

Literacy, achievement and success

*Reading the world in order to read the
word*

This series covers research on teaching and learning in literacy, language and numeracy and analyses of international surveys on adult literacy and numeracy.

Author

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Ministry of Education for the opportunity to carry out this research and the opportunity to work collaboratively and in partnership with the Ministry to better understand and develop approaches for raising literacy levels and Māori educational outcomes. This report not only provides information that will be useful to the Ministry in its critical understandings of literacy and development of initiatives for New Zealand teachers, but also for all those interested in developing multiple and diverse literacies in various contexts.

This report was written and contributed to by Associate Professor Vaughan Bidois and Pania Te Maro of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, who are both teach and conduct research at the Wānanga, and David Earle, Chief Research Analyst and Dr Chris Lane, Senior Research Analyst of the Ministry of Education.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the teachers, students and stakeholders who participated and contributed to this project. Without your support and willingness to give of your time and share with us your experiences and insight, this report would not have been possible.

We would also like to acknowledge the members of our 'Ohu Kaitiaki' (Advisory group), Associate Professor Cheryl Stephens, Aroha Puketapu (TEC), Patsy Karauria (TPK), Dr. Colleen McMurchy Pilkington (Literacy Aotearoa), Ria Tomoana (AKO Aotearoa), Kathryn Hazelwood (TEC), Mahina Melbourne (MOE) for your guidance and constructive critique throughout the project and final write-up of this report.

All views expressed in this report, and any remaining errors or omissions, remain the responsibility of the authors.

Published by

Tertiary Sector Performance Analysis
Graduate Achievement, Vocations and Careers
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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This report is available from the Ministry of Education's Education Counts website:
www.educationcounts.govt.nz

July 2017

ISBN (web) 978-1-77669-146-3

Who says that this accent or this way of thinking is the cultivated one? If there is one which is cultivated it is because there is another which is not. Do you see, it's impossible to think of language without thinking of ideology and power? I defended the duty of the teachers to teach the cultivated pattern and I defended the rights of the kids or of the adults to learn the dominant pattern. But, it is necessary in being a democratic and tolerant teacher, it is necessary to explain, to make clear to the kids or the adults that their way of speaking is as beautiful as our way of speaking. Second, that they have the right to speak like this. Third, nevertheless, they need to learn the so-called dominant syntax for different reasons. That is, the more the oppressed, the poor people, grasp the dominant syntax, the more they can articulate their voices and their speech in the struggle against injustice.

Paulo Freire, 1996

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| | |
|---|----|
| Summary | 1 |
| What the research was about | 1 |
| How we went about the research | 1 |
| What we found out | 1 |
| Reflecting on previous research | 3 |
| Discussion: 'Read the world in order to read the word' | 3 |
| Reflecting on the findings | 4 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| 1.1 Improving literacy, language and numeracy | 6 |
| 1.2 What the research was about | 6 |
| 1.3 NZQA/TEC investigation of Hei Manaaki and what it meant for the research | 7 |
| 1.4 How this report is set out? | 7 |
| 2 How we went about the research | 9 |
| 2.1 How we approached the research | 9 |
| 2.2 How we thought about our approach | 9 |
| 2.3 The case studies | 11 |
| 2.4 Our process for doing the research | 13 |
| 3 What we found out | 15 |
| 3.1 What we found out from the Literacy Assessment Tool and other education data | 15 |
| 3.2 From the qualitative research | 18 |
| 4 Reflecting on what previous research says | 25 |
| 4.1 Māori-centred teaching and learning | 25 |
| 4.2 Dialogues of meaning: literacy and numeracy in Aotearoa New Zealand | 26 |
| 4.3 The discourse of literacy knowledge communities | 27 |
| 4.4 The dangers of domesticating knowledge | 27 |
| 4.5 The silencing of cultural literacies: deconstructing rhetorical devices | 28 |
| 4.6 Using multiple modes of meaning | 28 |
| 4.7 Key conclusions from the research | 29 |
| 5 Bringing it all together | 31 |
| 5.1 Bridging the cultural divide through an embedded literacy approach: Teachers as a bricoleur of literacy improvement | 33 |
| 5.2 An alternative approach to improving literacy, teaching and learning | 34 |
| 5.3 Summary of what we found out | 36 |
| References | 38 |

SUMMARY

What the research was about

This project was a collaboration between Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi (TWWoA) and the Ministry of Education (the Ministry). The project focused on the Hei Manaaki: National Certificate of Tourism Māori programme. The aim of the project was to identify the transforming thinking, actions and practices that contributed to improved literacy and educational achievement. In doing so, the project has applied a broader understanding of improved literacy that includes:

- student engagement
- positive teacher-student relationships
- cultural relevance (place and people)
- social support networks
- raising student expectations and self-efficacy.

How we went about the research

The study was supported by kaupapa Māori theory, and used appreciative inquiry (Preskill, 2006). A kaupapa Māori perspective recognises that student success in one area must be understood in light of success in other areas. It considers the many elements that work together to contribute to improved outcomes. Both kaupapa Māori and appreciative inquiry consider improving the learning system as a whole, rather than focusing on problem finding, deficit thinking and “fixing” individuals.

At the start of the project, the research team developed a conceptual framework with the help of the programme leaders and teachers. A key assumption of the framework is that teaching and learning (including research) needs to be thought about as holistic, happening within a context and as political in nature. The production of knowledge is never neutral. It is, instead, a complex negotiation of knowledge, power and particular ‘regimes of truth’ which are constructed over time.

The framework set out the guiding principles for the research team, our relationships and behaviour toward each other as a research community, the research design, the data analysis and the knowledge produced from it.

At the time of the research, Hei Manaaki was delivered in a number of sites and contexts across Aotearoa. The project involved four case studies covering different areas and ways in which the programme was delivered. An analysis of the course work folder given to students provided further insights into the programme.

What we found out

From the education data

We conducted an analysis of the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (the Assessment Tool) and other education data to support this study. Learners were assessed in reading using the standard adult option of the Assessment Tool¹. When analysing quantitative data from the 2011 - 2014 Assessment Tool and student achievement results, we found that:

- Hei Manaaki students are less likely to have school qualifications than students in other Level 3 and 4 certificates

¹ This research predates the release of the Youth and Te Ata Hāpara options.

- A higher proportion of Hei Manaaki students were assessed as having higher reading skills than in other Level 3 and 4 certificates. This may be a result of the Assessment Tool being administered later in the programme and as part the course.
- Reassessment in Hei Manaaki was targeted to those students who had lower levels of skill in their initial assessment. At each initial step level, a higher proportion of Hei Manaaki students who were reassessed made statistically significant gain, compared with other Level 3 and 4 certificates.
- The proportion of Hei Manaaki students passing most of their courses was uniformly high across all levels of reading skill. This contrasts with other Level 3 and 4 certificates where students with lower reading skill were less likely to pass most of their courses than students with higher reading skill.

From the qualitative research

At the initial research hui, teachers identified that to understand the literacy assessment results of their students, the research project would need to recognise that they were not focussing on literacy in their course. Their focus was on developing Māori tourism. This meant students being grounded in their place and having the essence of manaakitanga modelled to them in everything they did.

We found three main themes about how the programme contributed to student success:

- working together
- pedagogy
- knowledge development that links to purpose for study.

It was the combination of all three themes that was important, rather than an emphasis purely on any one of them.

Teachers emphasised that success in literacy is part of embedding literacy into the programme that is relevant to the students, and working from a base of strength and potential, which recognises and values the skills and knowledge that students bring with them. Manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, whanaungatanga were values that were collectively shared and practiced. Literacy, numeracy and language acquisition were embedded aspects of the teaching and learning process, but students did not recognise that it was part of the programme. Assessments were treated as learning activities.

The work folder played a key role in supporting student success. The content was personalised using an icon of manaakitanga, someone who appeared throughout the folder called nanny Kui. Students were asked to connect the content and jargon of tourism with who they are, what they know and where they live. The work folder supported students through levels of literacy demands, starting quite light and getting progressively more complex. The literacy assessment was presented as another activity from the work folder. It was not treated as a separate piece of work, even when it was not contextually related to the course material.

