the four courses. One student said he was glad he'd had that introduction because his current programme went at a faster pace. Students reported that they responded well to the competitive nature of the TradeSUP teams of four when they were working on their quad bikes. They liked the way the learning in each trade built on the learning in the others. One student thought that some students were impatient with explanations and wanted to go ahead and get practical work done. He thought some students complained a bit and should take more responsibility for their own learning. He felt comfortable about making mistakes and learning from them in class.

The students enjoyed the practical learning the programme offered and see the literacy and numeracy as part and parcel of the practical work. One described the programme as 60 percent practical and the rest writing down what had been learnt that day. This student finished work off at home. Another student spoke with great enthusiasm about how he practised the skills he'd learnt each day at home—buying the necessary tools and fixing equipment around the house that he had previously got tradespeople to do. He said his family was impressed with his new skills. They like the one-to-one learning, and the small-group learning. They feel able to approach a tutor if they don't understand something the tutor has explained on the whiteboard. Students also reported learning a lot from each other.

The assessments the students talked about were all practical, such as painting and welding. If they do bookwork and get something wrong the tutor will put a cross by it and then explain what is wrong. The students thought the portfolio was worthwhile.

Future prospects for the organisation/Programme intentions

The TradeSUP programme has only had one intake and the lecturers we spoke to were considering options to improve further programmes. For example, they saw that student attendance at the Mangere (plumbing) site fell off and saw that the organisation had a responsibility to make transport easier. Week 13 had not originally been included in the programme but would be in future programmes as students had been very focused on putting together their portfolios which became in effect their CVs.

Funding and government policy constrains LLN teaching and learning. We discussed measurement of LLN outcomes. A lecturer felt strongly that students learnt important social skills of critical thinking and problem solving through the embedded approach but that these were not seen to be valued by government in the same way that improved LLN was. There is always tension for lecturers in foundation programmes between giving learners a second chance at learning where tertiary education may not work well for them (there is open entry to general foundation programmes) and needing to meet targets for funding of retention and completion. Thus students who drop out before completion can be a drain on an organisation's already stretched finances. There was concern

expressed about the Government capping intakes and the possible effect of this on the TradeSUP programme. Lecturers had not thought about the effect of the new tertiary high school at MIT from 2010 but thought that students from the high school might feed into TradeSUP.

Key success indicators

The following factors associated with successful LLN learning at this centre are highlighted in bold type. The first two columns are derived from a list of factors determined from the international research. Column three is derived from our case study findings. Where we found additional factors not identified in the research literature that contributed to success at this centre, they are indicated in italics.

Table 8. Key success indicators: MIT

	Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Learner Level (case study)
Strong association with success	<p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and interrelated</p> <p><i>Workshops and resources are authentic and high quality</i></p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., with lowest skills</p> <p>Small-group learning is the norm/common</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised)</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short timeframe</p> <p>Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge</p> <p>Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (including one-on-one mentoring and counselling)</p> <p>Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching</p> <p>Teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p> <p><i>The programme is project-based</i></p> <p><i>The programme is very targeted to the intake</i></p>	<p>Learning programmes take account of learners' current skill level</p> <p>Tutors are responsive to individual learning needs in a "just in time" manner</p> <p>Learning progresses at learners' pace</p> <p>One-on-one teaching is used to meet individual needs</p> <p>Tutors break learning into manageable steps</p> <p>Tutors clearly explain what learners do not understand</p> <p>Learning goals are achieved quickly and easily</p> <p>Learning programmes include fun activities</p> <p>Learning environment is seen as hassle-free (no pressure, unnecessary rules, etc.).</p> <p>Learners are motivated by realistic and achievable career pathways</p> <p>LNN seen as relevant to vocation or career pathway</p> <p>There are respectful relationships among everyone in the organisation</p> <p>Friendships with others are facilitated by the programme</p> <p>Learners are treated as adults</p>
Moderate association with success	<p>Low or no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments are youth friendly</p>	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults' extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p>	<p>LLN is embedded by "stealth"</p> <p>Learning staircases to an achievable qualification</p> <p>The organisation has a "family" environment</p>
Limited association with success	<p>LLN is learnt first, and vocational learning follows</p>	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p>	

CASE STUDY 4: FUTURE SKILLS (PTE–MANUKAU)

The programme

Future Skills was established in 2000, where the CEO informed us it had previously operated as a highly successful enterprise providing high-quality programmes for youth and adults. While it still has some adult classes, Future Skills is focusing on targeting young people and young adults, which many other PTEs have seen as too challenging.¹¹ Its vision is “To create opportunities for transformation through personal and professional growth, for our students, staff and the wider community”. The CEO told us the culture and practices of the organisation have evolved and progressed over the last nine years as staff have grappled with some of the challenging issues related specifically to the education and training of young people. There appeared to be a general consensus, from both staff and the young people interviewed, that the environment and programme is working successfully. Many of the young people appeared to be making positive gains and progress.

Future Skills specialises in training for young people aged from 15–18 years in information technology and trade skills, as well as foundation skills. Both foundation and vocational skills are incorporated into all of their programmes, but they also offer a specific foundation skills bridging course for students needing upskilling before beginning vocational programmes. Future Skills offers a broad range of beginner and intermediate vocational courses including computing and office technology, information technology, electronics, printing, air-conditioning and refrigeration, business administration and multimedia production.

The lecturers/tutors

The CEO explained that the organisation has deliberately looked for tutors and staff who can work productively with young people. There have been changes to staffing over the past few years. Management expect staff to consider the students in a holistic way, so there are aspects of pastoral care that are fundamental to the job. New staff with qualities and attributes suitable for teaching young people have been employed. The most important quality for staff was to have their heart in the job, be passionate about what they were doing and to have a duty of care. The CEO said, “Before you can teach these young people you need to have an understanding of the young people’s world, of their challenges and personal issues.” We spoke informally to a number of tutors throughout the day, and interviewed two in depth. There certainly did seem to be an ethos of caring and respect for the young people. A specialist pastoral care tutor has been recently employed to focus on the wider pastoral needs of students and staff. Another administrative staff member had been a former student, which gave a very positive message to other students.

¹¹ In 1998 the Government divided funding between the previously combined youth and adult education programmes. As a result many PTEs opted not to continue with youth-specific training programmes as they found it very difficult to train youth on their own, without the moderating influence of adults in the class.

Future Skills management has also helped staff to develop teaching, mentoring and—in particular—coaching skills, which the CEO sees as the most important one for working with students' needs. Tutors have been encouraged to complete the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education (NCALE). This has been successful: the programme is delivered in digestible chunks and the CEO believes it is starting to have an impact on tutors' teaching. Some tutors are doing the Certificate in Adult Teaching through MIT and other unit standards in planning and in assessment for adult educators.

The tutors we interviewed spoke about the challenges of teaching classes of 16 to 18 students, who are enrolled in an ongoing rolling intake, as they arrive during the year. After assessing each person on arrival, they are put on individualised programmes to suit their different needs and different stages in their learning. Tutors explained that rigid class-oriented teaching does not work because of these different levels. They described how important it was to treat their students as individuals, and to build up respectful relationships with them, and said they were sometimes amazed at the personal information the young people shared with them. However, they were also well aware of the relationship boundaries, understanding their role as a teaching one, rather than anything like a friend or surrogate mother.

Tutors spoke at length about keeping students engaged and satisfied in their learning. The tutors recognised the limitations of workbooks and how important it was to modify and break down the important learning and then contextualise it in ways that kept students interested, participating and progressing. One tutor described using a shopping activity to teach percentages, and another using a favourite recipe to teach Power Point presentation skills. They also carried out assessments through observing planned creative activities rather than just through marking the completed workbook. They agreed that these ways of teaching worked better for the students but were much more demanding in terms of their own time in planning, and in collecting together and making the necessary resources. They felt the Government was not doing enough to provide resources and one said, "We have learnt to cope on the smell of an oily rag." However, the work that took the most of their time, they agreed, was the LMO¹² work running around checking up on past students to satisfy TEC outcomes.

The learners

All the young people we spoke to were positive about both their learning and personal experiences at Future Skills. They described the culture of the organisation as "one big family". They felt tutors treated them kindly, with respect and caring and as individuals in their learning needs. Tutors were described as helpful in their teaching and scaffolding of the young people's learning. Students said they were able to learn successfully at their own pace, which was slower than the one operating at secondary school. Students in vocational courses liked having only one subject to concentrate on, and those in

¹² LMOs are Labour Market Outcomes. PTEs are required to report on student destinations two months after students leave a programme. PTEs are funded on the basis of at least 60 percent of students being in further education and training or in employment.

the Foundation Skills programme said it was good to just concentrate on literacy and maths.

The young people interviewed all felt they were steadily making progress. While it had taken one person three years at secondary school to complete most of the unit standards for Level 1, he had completed Level 2 in less than 10 months at Future Skills and was starting on Level 3. This student is taking increasing responsibility for his own learning. He talked about his growing confidence since coming to Future Skills, and the way he worked through the unit standards at an increasingly rapid pace. His strategy was not based on working step by step through the workbooks for each unit, but on completing as much of the assessment booklet as he could as a first step, then going back to the workbook to learn about the parts he did not understand. In terms of utilising his prior learning and managing his work, he was demonstrating sound pretest, post-test learning strategies.

All students found their work accessible or “easier than secondary school”. They spoke about being able to get one-to-one help from tutors and how important this was to their understanding of what they were learning. One spoke with clarity about the nub of the problem, which was that many secondary teachers spoke too fast, using language and words that some students, especially ones with ESOL needs such as this young man, did not understand. He said:

I couldn't understand what the teachers were talking about at high school. The way they explained it they used hard words which I couldn't understand. I kept having to stop them and ask what the words meant. Most of the teachers were pretty good in helping and interpreting the words and work, but I did get bored as the years went by because I was having such trouble understanding the work.

But here, when the tutor reads words I don't understand, he explains it to me in easy words I understand. Then I can go back and read it myself. I'm getting better.

Family members had been mainly responsible for some of the young people we spoke to enrolling at Future Skills; a secondary school teacher in one case; and a WINZ case manager in another. Students said that the tutors helped them work out a pathway for their future work ambitions and helped them achieve steps along the way to their goals. This aspect seemed to create an important optimism and expectation that they would achieve successfully, and all were motivated to get credits under their belt. Some were even more motivated by a sense of competition among classmates. When asked to rate their keenness to get up in the morning and come to Future Skills, with 5 being the most keen, they were all within the 3–5 range with four stating 5. Tutors said most of the students who left suddenly without completing qualifications had done so for family and personal reasons.

Future prospects for the organisation/Programme intentions

The CEO at Future Skills wanted to offer more places for Youth Training—200 as opposed to the 100 for which they are currently funded. He believed that economies of scale would allow them to offer a much more productive programme that included meeting the social service and pastoral needs of young people in a way that lessened the impact of their personal issues getting in the way of their learning, attendance and engagement. He says:

We are concerned with the lack of personal transformation experienced by youth during their training period—this is regardless of their success in gaining qualifications. Being located in South Auckland, we face challenges on a daily basis as we endeavour to assist our youth cope with personal issues unrelated to their training, while at the same time, endeavouring to teach them foundational and vocational life skills.

Students told us that they wanted more sport at Future Skills.

Key success indicators

The following factors associated with successful LLN) learning at this centre are highlighted in bold type. The first two columns are derived from a list of factors determined from the international research. Column three is derived from our case study findings. Where we found additional factors not identified in the research literature that contributed to success at this centre, they are indicated in italics.