Teaching and learning, including reading and comprehension, was a shared process (as opposed to individual) of making meaning, where teachers saw themselves as partners in learning with students. Individuals' strengths were acknowledged and used in the process of working together to make and share sense. This supportive environment fostered high self-efficacy, and was essential to enabling this shared approach to teaching and learning.

Reflecting on previous research

The findings in this research are consistent with research from the past seven or more years. This previous research identified Māori community leadership and the authentic inclusion of Māori knowledge in the design, training and implementation of programmes as essential to success and achievement.

Conventional understandings of literacy are products of our times, legitimised by those authorised to name the world. The discussion created around literacy over the past few decades in Aotearoa New Zealand, whether globally or nationally focussed, identifies literacy as a conventional issue, and informs what constitutes literacy, its definition, its purpose and significance according to current constructs. If there is to be any real and positive change in the way we understand literacy, language and numeracy achievement, we must firstly be aware of the prevailing ideologies, attitudes and values that normalise everyday thinking and practice, and how these have been harmful to the achievement and success of many students in education.

A system of literacy and numeracy devoid of cultural diversity has the potential to silence other cultural literacies. Language, learning and literacy are not neutral processes of acquisition, in fact, they are culturally biased in the context of mainstream education. There are multiple literacies that need to be considered in the context of raising conventional, standard dominant language literacy levels.

Discussion: 'Read the world in order to read the word'

If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings.

(Freire, 2005: 88)

Education is not a neutral process; it is a cultural one. Problems can occur when teaching and learning draws mainly from, and therefore implies more value for, one dominant cultural perspective. This is more so where students have limited access to the cultural capital of the dominant group, and/or have had bad experiences that have made them resistant to the dominant culture (such as discrimination at school).

It is common in education to focus on measuring levels of achievement of single literacies, such as reading and comprehension, and writing. In doing so there is a risk that teaching these literacies for the purpose of assessment is reduced to developing technical skills divorced from the social context of the learner. In this report, we refer to this approach as *convergent literacy*, as the teaching converges on acquiring the specific literacy. While acquiring these literacies is important, including developing technical proficiency, a sole focus on them in teaching, learning and assessment, can actually undermine the outcome of improving literacy and fail to engage the students.

The Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool examined in this research measures reading and comprehension. It is related to particular cultural understandings and contexts, largely those of the dominant cultural group. Those who have access to the cultural capital of the dominant group, are more likely to manage the tool as a decontextualised event.

An important finding of this project is that educators should acknowledge the value of, and make use of, the existing multiple literacies of the students alongside the literacies being assessed by the tool. In this report, we refer to this approach as *divergent literacy*, as the teaching and learning recognises the full range of areas in which learners are developing their literacies, and the mutually reinforcing nature of these literacies. This approach is consistent with broadly recognised principles of adult learning (TEC, 2008). It means that educators and policymakers need to take a broader, more critical understanding of literacy. They need to acknowledge and include the many ways in which students make sense and meaning of the world. In doing so, they can help improve single, or convergent, literacies, as well as continue to develop broader, or divergent, literacies.

...students are to find their own voice so that they may speak or write their reading of the world... The student's own language is the means of developing a positive sense of self-worth, 'fundamental in the development of emancipatory literacy'

(Meek cited in Freire and Macedo, 2005, p vii)

This report argues that an approach that uses the multiple literacies of the students as a starting point is most effective in improving a singular or convergent literacy. Existing multiple literacies and divergent approaches need to be considered in raising conventional literacy levels of students. The findings from Hei Manaaki suggest three key and interrelated considerations for policy makers and educators.

Creating dialogues of meaning

Using the multiple literacies of students helps improve single literacies, such as reading and writing. This approach acknowledges that students have different ways of bringing meaning to their world.

Using social and cultural capital

Learning environments need to use the social and cultural capital of the students when seeking to improve a particular literacy. Social capital acknowledges the social networks of students and the sharing of resources, ideas and experiences. Cultural capital acknowledges the cultural literacies, practices and experiences of students and their value in bringing meaning to other literacies. In Hei Manaaki, this also means the context of place, and the understanding that students bring to tourism because of their in-depth knowledge of the history and stories of their place and how to care for visitors to their place.

Students as partners in teaching and learning

Teaching and learning becomes a negotiated space where meaning is constructed and agreed by students and teachers. As partners in teaching and learning, students and teachers contribute equally to the production of knowledge.

Reflecting on the findings

The findings from Hei Manaaki suggest three interrelated considerations for policy makers. The following critical questions are posed to help think about literacy, teaching and learning as a holistic process. That is a process that requires teachers and educators to not only be more reflective of the political, social and cultural nature of the schools/institutions in which they are a part of, but also to create change and transform the thinking, actions and practices that contribute to improved literacy and educational achievement. Answering these questions requires conversations between the organisations, teachers and students in which students are treated as partners in the learning process and their social and cultural capital is valued.

Creating dialogues of meaning

How well do your teaching strategies allow for different types of literacies to be used in learning?

How could you use the multiple literacies of students to improve a single literacy?

Using social and cultural capital

What can you do to support those students who do not have the social or cultural capital of the dominant group to develop their skills in the prevailing language?

What do you do to include the cultural experience of students in developing reading and comprehension literacy?

Students as partners in teaching and learning

How do you understand your relationship with your students in terms of how knowledge is both taught and learnt in the classroom?

How do you create conversations with your students that acknowledge their voice and reading of their world?

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Improving literacy, language and numeracy

Improving literacy, language, numeracy and skills outcomes is a priority for tertiary education. The 2010-2015 Tertiary Education Strategy proposed that embedding literacy and numeracy in entry-level tertiary education study will better equip students to progress to higher level qualifications and employment (Ministry of Education 2010, Tertiary Education Commission 2010).

Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi (TWWoA) committed to improving literacy, language, and numeracy skills for adult students through a 3-year strategic plan, beginning in 2009. The plan aimed to embed literacy, language and numeracy skills in Level 1 to 3 qualifications by making the teaching and learning of these skills explicit. In 2012, TWWoA raised literacy and numeracy awareness through professional development with staff, based on the learning progressions framework. Most foundation level courses were redeveloped to embed deliberate acts of teaching in reading, writing, listening, speaking and numeracy. The Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool was implemented in 2011 by a team of specifically dedicated staff. All staff teaching in programmes with embedded literacy and numeracy completed the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Educator (NCALE) training opportunities throughout 2012 and 2013. At the time of the research, the standard adult option of the Assessment Tool was used in all assessments. The research predates the release of the Youth and Te Ata Hāpara options of the tool.

Hei Manaaki: National Certificate of Tourism Māori (Level 3 & 4) ('Hei Manaaki') was one of the courses developed within the TWWoA strategic plan to embed literacy and numeracy into its programmes. The Assessment Tool has been used in the programme in 13 locations in the North Island. Ministry of Education (The Ministry) analysis of literacy assessment results confirmed that Hei Manaaki students were showing significant gains from initial assessment to final assessment. This analysis is discussed later in the report.

The project aimed to identify the key elements of Hei Manaaki that support improved literacy outcomes for students. A further purpose of the project was to construct approaches to improving literacy that can be applied in a variety of contexts. The project was conducted by TWWoA, in partnership with the Ministry.

1.2 What the research was about

The overarching research question for this project was:

- What transforming thinking, actions and practices in the Hei Manaaki programme contribute to improved literacy and educational achievement?

Further sub-questions included:

- What attitudes, values and beliefs do the teachers bring that support success for the students?
- What aspects of the programme are embedded with literacy and how do they assist the teachers, community and students to achieve educational outcomes?
- What other outcomes are gained through the Hei Manaaki programme?

The research included three case studies of specific groups of students, teachers and stakeholders, and a:

- Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) – secondary school students and whānau
- Te Tairāwhiti (Hawkes Bay) – secondary school teachers
- Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) – historic site workers.

A fourth case study was a document analysis and a supplementary cohort of hospitality industry workers in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) was included after the main data collection.