Table 9. Key success indicators: Future Skills

	Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Learner Level (case study)
Strong association with success*	<p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and interrelated</p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., with lowest skills</p> <p>Individualised and small-group learning are the norm/common</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised)</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short timeframe</p> <p>Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge</p> <p>Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (including one-on-one mentoring and counselling)</p> <p>Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching</p> <p>Some teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p>	<p>Learning programmes take account of learners' current skill level</p> <p>Tutors are responsive to individual learning needs in a "just in time" manner</p> <p>Learning progresses at learners' pace</p> <p>One-on-one teaching is used to meet individual needs</p> <p>Tutors break learning into manageable steps</p> <p>Tutors clearly explain what learners do not understand</p> <p>Learning goals are achieved quickly and easily</p> <p>Learning programmes include fun activities</p> <p>Learning environment is seen as hassle-free (no pressure, unnecessary rules, etc.)</p> <p>There are respectful relationships among everyone in the organisation</p> <p>Friendships with others are facilitated by the programme</p> <p>Learners are treated as adults</p> <p>Learners are motivated by realistic and achievable career pathways</p>
Moderate association with success*	<p>Low or no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments are youth friendly</p> <p>Environment is professional - High-quality buildings and well-resourced classrooms</p>	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults' extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p>	<p>LLN is seen as relevant to vocation or career pathway</p> <p>LLN is embedded with "stealth"</p> <p>Learning staircases to an achievable qualification</p> <p>Organisation has a "family" environment</p>
Limited association with success	<p>LLN is learnt first (only in some instances, when considered necessary) and vocational learning follows</p>	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p>	

CASE STUDY 5: SOUTH PACIFIC ACADEMY (PTE-PORIRUA)

The programme

The South Pacific Academy (SPA) was first set up 20 years ago by a private provider—a Pacific Island man who wanted to help Pacific Island youth achieve qualifications that would help them get employment. The organisation's focus is young people and adults, and their vision is "E ara e kimi e te iti tangata Pasifika"—"Quality education for Pasifika learners". The manager explained that the original owner sold the business five years ago to a new owner—the present director, who has more of a commercial interest in the organisation, as opposed to the original purpose of supporting Pacific learners who were not succeeding in mainstream educational institutions. Presently, of the 70 students, 40 have Pacific backgrounds.

Two NZQA accredited certificate courses are offered at SPA—the National Certificate in Employment Skills Level 1 and the National Certificate in Computers Level 2. The organisation also offers an English for Employment programme. There are four classes and four tutors. Two classes are TOPS-funded for adults, and two youth classes are funded by Youth Training. Literacy and numeracy unit standards are included in the Employment Skills Certificate, and while not separate units in the Computer Certificate, they are embedded in it. In addition to these two vocational certificates, the SPA website says the organisation provides "vocational and recreational activities to assist with the overall learning and balance of education and life."¹³ The day is structured to have academic work in the mornings and recreational activities in the afternoons.

The lecturers/tutors

Apart from the owner/director of SPA, who is not onsite, the staff of SPA consists of a manager who is also a tutor, three other tutors, a learning support worker and administrators at the front desk. While the centre was set up to cater for Pacific Island learners specifically, the manager is a Māori woman who is an experienced, trained school teacher and who has worked in the primary, intermediate, kura kaupapa and wānanga education sectors. She has business and management experience, and was appointed to the position of manager and full-time tutor 13 months ago. Two of the other tutors had been appointed before she came, and one has been appointed since. One tutor has been with the organisation for 17 years and came from office work with the Salvation Army 20 years ago and in that time has obtained her Certificate of Adult Teaching. She has seen class sizes jump from 12 to 20. Staff work 48 weeks of the year, from 8.30am to 4.00pm.

Apart from the manager, the other teaching staff are not trained teachers. However, the staff all possess other important qualities and backgrounds necessary for employment at the centre, including teaching backgrounds (staff worked at similar institutions such as IHC, the Salvation Army and another

¹³ Downloaded 17 August 2009, from http://www.spa.ac.nz/our_Courses.html

Porirua academy), qualifications to assess (Unit Standard 4098) and a culturally sensitive demeanour. Staff valued the opportunity for professional development, and while the director was not averse to professional development, staff reported that they are expected to do it in their own time and at their own cost. The manager described staff as having a passion for their jobs, but noted that the learners at SPA need very skilled teachers and is concerned that staff are not teacher-trained. She provides as much help as she can for tutors with planning, teaching strategies, behaviour management, assessments, monitoring, moderation and budgets, and reported these tasks as the most challenging and time consuming aspects of her job.

We interviewed one other member of staff. She reported enjoying working at SPA. She saw the paperwork as a problem, but gained satisfaction in the job from seeing the learners make progress and watching them grow. She taught the computer programme which consists of 25 unit standards covering word processing, spreadsheets, databases and presentations, and some employment skills including health and safety. She said many of the learners plan to be employed in call centres, or in administration or reception work. She therefore tried to make literacy and numeracy relevant to learners through teaching about writing covering letters and CVs. She uses a range of tests, worksheets and games with learners. These include spelling and times-tables tests, a series of worksheets where learners need to find the correct word or do addition without using a calculator, and spelling bees and hangman games. She believed learners needed particular help developing strong skills in written and oral literacy, communication and team work for their future employment needs. She also described learners as needing to build self-esteem.

The manager described the importance of embedding LLN in her programme in order to make it relevant to learners. She cited an example where weighing chemicals was the relevant, if, in her opinion, not the most appropriate, context for a lesson on measurement:

The students can talk to me about grams, pounds, ounces, for weighing and pricing drugs. These are the basic facts and they're not wrong—it's just the story that's not appropriate. Then I turn it into a shopping exercise for a family of six, and change it to potatoes, carrots, etc., and then they are away. I didn't make a big thing out of it, but it was a relevant link.

She had developed literacy activities out of the topic such as getting learners to make a vegetable collage, a rap song and a skit. She felt this creativity was lacking in the teaching methods of some of the other tutors, so she was helping them with these sorts of teaching strategies and ideas. But she thought it would be more successful if tutors could also observe her in these activities or team teach with her, which there was no time to do.

Staff were reported by the manager to have "pretty good rapport with learners", but learners did sometimes change tutors when they were not getting on with their tutors. The manager thought it was important to find out why those learners

were not managing to work with that tutor, because the learners would need to be able to manage relationships in the workplace. She felt that it was important that the reasons were well understood, because there would be many instances in future workplaces where they would need to learn skills to get on with people they didn't like, and not just think they could refuse to work with them.

The learners

Most of the learners we spoke to had been referred by WINZ to SPA. One was an adult student who was on a Sickness Benefit but who was so keen to be taking part in second chance learning, she had turned up at SPA the day after returning from hospital. All the learners we interviewed were very satisfied with their experiences at SPA, saying they loved coming (all were 4.5 to 5 on the keenness scale of getting out of bed and coming in the morning), and all enjoyed the learning. One young man said he initially didn't want to come here, but since arriving he hadn't missed a day, and had walked 50 minutes a day to get to class. The younger learners said they enjoyed learning with adult learners. They described the culture as "like a family", with respectful and friendly as the two most commonly cited adjectives, and they enjoyed being treated as adults by tutors. Many said their confidence had grown and they now felt they could communicate much better than they had at secondary school, where they said they felt shy and would never speak up in class.

Learning was described as "more laid back" with more one-on-one time and less pressure than secondary school. Learners felt at ease in asking tutors for help with things they didn't understand and appreciated the explanations given. One young woman said:

Some teachers at college would explain things in language you wouldn't understand. When I said I still didn't understand the teachers would say, "Well you should understand—you are old enough!"

One learner described the learning here as "the same as at school", that is, working through workbooks and then doing an assessment, and said: "It's just the environment that makes it better". Several learners said they liked learning in a group rather than with the whole class or individually. They also all liked the practical, hands-on activities such as the mosaic tables they were in the middle of making. Several also commented on goal setting, having help with career planning and also working towards their certificate, unit standard by unit standard, where they could see success and progress.

One of the tutors said that the environment suited all the learners, even those who were part of gangs. New learners were put into buddy groups and time was taken to include them in the group work and get to know them. Tutors helped them set goals and Individual Learning Plans were put in place for them. She felt older people had different educational training needs from the younger ones. Those over 40 years old of age often needed to go back to the basics, because they found numeracy and literacy difficult, but once they began, they enjoyed their learning and asked for exercises to do at home.

Several learners spoke about the ways LLN skills were taught at SPA. One student said his spelling at school was poor, but that here the tutor valued the ideas more than consistently correct spelling in writing. However, he explained that for assessments his spelling needed to be correct and he was able to ask for help from the tutor for that. He said he found English difficult but maths easy, and that he had already gained all his numeracy credits. He said his tutor showed the class how to do the problems on the board in detail and then he showed them the easiest way. Another learner had completed nine units, including filling in forms, communicating and job search and budgeting. He was excited that he could now budget and had a saving plan underway towards building his own house. He said before this programme he would spend all his money, and not save any of it.

One young woman spoke about her love of writing, which she did in her spare time. She would like to become an author one day, but hadn't told her tutors about this interest. Another learner was planning to become a teacher as she had already got her University Entrance, and was doing the unit standards towards the Certificate in Employment Skills to fill in time. She came onto the programme as there were no jobs available. A third young woman arrived from school with many credits after completing Year 13 but without her literacy credits. She is now completing them to become eligible for Auckland University of Technology where she will enrol in music and information technology. She said at school she was shy and if the teacher had asked her if she understood she would say yes and just sit there. She said other students got angry if she asked for help. They wanted to move on without discussing things again:

At school there were always deadlines but here you have time to get the work done. At school we were doing unit 12905 which was just reading. One teacher said I couldn't do it on time. Here they just encourage you to do it.

At SPA, she said, staff were friendly and helpful and tried hard to help learners pass and she had no hesitation in asking for help.

The one less positive comment made by several learners was that there needed to be more up-to-date computers in the classroom because their computers were too slow.

Future prospects for the organisation/Programme intentions

The employer/director was not available for an interview so we were unable to hear his views about the future prospects for the organisation. However, according to the manager of SPA, the director is planning to shift the organisation to a newer, bigger building in October, to the ground floor of the premises, where he currently runs his other business. He has plans to have six classes operating from the new premises, but the manager is worried about finding trained teachers to employ to teach the extra two classes, and having enough resources for the increase in learners.

While the staff and learners are looking forward to being in a newer, warmer building, the manager was cautious about predicting the success of the move

because of restrictions the director has put on the activities of learners in the new location. These restrictions include not allowing many of the cultural activities the centre now enjoys because the director is worried that music, dancing and drumming will be too noisy and distracting for his workers at his other business. He has also forbidden programme staff to use the barbecue to cook lunches because he doesn't want the smell of cooking meat drifting through the business premises. The learners and staff all agree that the success of the academy is due to the emotional and cultural understanding of the environment they have created. Thus Pacific learners accept the SPA as family and work hard to please and are proud to be there. Without the cultural understanding of the importance of shared food and cultural activities such as dance and music the staff worried that the new atmosphere would not reflect Pacific cultural values.

One tutor was worried about future employment possibilities for their learners because the current recession meant there were fewer jobs and those that were available, required experience. As well, fewer workplaces were offering work experience opportunities, making it difficult for learners to gain the experience necessary to gain a foothold in the job market. She also felt that learners would benefit from more industry-related activities to build their experience for the workforce, rather than outdoor education such as playing touch rugby. They had previously used this time visiting industrial and commercial businesses such as Farmers and Moore Wilson's and a printing firm where the learners could watch the process from computer design to finished product.