1.3 NZQA/TEC investigation of Hei Manaaki and what it meant for the research

This project started at the beginning of 2013. The first two phases were undertaken during that year. In March 2014, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) investigated Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi (TEC/NZQA, 2014). The investigation included the Hei Manaaki programme and looked at:

- the teaching hours of the programme that TWWoA was funded to deliver
- the approval process and changes made to the programme
- whether similar changes had been made to other programmes delivered by TWWoA and funded by TEC
- whether there was evidence to suggest that individuals associated with TWWoA intentionally made any misrepresentations to TEC and NZQA relating to Hei Manaaki and its delivery and the financial implications of such actions.

The investigation concluded that TWWoA had made errors of management of programme changes, for this programme only, by offering both Level 3 and 4 qualifications concurrently. Although students were able to fulfil all assessment requirements within the time-frame created by this concurrent delivery, it meant that less time was being used to deliver the programme. It was identified therefore, that funding had to be paid back, and that levels 3 and 4 could not be taught concurrently. There was no evidence to suggest that anyone in TWWoA had intentionally made any misrepresentations to TEC and NZQA, or that similar changes had been made to other programmes.

The investigation was completed in September 2014. As to be expected, during the investigation, all of the existing staff of the programme and management experienced considerable anxiety and stress. Following the investigation, teachers were moved from being contractors to becoming direct employees of TWWoA, and the programme was revised to be delivered as two sequential certificates rather than being delivered concurrently. As a result of the investigation, the research project was put on hold until such time that staff well-being and the issues with the delivery of the programme were addressed. The 2016 External Evaluation Report of TWWoA notes that the wānanga had taken full and appropriate action to address the issues raised in the investigation (NZQA, 2016).

In our view, the data collected, stories told about the programme and its success by the students and teachers, and the findings of this project are unrelated to the administrative issues identified by the investigation. The disruption from the investigation has limited our ability to follow cohorts of students beyond the delivery of the course and engage with the views of wider stakeholders.

1.4 How this report is set out?

The next section of the report describes the methodology and conceptual framework used in the research. This is followed by a summary of the findings, including the Ministry analysis of the Assessment Tool results. The literature review provides a way of reflecting on the findings and

placing them within a larger context of literacy education. This leads into the final discussion of implications of the research.

2 HOW WE WENT ABOUT THE RESEARCH

2.1 How we approached the research

The research is supported by kaupapa Māori theory, and used appreciative inquiry (Preskill, 2006). A kaupapa Māori perspective recognises that student success in one area must be understood in light of success in other areas. It considers the many elements that work together to contribute to improved outcomes. Appreciative inquiry identifies what is working well and has a strengths-based focus. This is in contrast to research approaches that are based on problem finding and deficit thinking. Researchers use appreciative inquiry to ask affirming questions and encourage participants to focus on successes and strengths (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003; Bushe and Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Fiona Cram states that

[a]ppreciative inquiry takes a strengths-based approach, rather than focusing on deficits, and is therefore compatible with Māori concerns that strengths be recognised and built upon in order to create flax root (e.g., community-level) change. Appreciative inquiry is also concerned with structural change and is therefore compatible with a kaupapa Māori commitment to finding solutions and recommending change in order to facilitate better pathways and outcomes for whānau. (Cram, 2010: 7-8)

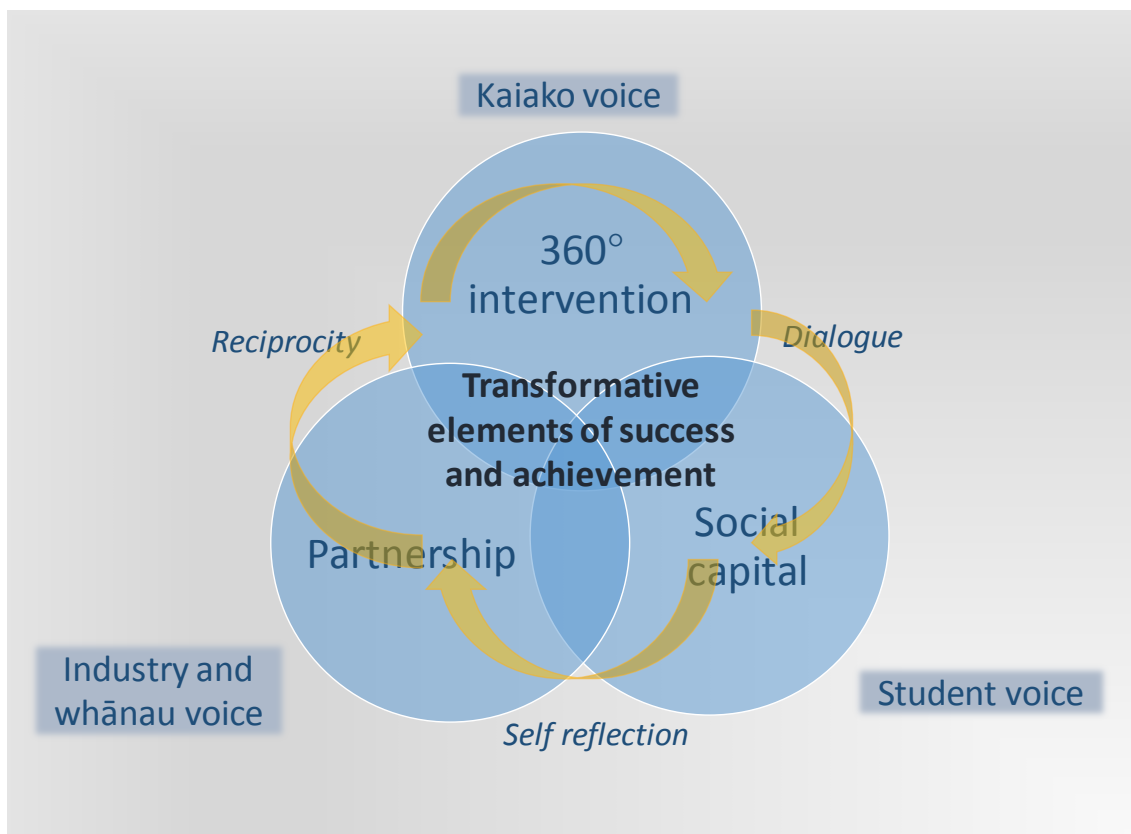
This project includes both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data consists of the 2011 - 2014 Assessment Tool and student achievement results, while qualitative data was collected through focus group interviews and workshops with more than 60 students, and individual interviews and workshops with eight teachers. A document analysis was carried out on the students' programme work folder.

The research team worked collaboratively with the teachers and course administrators to analyse the themes that were identified in the workshop sessions and focus group interviews. These themes were revisited in further conversations in order to establish greater clarity. This provided an opportunity for the participations to give meaning to both the quantitative and qualitative data within their own particular context.

2.2 How we thought about our approach

This project used a conceptual framework that acknowledged the importance of collaborative approaches to research, and the interconnections between research, teaching, learning and success for students. A key assumption of the framework is that teaching and learning is holistic and happens within a context. Many inter-related factors contribute to the success and achievement of the students, the institution and the community as a whole. The framework looks at how industry/community, teachers and students all contribute to the successful implementation of the Hei Manaaki programme, its content, delivery and consequent successful results for literacy assessment.

Figure 1
Research framework



Adapted from Smith (1999) and Bidois (2012)

The framework consists of three inter-related participant groups: teachers, industry/whānau and student. The interconnected circles show the mutually dependent relationships of the three groups, as well as the teaching, learning and research process. Dialogue, reciprocity and self-reflection provide processes for critical analysis. It is these three processes that help ongoing collaborative analysis and meaning construction. The central point of the model represents the transforming elements that contribute to success and achievement for the students.