Key success indicators

The following factors associated with successful LLN learning at this centre are highlighted in bold type. The first two columns are derived from a list of factors determined from the international research. Column three is derived from our case study findings.

Table 10. Key success indicators: SPA

	Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Learner Level (case study)
Strong association with success	<p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and interrelated</p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills</p> <p>Small-group learning is the norm/common</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised)</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short timeframe</p> <p>Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge</p> <p>Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (including one-on-one mentoring and counselling)</p> <p>Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching</p> <p>Some teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p>	<p>Learning programmes take account of learners' current skill level</p> <p>Tutors are responsive to individual learning needs in a "just in time" manner</p> <p>Learning progresses at learners' pace</p> <p>One-on-one teaching to meet individual needs</p> <p>Tutors break learning into manageable steps</p> <p>Tutors clearly explain what learners do not understand</p> <p>Learning goals are achieved quickly and easily</p> <p>Learning programmes include fun activities</p> <p>Learning environment is seen as hassle-free (no pressure, unnecessary rules, etc.)</p> <p>There are respectful relationships among everyone in the organisation</p> <p>Friendships with others facilitated by the programme</p> <p>Learners are treated as adults</p> <p>Learners are motivated by realistic and achievable career pathways</p>
Moderate association with success	<p>Low or no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments are youth friendly</p> <p>Environment is professional</p> <p>High-quality buildings and well-resourced classrooms</p>	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults' extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p>	<p>LLN is seen as relevant to vocation or career pathway</p> <p>LLN is embedded with "stealth"</p> <p>Learning staircases to an achievable qualification</p> <p>The organisation has a "family" environment</p>
Limited association with success	<p>LLN is learnt first, (only in some instances, when considered necessary) and vocational learning follows</p>	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p>	

CASE STUDY 6: HE TOA COMMUNITY AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

The programme

The He Toa Community and Sports Development Association is a PTE set up by the founder who is a martial arts professional expert and trainer. He originally began by building a martial arts centre 20 years ago to encourage attendance from young people in the area who were not in employment. The programme is now funded by TEC as a PTE and LLN and other academic learning is integrated with the martial arts. He Toa offers educational programmes for young people/young adults and older learners that enable them to achieve one or two qualifications—the National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1) and/or the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (Level 1).

The programme combines academic studies with martial arts and fitness. The martial arts act as the initial incentive to attract and hook in unemployed young people. The martial arts component includes sumo wrestling, wrestling, kick boxing and karate. The learners begin most days with circuit training for an hour, and they then work through unit standards related to the national certificates for two hours before lunch (except Tuesday when they do unit standards work all morning). Most afternoons are taken up with martial arts and fitness training and the learners go swimming on Wednesdays. Literacy and numeracy are embedded in the unit standards as well as being separate units in the two certificates offered. The programme also provides learners with one morning a week's additional help through a learning support teacher who focuses on the literacy and numeracy needs of individual learners.

The balance between the physical activities and the unit standards work appeared to be a very successful fit for the learners, and a powerful model, in our opinion. The physical activity attracted into the programme young people who had been disengaged from education, yet who had experienced success in sporting activities in the past. It gave them an opportunity to be successful again. Some of the young people we spoke to said they had been very overweight before they came to He Toa, but had since lost weight and become much fitter. One student had lost 11 kilos in four months and another had lost 40 kilos in a year. The discipline of the martial arts had also carried over to help them become more focused, self-disciplined and motivated in other aspects of their lives. All of these things helped them become more able to focus on academic tasks again, and because of the balanced nature of the programme with book work interspersed with energetic physical work, they felt much more able to cope with the demands of living.

Most of the unit standards were taught in a group situation with the tutor guiding the group through them. Once a week, the learner support tutor met with learners and dealt with any specific learning issues.

The tutors

There are two full-time tutors at He Toa who are both martial arts professionals. One was in hospital at the time of our visit so we did not interview him. There is also a learning support tutor who is employed for three hours a week, who provides specialist one-to-one assistance for learners. She is a retired secondary English teacher, who has worked in the areas of ESOL and adult literacy. The employer/manager has a B Ed degree, the other tutor is working towards his B Ed and both tutors are doing professional development workshops offered by TEC, including a Literacy Aotearoa course. This involves four programmes in literacy and five in numeracy. The learning support teacher has provided support to help them put many of the new ideas they have learnt into practice. This team appears to provide the learners with the support needed to complete their programme. The manager also has an adviser who runs the Gateway programme where selected secondary school students take part in the programme at times.

The manager/employer explained that most learners stay for about a year to complete their certificates, but some stay longer. He estimated that 40–50 percent of learners go on to further training and about 30 percent go on to employment after completing their certificates at He Toa. They have had some very successful results; for example, one learner became a Westpac consultant and then a manager at the Warehouse. The manager/employer said many learners had stopped committing crimes after attending He Toa, and explained that they had not previously understood stealing as a crime so much as a means of survival. Many did not have any family support and saw He Toa as a substitute family. The manager/employer was well aware of not becoming too much of a father figure to learners, as this might hinder their independence and encourage them to stay too long in the programme. The learning support teacher explained that many learners were very insecure, coming into the programme with a history of abuse, lack of family support and having moved homes a lot. She thought that learning to survive had been their main task, with academic learning much further down the list of priorities. The learning support teacher understood her teaching role as totally integrated into a support role for the learners and she could not separate their life circumstances from their learning.

The learning support teacher made a general assessment of all new learners' literacy and numeracy skills when they first arrived, and then talked to learners about what they wanted to achieve. The learning tutor recognised that learners came into the programme with very negative attitudes about learning. She therefore let learners make the decision about coming to her for individual tuition when they were ready. She said:

Most of these learners are here because they get lost in the large size of secondary schools and 'chalk and talk' type lessons don't suit them. They get behind in reading and maths from an early age and their vocabulary is often very limited, because they have very limited experiences. They truant a lot because they don't understand the work at school.

When the learning tutor did start one-to-one work with individual learners she liked to work on their numeracy first because she considered numeracy more

“contained” than literacy for many learners and therefore easier for learners to approach. She thought most learners had a basic feel for numeracy, but a lack of confidence, so she aimed to give an instant sense of success to help build learners’ self-esteem. She showed learners different ways to approach numeracy and used different resources to teach concepts. The whiteboard was a particularly useful resource because it allowed learners to erase mistakes quickly and put in a correct answer instead. The tutor felt that rote learning for things such as times tables was not a successful strategy because many learners struggled to remember things. While they were fairly competent with calculators, they did not actually understand the computation behind the calculations and consequently could not always recognise when calculator-produced answers might be wrong.

The tutor described the important principle of assessing where learners were at and working with them from that point. Learners were very focused on the “now” of their lives and their backgrounds had fostered a moment-by-moment “survival” approach to learning. The tutor found the best approach was to teach the literacy and numeracy flexibly around what they needed to understand in their unit standards work.

The learning support teacher outlined three funding and resourcing issues that needed to be addressed to better meet the needs of the learners. The first issue was that TEC and the Ministry of Education funding model was unrealistic with its compliance outcomes. She felt that TEC did not understand how hard it was to get the young people to turn up in the first place, and then to do the unit standards work. She knew the learners would not succeed in the long term without a well-scaffolded programme such as He Toa.

Secondly, the tutor was critical of some of the unit standards booklets being used and thought the quality of the content was sometimes poor. These booklets were purchased from an independent (non government) organisation. Thirdly she thought there was insufficient reading material for students of this age group with low-level literacy. He Toa wasn’t resourced for this type of literacy material; all they had were unit standards’ work books.

The learners

There are up to 20 learners on the programme and most stay for about a year. Most are young Māori males, but ages ranged from 16 to 30+. Presently He Toa has more TOPs learners than Youth Trainees, but these proportions do change from year to year. We spoke to eight learners including one of the three women in the class. Word of mouth seemed to be the main recruitment strategy working at He Toa, but the organisation was well known in the area and schools and other social agencies (WINZ and Child, Youth and Family) also sent learners to it. Most of the learners we spoke to had not come straight from secondary school. Many had tried other programmes or had worked in mainly labouring jobs and were now on the Unemployment Benefit. Some had been made redundant as a result of the recession. Most now had a clear idea of what they were aiming to do in future employment. Some wanted to continue training to become professionals in martial arts; some wanted to go into the army or police; others wanted to enter a trade; and two wanted to work in horticulture or farming.

These learners' experiences of secondary schools were negative, and most had achieved little at school. One learner said "this is ten times better than school". The certificates they were working towards at He Toa were at Level 1, and most learners had high literacy and numeracy needs. One young man, for instance, was being taught how to tell the time, using hands, by the learning support tutor. Others needed help with giving change, and subtraction and division, and were taught using practical aids such as play money. Numeracy skills were also being taught through the sports programme where they had to measure their own weights in circuits, take their pulse and measure their flexibility. One learner described using the Cooper's test to measure their performance of the number of laps they could run in 12 minutes over a period of a week, which was part of an assessment for fitness.

The learning support teacher had assessed the learners' reading ages and found most had a reading age of around 12 years, but with some as low as nine. Several learners told us they read the newspaper and some even read books for pleasure, such as *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*. However, according to the teacher, their writing levels did not match those of their reading and she said most learners hated writing because they associated it with school:

When you are at secondary school you write non-stop, and then change classes and do more. The learning here is much better because we do two hours book work and then physical—that's what I like. (Male learner)

The writing that learners did do was mainly that required in their unit standard workbooks, but one learner did cite an authentic writing context for her learning, when she told us about the learning support teacher helping her write a letter to Housing New Zealand about a tenancy problem.

One learner talked about his reluctance to learn anything when he first came to He Toa, and how he initially resisted going to the learning support teacher for help. Now, however, he claims her help has been critical to his progress and success, saying:

I've done a lot with her—she has taught me heaps. I'm much more motivated—I take books away and read them, then come back and read it out loud to her. My reading has improved heaps. I read lots more now at home—newspapers, and I read to my daughter and I'm learning the words off these picture books. They teach me—I'm teaching her and myself at the same time. I never had books read to me as a child.

The learners interviewed all spoke admiringly of their tutors and the way they treated them as adults. One said:

The tutors are awesome, they're 'straight-up' and they keep me motivated. They've also been through a lot themselves and they're quite inspiring people.

Learners liked the relaxed friendly environment at He Toa, but they also liked the competitive nature of the martial arts training and the self-discipline they gained. Several of the young men talked about their early lack of motivation and past histories of stealing and anti-social behaviour, and of how this programme had changed them. One said, "I'm trustworthy now." Another spoke about learning communication skills, which helped him deal with ways of asserting himself and "not getting so angry now". Several learners spoke about the self-confidence they had gained since being on the programme. One woman said: "It has given me the skills of being assertive and having a better attitude."

Future prospects for the organisation/Programme intentions

The manager described the high cost of compliance for organisations like his and that several PTEs in their city had had to close. He said He Toa was one of the smallest programmes left in the area, and the only reason they were still viable was because he owned the building. Other small organisations had not been able to afford high city rentals, and had closed, which was putting pressure on other training providers, as the number of learners was not decreasing. He hoped to continue meeting learners' needs, but felt he needed more learning support time. He suggested that TEC consider social outcome gains as well as LLN ones. It took much longer to meet TEC LLN outcomes when working with learners who had mental health problems, social issues and developmental learning delay. These issues meant that his programme would never be able to provide TEC LLN outcomes for some learners. He also felt an obligation to those learners whom current TEC funding did not cover; for example, he allowed learners to stay on in the organisation after their time on the programme had finished.