360° Intervention

360° intervention, in the context of this research, proposes that reflective practices lead to positive and powerful change, and are most effective when multiple strategies are employed at the same time. As Distinguished Professor Hingangaroa Smith states,

[w]e describe this new and emerging model of *transforming praxis* as the '360° Māori Education Development Model'. This holistic model explicitly engages in transforming approaches within multiple sites using multiple strategies that are often simultaneously applied. This holistic approach requires a change of mind set and practice and it challenges the current government funding emphasis of developing policy and practice that are 'singular', 'one-off', 'project' based initiatives...We therefore need to do things differently and not keep on with the same strategies and practices that have proved to be ineffective. (Smith, nd)

Smith goes on to say that TWWoA has deliberately reshaped its approach to interventions based on two key understandings. The first is "[t]hat there will not be a sustainable socio-economic revolution for Māori without a prior or simultaneous educational revolution" and secondly "[t]hat the potential for intervention must move beyond singular, one-off project strategies" (Smith, nd).

A new way of partnership

Kaupapa Māori theory seeks to inform and transform the current social structures, practices and ideologies that continue to fail Māori. It sets out to “restructure power relationships to the point where partners can be autonomous and interact from this position rather than from one of dominance and insubordination” (Bishop, 1998: 63).

TWWoA and the Ministry found themselves modelling a new form of partnership that is not fully defined by the traditional buyer-supplier relationship. The methodological framework promotes a respectful and collaborative relationship between TWWoA and the Ministry, while contractual obligations have not changed and the processes in preparing the contract for signing remain robust. As such, the Ministry has been involved extensively in key stages of the project, including the initial collaborative scoping hui, research design and data collection methods. This relationship, while not an original outcome of the project, is seen as very important for future directions in similar projects.

Social capital

Social capital according to Putnam (1995) refers to the ability of individuals and groups to facilitate co-operation and mutually supportive relations as ways of challenging social disorders or injustices in modern societies. Smith (2003) sees social capital as an important concept in the mediation of socio-economic and home difficulties.

In the context of this research, social capital includes the culture, skills and knowledge of the students, and the use of this capital to contextualise teaching and learning, success and achievement in the classroom. In the conceptual framework, social capital includes the various forms of capital that each group of the research team (teachers and researchers) bring to the project, thus, emphasising the subjective and qualitative nature of research of this kind.

2.3 The case studies

At the time of the research, Hei Manaaki was delivered in a number of sites and contexts across Aotearoa. Three Hei Manaaki programmes provided context-based case studies.

1: Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) – secondary school students and whānau

This case study was made up of year 12 and 13 secondary school students. A condition of the student's participation in Hei Manaaki was that at least one family member must enrol and complete the programme with them. The students were aged between 16 and 18 years old, with family members ranging between 35 and 60 years. The purpose of this cohort was to gain qualifications for future employment.

The teacher delivering the programme is a past Hei Manaaki student, also a senior teacher at the school and has a strong relationship with both the community and students.

2: Te Tai Rāwhiti (Hawkes Bay) – secondary school teachers

This case study was made up of teachers from a secondary school. The principal of the school had put herself, her senior management staff and teaching staff through the programme with the agenda of shifting staff attitudes and practices toward teaching Māori students. The strong cultural and cooperative elements of the Hei Manaaki programme were seen as being important to improving Māori student achievement at the school through changing teacher's knowledge about their students. Using a course designed with tourism and hospitality in mind provided a way of shifting the teachers' perspectives about how they interact with their students. They were able to explore how the core value of manaakitanga applies within their own context.

The programme teacher had delivered the programme to cohorts of the school, and had an established relationship with the principal and many of the staff on the programme. She has now been employed at the school.

3: Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) – historic site workers

This case study consisted of Māori cultural performers and tour guides of a historic site. All the members involved in the research had connections with the local hapū and iwi, whenua and histories, in some form, and they ranged between the ages of 19 and 27. The students were already employed in a tourism business and were studying to gain qualifications and improve their practice.

The teachers who delivered the programme were a husband and wife teaching team and had experience in both the tourism sector as well as in Māori cultural performance.

4: Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) – hospitality industry/ whānau workers

Following analysis of the course work folder (as discussed below) further questions emerged. Interviews took place with a Te Tai Tokerau teacher, the Te Tai Rāwhiti programme teacher, and a teacher based in the hospitality industry. An industry worker (a previous student of Hei Manaaki) was interviewed with her teacher. While the industry view is from a sample of two, the data supports each of the other phases and case study data sets, so has been incorporated as a supplementary case study to the research.

Document analysis of the programme work folder

An analysis of the Hei Manaaki course work folder given to student proved necessary to provide insight into the level of literacy, reading and comprehension expected in the programme and also the ways in which students and teachers engaged with the knowledge and content of the programme through the work folder. Questions drawn from this analysis sought to reveal the strategies, techniques and approach the teachers and students used to bring meaning to the texts in the work folder, and how this may or may not have aligned with the demands of the Assessment Tool.

Overall outcomes for each cohort

Each cohort were aiming for different sets of outcomes even though they were using the same programme and work material. The following table illustrates distinct outcomes for each cohort:

Table 1

Outcomes for cohorts

| | Participants | Purpose | Context | Outcomes |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 | Secondary students and members of community – ages 17 – 70 | Study Māori tourism and gain qualifications and experience for future employment. | Classroom based with some field experiences. | Pride in self, self manaaki, a qualification, hope for the future. |
| 2 | Secondary school teachers from various departments, including the principal. | To learn how to care for Māori student achievement and success through a Manaaki framework. | Classroom based, with some field experiences. | Reporting that staff relate better to each other and with Māori students. Students are able to build relationships with staff and learning is occurring in a reciprocal way. |
| 3 | Currently employed in Māori tourism positions. | To gain qualifications in the field in which they are already employed. | Field-based, on the job, and classroom. | Reinforcement of self and community skills and knowledge; self-efficacy; pride in qualifications; qualification. |
| 4 | Currently employed in a range of hospitality positions, (eg. house-keeping, bar, service). | To gain tourism skills that support the hospitality context – enhancing the business. | Field-based, on the job, and classroom. Mainly field. | Deeper understanding of how the program frameworks can build staff camaraderie; frameworks for mentoring workers in understanding how their role contributes to the success of the business. |

2.4 Our process for doing the research

Four phases of the project emerged during the research process. In Phase 1, we designed the conceptual framework. In Phase 2, we undertook the first three case studies and questions arose about the content, assessment and literacy demands of the Hei Manaaki programme work. This led to phase 3, the document analysis. From the first three phases, further questions became apparent that needed to be answered in follow-up workshops and interviews with teachers and students in phase 4.

Phase 1: Research team co-construction hui

Phase 1 consisted of a two-day workshop which included:

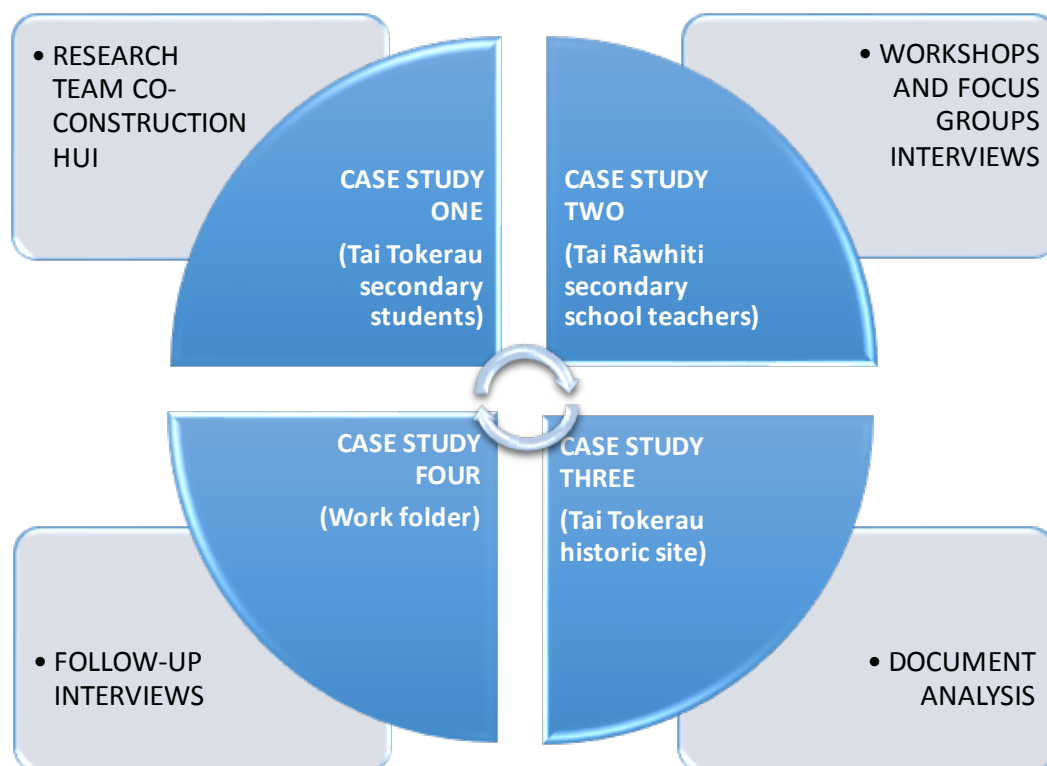
- Hei Manaaki teachers
- Programme coordinator
- Head of the School of Undergraduate Studies (Project Manager)
- Lead researchers
- Ministry of Education advisors

The objectives of the hui were to clarify what data to collect; how to collect the data; how to store the data; and how the team would share ideas on analysis. Ways of communicating were agreed and responsibilities assigned. It was agreed that the project would be conducted in a collaborative manner with open communication.

The outcome of the hui was the conceptual framework which underpinned the research process, analysis and interpretation.

Figure 2

Phases in relation to case studies



Phase 2: Case study workshop sessions and focus group interviews

Each Hei Manaaki programme runs for a period of 20 weeks. In each case study, the students were told about the research project within the first two to four weeks. Once consent was given, an hour long workshop was scheduled. The workshops took place with the students of two cohorts during the middle of the programme (weeks 4 to 6) and provided the guiding themes and prompting questions for the focus group interviews scheduled toward the end of the programme (weeks 18 to 20).

Initial data from the workshop sessions for each case study were collated and key themes were analysed using the conceptual framework.

Phase 3: Document analysis of the course work folder

Phase 2 prompted further questions regarding the Hei Manaaki course work folder and how students were supported in the literacy demands and integration of the Assessment Tool. The document analysis highlighted features of the course that raised further questions. The questions included how the document was structured and used, and how it related to student literacy learning and the results of assessment.

Phase 4: Follow-up interviews adding the hospitality industry

Focus group interviews were conducted with three teachers, two from phase 2 data collection, and a new teacher along with one of their graduate students. All of the teachers had been Hei Manaaki students. The interviews were undertaken in order to add to the existing data, to enable more probing questions and to validate evidence.

3 WHAT WE FOUND OUT

3.1 What we found out from the Literacy Assessment Tool and other education data

The Assessment Tool provides diagnostic information on reading, writing and numeracy skills, to inform teaching and learning. The tool can also track the progress of the student and provide data for teachers and organisations on the progress made by groups of students (TEC, 2016).

We conducted an analysis of the literacy reading and comprehension Assessment Tool results and other education data to support this study. A summary of the main findings of the analysis follows.

The Assessment Tool analysis looked at domestic students in Student Achievement Component (SAC) funded programmes leading to Level 3 and 4 certificates from 2011 to 2014. It includes both Māori and non-Māori students; as very little difference was found between these two groups. Students in Hei Manaaki² were compared with students in:

- other Level 3 and 4 certificates in Tourism Studies
- Level 3 and 4 certificates in tikanga Māori
- all other Level 3 and 4 certificates considered as a group.

Students enrolled in 2011 and 2012 were grouped together, as were students enrolled in 2013 and 2014.³ This provides enough students in each group for meaningful analysis and also represents the period before and after the programme was revised (refer to discussion on page 7).

Hei Manaaki students were mostly assessed in reading and comprehension using the standard adult option of the tool. Reading assessment scores can be grouped into:

- **Steps 1-2:** students may be struggling with reading;
- **Step 3:** students still need some further development to meet the demands of Level 3 and 4 study
- **Steps 4:** students should be able to meet the demands of most study at Levels 3 and 4
- **Steps 5-6:** students would have the skills to progress to study at higher levels

In the TEC's current guidelines, students with first reading assessments in Steps 1-3 need to be reassessed, while those with assessments in Steps 4-6 do not need to be reassessed.

Students in Hei Manaaki have lower school qualifications than those in other Level 3 and 4 certificates. Figure 3 shows that 60% of Hei Manaaki students had either no school qualification or only a Level 1 qualification⁴. This is similar to the proportion in tikanga Māori programmes, but higher than in other tourism and other certificates. Hei Manaaki students were also less likely to have a Level 3 qualification than those in other certificates.

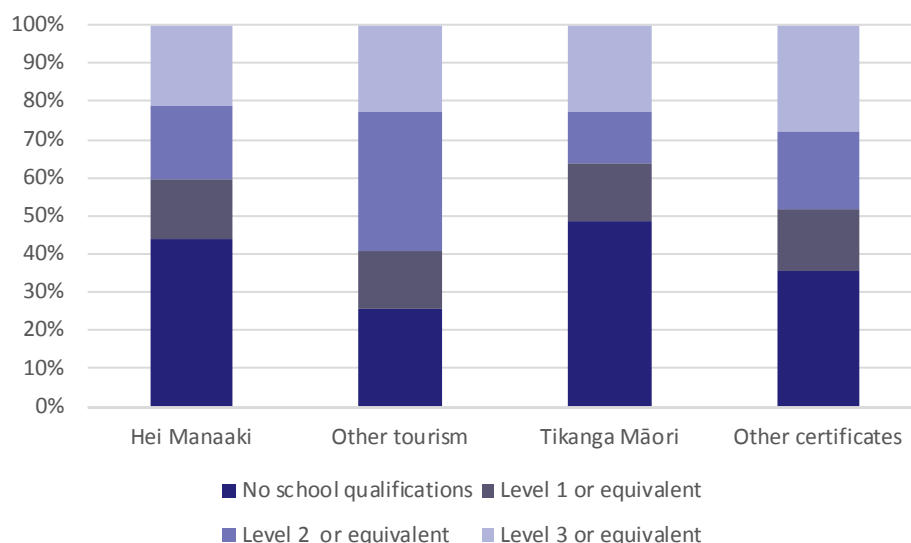
² Hei Manaaki students are all students in Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi Hei Manaaki: National Certificate in Tourism Māori.

³ The year periods refer to the year in which students finished their programme of enrolment.

⁴ The highest school qualification is self-reported by students when they enrol in tertiary education. It is usually only verified by providers if it relates to an entrance requirement for the qualification.

Figure 3

Distribution of students in programmes by highest school qualification



Note: Level 1 or equivalent includes School Certificate; Level 2 or equivalent includes Sixth Form Certificate; Level 3 or equivalent includes university entrance, bursary, scholarship and overseas school qualifications.

A higher percentage of students in Hei Manaaki programmes were assessed using the Assessment Tool for reading than in the comparison programmes. The overall rates of assessment increased in 2013/2014 compared with 2011/2012.

In all of the programmes, the majority of students were first assessed in reading as being at Steps 4 to 6. In both periods, Hei Manaaki and other tikanga programmes had the highest proportion of students at Steps 4 to 6.

The qualitative research revealed that the first assessment in Hei Manaaki is undertaken after the programme has been running for several weeks and is presented as part of the course work. This contrasts with other programme delivery where the initial assessment is undertaken before or at the very start of the course and is may be undertaken separately from the course (Haggland and Earle, 2012). This approach in Hei Manaaki may contribute to higher initial assessment results, as students are more comfortable when they take the assessment and more confident with their existing skills.