Key success indicators

The following factors associated with successful LLN learning at this centre are highlighted in bold type. The first two columns are derived from a list of factors determined from the international research. Column three is derived from our case study findings. Where we found additional factors not identified in the research literature that contributed to success at this centre, they are indicated in italics.

Table 11. Key success indicators: He Toa

	Organisational level (literature)	Programme level (literature)	Learner Level (case study)
Strong association with success	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever-changing and interrelated</p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., with the lowest skills</p> <p>Small-group learning is the norm/common</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised)</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short timeframe</p> <p>Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge</p> <p>Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers are culturally sensitive and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (including one-on-one mentoring and counselling)</p> <p>Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching</p> <p>Some teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p>	<p>Learning programmes take account of learners’ current skill level</p> <p>Tutors are responsive to individual learning needs in a “just in time” manner</p> <p>Learning progresses at learners’ pace</p> <p>One-on-one teaching used to meet individual needs</p> <p>Tutors break learning into manageable steps</p> <p>Tutors clearly explain what learners do not understand</p> <p>Learning goals are achieved quickly and easily</p> <p>Learning programmes include fun activities</p> <p>Learning environment is seen as hassle-free (no pressure, unnecessary rules, etc.)</p> <p>Respectful relationships among everyone in organisation</p> <p>Friendships with others are facilitated by the programme</p> <p>Learners are treated as adults</p> <p>Learners are motivated by realistic, achievable career pathways</p> <p><i>Learning programmes include a balance of physical and academic work</i></p>
Moderate association with success	<p>Low or no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments youth friendly</p> <p>Environment is professional</p> <p>High-quality buildings and well-resourced classrooms</p>	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults’ extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p>	<p>LLN is seen as relevant to vocation or career pathway</p> <p>LLN is embedded with “stealth”</p> <p>Learning staircases to an achievable qualification</p> <p>The organisation has a “family” environment</p>
Limited association with success	<p>LLN is learnt first, and vocational learning follows</p>	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p>	

5. DISCUSSION

We were aware when we began the research that there was very little research that directly linked young people/young adults and engagement in LLN to provide characteristics of effective programmes. We knew there was a growing body of research about adult LLN and research about young people in a variety of settings including transition from school. Drawing on these two areas of research evidence as well as literature on youth and adult engagement (recruitment, participation, retention, motivation and persistence) we produced a draft exemplar or list of success indicators which seemed to be associated with strong, moderate and low success for engaging young people/young adults in LLN programmes.

In Tables 1, 2 and 3 we presented exemplars of the key success indicators (with strong, moderate and low associations of success) of programmes that engage young people/young adults in LLN. The exemplar was developed from the literature review and columns added to represent key findings from the key informant interviews and the case studies. We found a high correlation among the findings in the three phases of the research. The key informant interviews and the case studies added a valuable New Zealand perspective and texture that had been missing in the literature. These findings from these phases identify direct links between young people/young adults and engagement in LLN and back up and enhance the international findings.

We are confident that our findings will add important understandings of how best to engage young people/young adults in LLN. There is no one right way or silver bullet. In New Zealand there is much good practice and also much that could be improved. There is a general feeling among key informants and LLN programme staff that many government policies are heading in the right direction. There is also a sense of frustration from many people we talked to that there are unrealistic demands made on organisations to be accountable for LLN outcomes in a way that does not recognise the social, emotional and personal problems that are barriers to be overcome for many young people/young adults and the organisations that enrol them.

Our recommendations

There are four key areas that we think should be further debated, either because there is not enough conclusive evidence, or because there is conflicting evidence. These are:

1. a 21st century conceptualisation of literacy and numeracy including LLN outcomes
2. a focus on young people/young adults who are "most at risk"
3. a consideration of specific teacher education for people working with young people/young adults
4. an acceptance of multiple approaches to integrating LLN into vocational training and work.

The question remains about what it really means to be literate in the 21st century. Currently we address one aspect—albeit an important one—of the LLN

needed for an individual to succeed in the present and for the country to prosper in the immediate future. But we are not taking account of how young people/young adults' facility with ICTs and their approach to living with technology can be harnessed to improve their LLN and help with New Zealand's longer term prosperity.

Quality of teaching and teachers is an issue that needs further exploration for adult LLN in New Zealand. We suggest that any research or investigation into teaching should include specific focus on skills and qualifications for teaching young people/young adults. What does seem to be critical for young people/young adults, especially those who are NEET, in New Zealand and internationally, is having a single point of contact—a trusted and constant mentor/counsellor who is very much involved in addressing social, personal and attitudinal issues which are often the main barriers to learning. There would seem to be a place for government to invest in developing specific resources and assessments that are tailored to young people/young adults' needs and interests, and which utilise phone and other digital technologies and other ICTs.

We would also urge that vocational plus LLN teaching and learning opportunities for young people/young adults are not locked into a single "best practice" way of doing things, as we have not found any evidence that there is one best way. The inconclusive evidence over whether young people should be taught separately from other adults is a case in point. Decisions on good practice need to be made at the organisational level with shared decision making between all stakeholders.

The case studies and the key informants provided the New Zealand context that indicates that there is no one right way to approach LLN and the engagement of young people/young adults. PTEs, ITPs, apprenticeships, workplace learning all have their place. We would like to see more focus on recruiting the young people/young adults who most need to engage in LLN to the most appropriate place to further their learning. We know that WINZ plays a significant role in referring people and that word of mouth is also important. What we can't be sure of is if young people/young adults are being given good advice and being helped to make good choices for beginning and furthering employment and post school education.