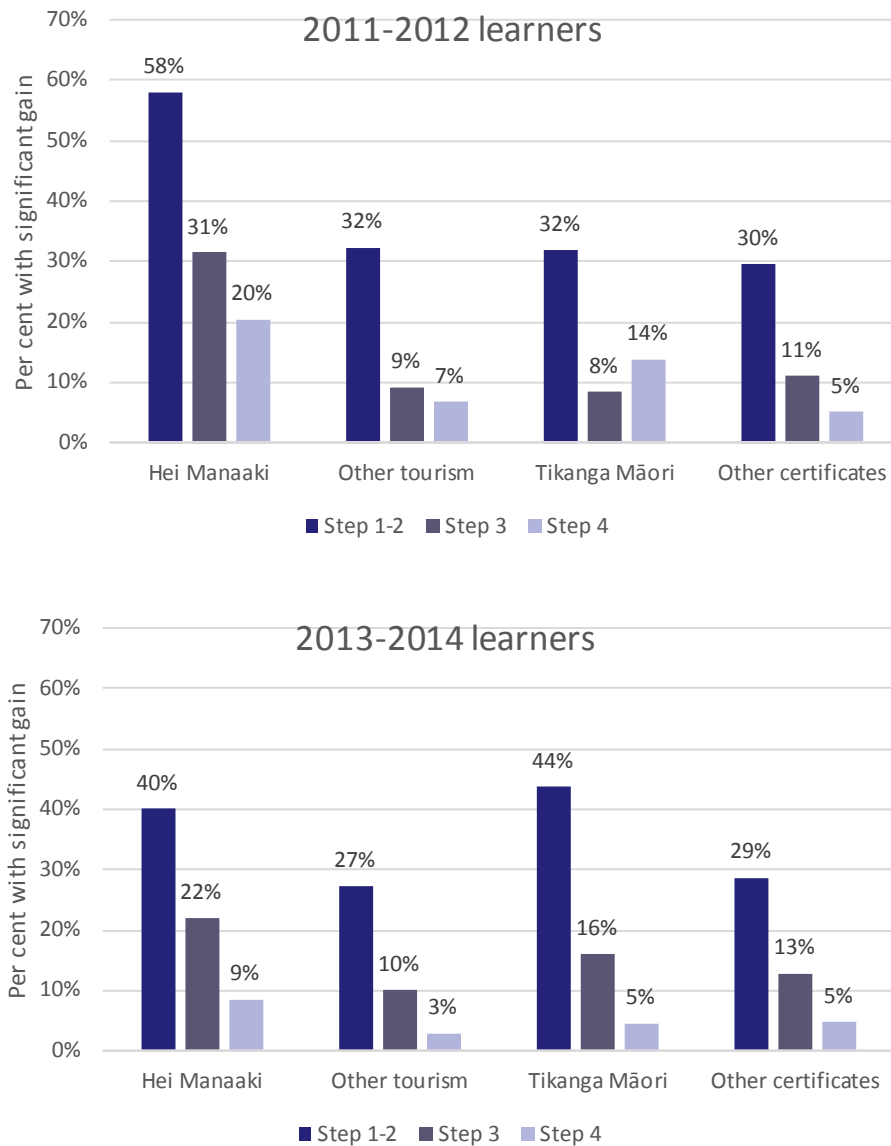
Within the Hei Manaaki programme, students who started at Steps 1 and 2 were most likely to be reassessed. The results indicate that the programme appears to target reassessment according to the initial step level. This contrasts with other tourism programmes where most students were reassessed regardless of their initial step.

Figure 4 shows the proportions of students reassessed at each level who had statistically significant gain. In general, the proportion of students who have significant gain is higher for those who started at Steps 1 and 2 and lower for those started at higher levels (Lane 2012). Steps 5 to 6 are not included as rates of gain are very low for these students.

In 2011-12, Hei Manaaki programmes had the highest rates of gain for students across all steps, with almost twice the rate gain compared with other programmes. In 2013-14, the rates of gain for Hei Manaaki students were lower, compared with Hei Manaaki in 2011-12, but still mostly higher than in other programmes. At the same time, the rate of gain increased for Step 1 to 3 learners in tikanga Māori programmes between these two periods.

Figure 4

Percentage with statistically significant gain between first and last assessments, by step on first assessment

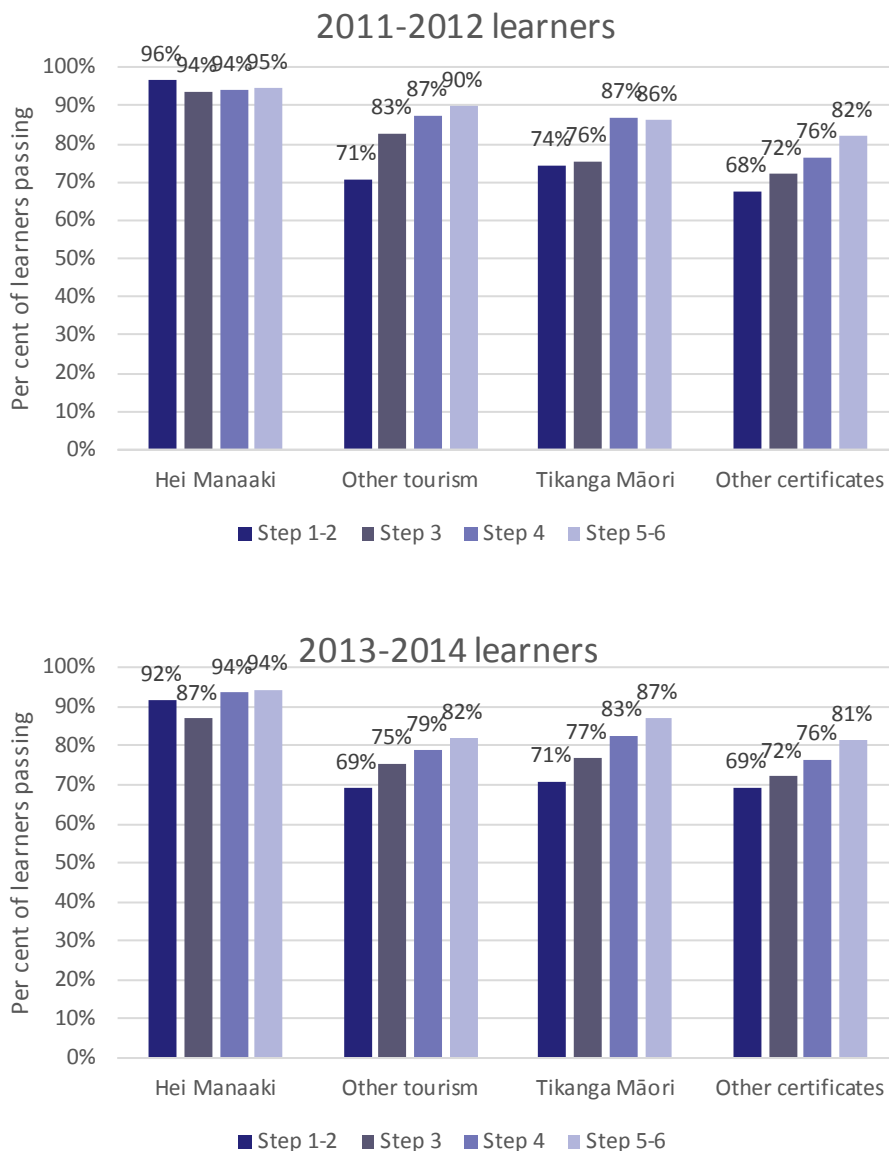


For Hei Manaaki, around 90 per cent of students passed 75 per cent or more of their courses. This compares with around 70 to 80 per cent in other programmes.

Figure 5 shows the course pass rates for students who were assessed in reading by their initial reading assessment step. Hei Manaaki students show an unusual pattern where the pass rates are almost the same for all students, irrespective of their initial step. In the other programmes, those on the higher steps had higher pass rates. This suggests that something different is happening in Hei Manaaki to support all students to succeed.

Figure 5

Domestic students in SAC-funded Level 3 and 4 certificate programmes who were assessed in reading and passed 75 per cent or more of their courses, by initial reading step



3.2 From the qualitative research

Phase 1: Initial research co-construction hui

OVERALL FINDINGS:

The teachers and the programme reflect the values (manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, kaitiakitanga) which support their students to complete successfully and achieve their qualification. This in turn leads to intergenerational success for communities involved in the programme.