As well, the status and conditions for employees in organisations do not align with importance of the job. Therefore these jobs do not attract enough of the highly skilled teachers young people/young adults need. This is similar to the situation ECE was in almost 20 years ago and may require the same wideranging approaches that are being put in place in the early childhood sector (for example, teacher education, training and registration).

Further research

We still do not consider we can confidently say how different teaching LLN should be for young people/young adults as opposed to older adults. Critical factors appear to be the learner's immediate prior experiences which affect motivation. New brain research indicates adolescent brains are as open to new learning as

neonates and suggests we should be adjusting teaching and learning in school and beyond to accommodate this.

There has been little independent research that has followed young people/young adults over an extended period of time so that LLN gains can be accurately measured and links to improved social and economic outcomes made. It would be useful to undertake a longitudinal study in New Zealand that could also determine whether LLN gain was more likely to occur in one context or another. While we have some evidence about apprenticeships, we do not know if young people/young adults are likely to make stronger LLN gains in further education and training or in employment or a combination of the two.

We do not know the extent to which voluntary or compulsory enrolment in LLN makes a difference for young people/young adults in New Zealand. There are also groups of young people we have not specifically sought research on, including young people in care or in prison and ESOL young adults. We have mixed evidence about whether young people/young adults should be taught as a group or in classes and/or organisations with older adults. There would also appear to be a dearth of research in the area that includes the voice of young people/young adults.

At the conclusion of the literature review we posed seven questions we considered needed addressing:

1. How can negative experiences of schooling best be addressed in engaging young people/young adults in LLN?
2. Should young people be taught in groups and classes separate from other adults?
3. What kinds of recruitment will most effectively reach young people? How do communities best utilise their local networks and encourage participation of young people/young adults in LLN?
4. How can young people who are most at risk best be reached? What kinds of programmes will be most effective at retaining them and improving their LLN skills?
5. How is LLN best delivered to young people in workplaces?
6. What do we know about young peoples/young adults' wider literacy skills, especially with ICTs (including cellular phone technologies)? How can these skills be harnessed to improve LLN in more traditional contexts?
7. What *kind* of embeddedness is most effective with young people in New Zealand? To what extent is this different according to whether the young person is in work or in education and training, or a combination of the two?

To these questions we would add:

8. How can career education (including career guidance counselling) help young people/young adults make informed decisions about further education and training and/or employment?

5.1 A final exemplar of factors associated with successful LLN learning

The exemplar that follows began with evidence from the literature review. We added a column of indicators that came from key informant interviews and another from the case studies. The final exemplar combines the columns into two—at programme level and organisation level. A factor that was identified as important in the policy context (and therefore less obviously at an organisational level) is the importance of programmes targeting those most at risk, that is, those with the lowest skills. We have not added this to the exemplar as a “success factor” at the organisational level. We saw very little evidence in our case study visits of learners and teachers jointly constructing learning and knowledge but in other areas we were able to substantiate and add to the first set of exemplars.

The categories of “strong”, “moderate” and “weak” were derived from the degree to which the evidence was provided. For example, where much of the literature and many of the key informants and case study participants identified a factor, this was coded as “strong”. We coded as “moderate” or “weak” those factors that were identified less frequently or where there was conflicting evidence.

Table 12. Factors associated with successful literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) learning as provided by evidence from the literature review, the key informant interviews and the case studies

	Programme level	Organisational level
Strong association with success* (Factors were identified in most of the literature and by many key informants and case study participants)	<p>Small-group learning is the norm/common; one-on-one is effective in some circumstances</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses (“by stealth” is often the best approach)</p> <p>Contexts and content are authentic and relevant</p> <p>Programmes meet individual needs (personalised); learners are motivated by realistic and achievable career pathways</p> <p>Goals are achieved within a short time frame</p> <p>Learners and teachers jointly construct learning and knowledge; learning programmes take account of learners’ current skill level</p> <p>Team teaching combines LLN, vocational and mentoring/counselling expertise</p> <p>Teachers culturally sensitive, respectful of and empathetic to young people/young adults</p> <p>Teachers provide emotional support for learners (incl one-on-one mentoring, counselling)</p> <p>Teachers well trained and knowledgeable; clearly explain what learners don’t understand; they break learning into manageable steps; learning progresses at learners’ pace</p> <p>ICTs are used to enhance good teaching; learners’ facility with ICT is acknowledged</p> <p>Teachers use a range of activities and innovative approaches, including fun activities</p> <p>Teaching is relaxed and informal but focused</p> <p>Schools and families have served young people well; good career advice is provided</p>	<p>Programmes target those most at risk, i.e., those with the lowest skills</p> <p>LLN is embedded into vocational courses</p> <p>Marketing targets young people/young adults directly—word of mouth works best</p> <p>Learning is unlike that done at school. The learning environment is unlike school</p> <p>Academic, social and personal services are integrated</p> <p>The roles of learning and working are acknowledged as ever- changing and interrelated</p>
Moderate association with success* (identified by some sources)	<p>Programmes are based on youth popular culture</p> <p>Young adults’ extrinsic motivations regarding employment and qualifications are acknowledged</p> <p>A strengths-based approach is used</p> <p>Young people are seen as unique and are valued for their qualities</p>	<p>Low or no cost for learners</p> <p>Participation is voluntary</p> <p>Environments are youth friendly</p> <p>Friendships among learners are facilitated</p> <p>Dedicated learning environments, e.g., marae, sports centre or enabling work environments</p> <p>LLN embedded in pre-employment/ employment opportunities (including short work experiences)</p>
Limited association with success	<p>Teachers are at a similar age and stage to learners</p> <p>Learning focuses on oral communication</p>	<p>LLN is learnt first, vocational learning follows</p> <p>Recent brain research drives LLN approaches</p> <p>Differences between males and females is acknowledged</p>

* According to research data available to date, key informant interviews and case studies

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