At the initial research hui, teachers identified that in order to understand the literacy assessment results of their students, the research project would need to recognise that they were not focussing on literacy in their course. Their focus was on developing Māori tourism. This meant students being grounded in their place and having the essence of manaakitanga modelled to them in everything

they did. Students were exposed to stories, cross-cultural interactions, kai sharing, a culturally responsive programme and “classrooms,” links to key events, all of which created relevance and purpose to teaching and learning.

Phase 2: Workshop sessions and focus group interviews of case studies

OVERALL FINDINGS:

Manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, whanaungatanga were values that were collectively shared and practiced.

Literacy, numeracy and language acquisition were embedded aspects of the teaching and learning process, but students did not recognise that it was part of the programme.

Student literacies and understandings acknowledged and used in the sense-making process – whakapapa of learning.

Assessments were treated as learning activities.

Definitions of literacy and numeracy

Students reported a variety of definitions of literacy. Below is a selection of examples:

- **Contemporary:** reading, writing, listening, technology, communication, everyday living, shopping, numbers, counting, statistics, time, space, beats, lines, finances and basic facts.
- **Traditional:** Whaikōrero, karanga, tā moko, whakapapa, whakairo, tukutuku, understanding different cultures, pōwhiri, and karanga.
- **Natural:** Stars, tides, everyday life, wind, maps, and understanding of everything in the world, freedom and independence, and how things operate.

Teachers' role in student success

Students described their teacher's contribution in terms of knowledge, pedagogy, and care for their learning: patient, supportive, available, understanding, appreciative, know and believe that their student will succeed, they show no doubt and they are knowledgeable. Pedagogy was not about pathologising ability, (finding gaps and filling them), but in taking for granted that all students have ability and to support that innate ability to complete the course (and the assessment was just another task to complete).

Programme contribution to student success

We found three main themes about how the programme contributed to student success:

- **Working together:** whanaungatanga, mahi ngātahi, ako, wānanga, discussion, brainstorm, pitching in ideas, team, good laugh and yarn together, and tuakana/teina teacher's pedagogy, and development of knowledge.
- **Pedagogy:** awahi, manaaki, kōrero, stories, māhanahana, enjoyment, assessments as learning activities.
- **Knowledge development:** research, Māori culture, NCEA credits, importance of values of life, mātauranga Māori as taken for granted, relevant, new opportunities and experiences, school work but outside of school, information and tourism.

It was the combination of all three themes that was important, rather than an emphasis purely on any one of them.

Phase 3: Document analysis of the course work folder

OVERALL FINDINGS:

A work folder can establish a relationship with students and guide them through a course, encouraging them to be persistent and professional using an iconic symbol of support, such as 'Nanny Kui'.

In the work folder, students' literacies and understandings are acknowledged and used in the process of making sense of the content; activities are personalised and contextualised.

Literacy, numeracy and language acquisition are deliberately embedded aspects of the work folder that support students through levels of literacy demands in line with the literacy progressions.

Assessments are demystified and become another activity to complete.

The Hei Manaaki course work folder was written as part of the Awanuiārangi strategic plan to ensure embedding of literacy and numeracy in the tasks and activities of the programme. The folder includes the assessments for students to complete. It is designed for teachers and students to work through modules that contribute to larger tasks and assignments.

Four main themes indicate the support that the document provided to students:

- Students are introduced to 'Nanny Kui' at the beginning of the work folder. Nanny Kui is an iconic figure of care - an elderly woman who carries on a conversation with the students throughout the document.
- The work folder content is personalised; students are asked to connect who they are, what they know, who they know, and where they live, and with the content and jargon of tourism.
- The work folder supports students through levels of literacy demands. Text demands are initially light with visual text and develop through to dense with comprehension exercises. Language features such as "action verbs" are an embedded feature of the texts.
- The literacy assessment is presented as another activity from the work folder.

Nanny Kui

Students meet Nanny Kui, who is their guide from the beginning of the work folder.

"Ok, she's actually guiding us too"

"She provided that element of encouragement."

Nanny Kui is an example and model of graduate profile characteristics.

"Hey, be the same as Nana Kui too, and have those abilities, because what are nannies like? Kei kōnā hoki rātou te awhi, te tiaki, te manaaki, all those sort of things"

"Nanny Kui says ... don't forget what Nanny Kui says..."

She provides an example to support to teaching and learning through collaboration and group success.

“Hey, kua e horo haere, don’t be too quick and then moan because the older ones can’t keep up. Kia āta haere, just like our old people, they move slowly.” But I’ve said, “With them moving slowly doesn’t mean they’re dumb ... doesn’t mean they don’t know, yeah, carefully”

She provides guidance about how we live our lives.

“... so always, kia tupato koutou when you’re walking in life always be careful, always be aware, don’t go head on with everything you do.”

“It gave us that familiarity and it didn’t make it so scary. Because it’s tertiary level, because some of our whānau think, “I can’t do this. But when you implement those little things, you feel safe in that.”

And she is a reminder of how we teach as teachers.

“As a training tool too. What are our expectations? Make us reflect and look back.”

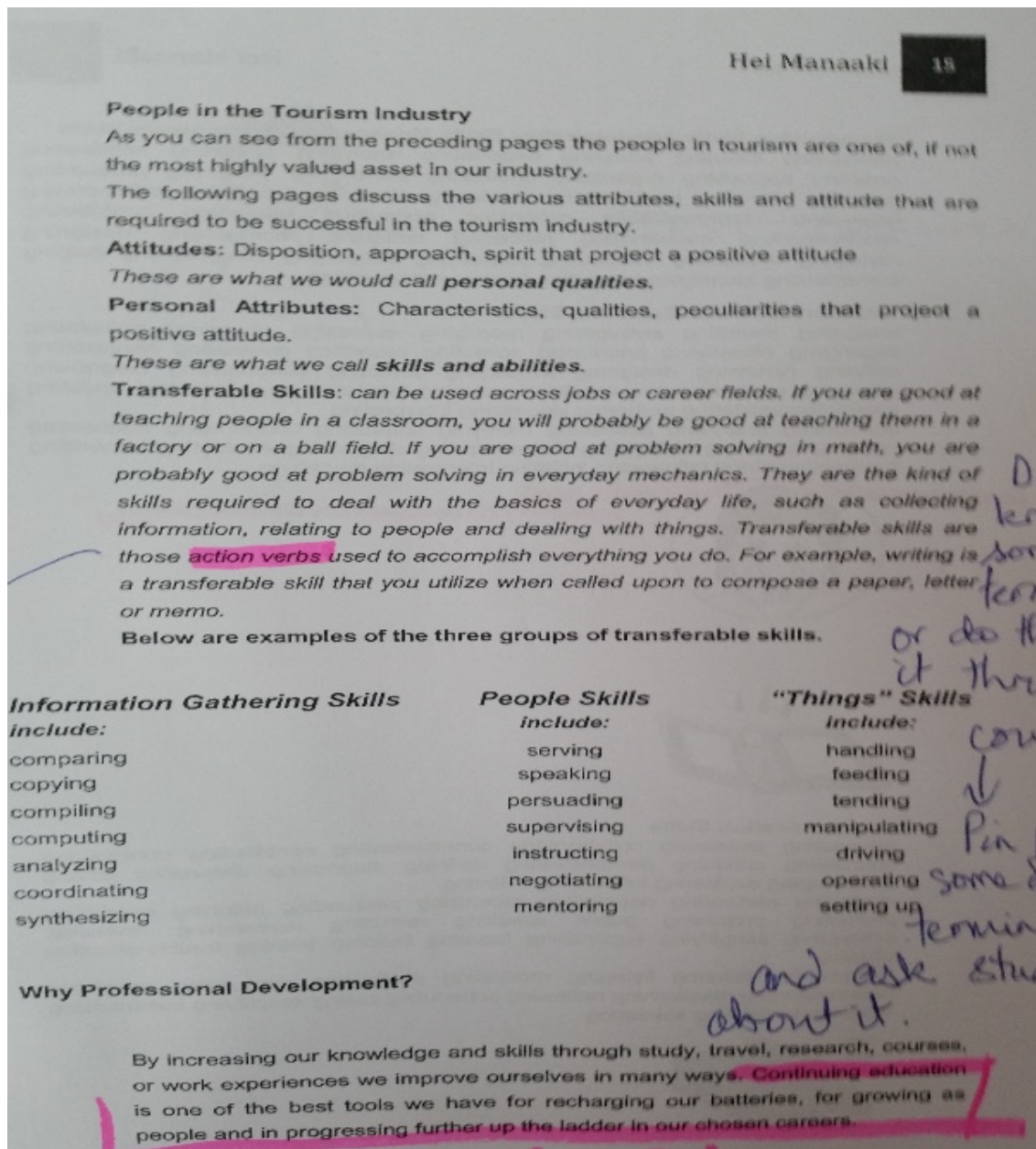
Light text density, visual language and personalisation

The first sets of activities in the work folder have illustrations and few sentences. They describe tourism skills and introduce tourism jargon. Students are asked to identify what is necessary knowledge for tourism, and to identify skills, knowledge, personal qualities, physical requirements and entry requirements they already have.

Scaffolded literacy demands and embedded exposure to language features

Page 15 (shown below in Figure 6) indicates a shift up in text density and evidences the use of the embedded nature of language feature learning. Action verbs, for example, are identified as a way of describing skills for the context of tourism. Action verbs are not isolated as an item of knowledge to be taught separately.

Figure 6
Page 15 of the workbook



Pages 33 to 37 are a three-page text-dense case study followed by questions similar to the literacy Assessment Tool: to select and retrieve information from text, deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from text, and to relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts. Similar longer readings continue throughout the document, with comprehension and vocabulary activities. The exercises support student familiarity with literacy Assessment Tool items.

An indicator that embedding literacy features has had some influence in student comfort with the Assessment Tool items, is the response by students from two case studies that indicates no awareness that they carried out an assessment task separate to work from their folder.

Assessment tool

The literacy Assessment Tool was not recognised as a separate piece of work when students were questioned (Tai Tokerau cohorts and industry student).

“I do, I do remember doing it, I should have brought my book down, I don’t remember when...” [Goes on to describe doing exercises independently – the teachers identified these as the assessment tasks].

“I remember giving the assessments out and they came back a little bit willy-nilly, but they weren’t done like an exam situation. We didn’t go over those as a group, they were just individual.”

“No, we didn’t do a literacy test.”

Phase 4: Follow-Up Interviews/ Supplementary Case Study (Teachers and Student)

OVERALL FINDINGS:

Teaching and learning, including reading and comprehension, is a shared process (as opposed to individual) of making meaning, where teachers see themselves as partners in learning with students.

High self-efficacy and a supportive environment are essential to enabling a shared approach to teaching and learning.

Scaffolding through embedded practices contributes to high self-efficacy

Individuals’ strengths are acknowledged and used in the process of working together to make and share sense. For example, the strength of the hunter-gatherer is used to teach about environmental literacies, and the strength of the writer is used to model writing in a group.

Phase four interviews helped pull together the findings gathered from the case studies. Teachers reiterated that success in literacy is part of embedding literacy into the programme and working from a base of strength and potential, recognising and valuing the skills and knowledge that students bring with them. It is not wrapped up in deliberate acts of literacy teaching and learning.

“...because in the classroom you’re valued, which takes away barriers, so you will [succeed] when you’re valued like that, you will try harder for the kaupapa and you will know it does make a difference.”

In these interviews, the teachers repeated that the programme is designed specifically for people to be successful when they are essentially the living face of the kaupapa of the programme.

“It’s not new in our lives and it’s about that, (Māori students) ... By making it real and relevant in their every-day life (non-Māori students). [To] reaffirm that what we do and what we know is valued and truth to who we are as Māori and even non-Māori. It’s embedded in us from right before we were born.”

The fact that there was no deliberate teaching of literacy or numeracy was explored again and the reasons for success were repeated as whanaungatanga and relationships of students to their teachers and the kaupapa of the programme. The students were explicitly told that the progress assessment was not part of the course requirements, and was something that must be done when they study at this level. The assessment was not being done for the teachers. Although students found it “hōhā”, they found ways to deal with it, and strategies to complete it.

“They are still hōhā second time around because it has nothing to do with the content of the kaupapa... It doesn’t matter what’s in front of them, they will do it and succeed in it... The assessment straight away builds up that wall of “the mainstream,” because a lot of them

didn't have good experiences in mainstream and that's how they'll approach it, but they approach it with that in mind, but with, well, we're going to show them that we know this stuff."

The collaborative teaching and learning pedagogies of the teachers were again highlighted. Teachers see themselves as partners with their students, as people who are learning from their students, as kaitakawaenga for their students. Classroom experiences are about being educators with a high level of adaptive expertise, who take note of different learning levels and styles and juggle with each to enable student's strengths to be used and valued (Lin, Shwartz & Bransford, 2007). Using group teaching approaches supported in minimising stress for students and in maximising the synergies of the strengths of all students when pulled together.

"Everybody enjoys being in a group because ... sometimes there are those who feel intimidated or shy because their knowledge isn't as great as ones that know ... so they can shy away from offering, but put them in a group situation to get them to enhance what they know, they just fly. Manaakitanga of the kaupapa for the kaupapa. It's all about building up the ethos, it's probably about class management too, (slowly developing the groups), the understanding is contributed, is distributed, throughout all of the group."

"We did just small portions that we did by ourselves or just catch-ups that we had to do, each one brought it back, but basically a lot of ours was all group discussions and things that we did together and a lot of our writings, as things came to mind, we would just jot down and put it all into place, (and I thought) ... gee that's neat, when you hear different ones when they would speak on certain subjects and everybody had this little bit. It was really, really quite interesting, we found it really quite good doing it."

"I believe that the team that we've got (talks about kids who come down from the school who are not "fantastic" students at school) - they're fantastic here, you know, they just shine. They're out there doing it, they're engaging ... they're not sitting down and working individually in a classroom."

4 REFLECTING ON WHAT PREVIOUS RESEARCH SAYS

4.1 Māori-centred teaching and learning

Six reports about adult literacy and numeracy indicate strong similarities to the findings of this report. These reports were written in the same period, simultaneously, yet separately. (Ministry of Education, 2009; McMurchie-Pilkington, 2009; White, Oxenham, Tahana, Williams & Matthews, 2008; Mlcek, Timutimu, Mika, Aranga, Taipeti, Rangihau Temara, Shepherd & McGarvey, 2009; Potter, 2011).

When the findings of the reports are mapped across each other, particular themes emerge that support a focus on Māori student success, aspirations and priorities in tertiary programmes. This illustrates that none of the findings from this particular project are new, although the each of the programmes have their own unique approaches and contexts.

Māori community leadership and the authentic inclusion of Māori knowledge in the design, training, and implementation of adult literacy and numeracy programmes and initiatives are identified as imperative to success and achievement.

Recognising who and what the student brings with them

This can be seen in acknowledging Māori potential, normalising tikanga and Te Reo Māori as vehicles for teaching and learning, in acknowledging that answers lie within the communities of the student, and in implementing authentic whanaungatanga. Particularly for Māori tourism, it means acknowledging that students have intimate and native knowledge of the places that tourists are visiting.

Working in partnership

Building authentic partnerships with all who those who support the student is key. It is evident that students and tutors who work together, and tutors who seek the pedagogies and methodologies that work best for students make a difference.

Contextualising work for students, making it fun and meaningful.

The literature, in line with Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education), demands space for Māori to be Māori and to have the broader definitions of literacy and numeracy recognised in any teaching and learning spaces, particularly for Māori students. As Potter (2011) points out:

The inspiration provided by our tupuna in their quest for print and English literacy is to again strive for a world where literacy learning in English and any other language, is framed by our literacy in te reo Māori and a Māori worldview... a kaupapa Māori definition of literacy points to other meaningful roles for literacy learning, helping to redirect and increase attention and funding to adult literacy programmes that prioritise the goals and aspirations of Whānau, Hapū and Iwi. (p19)

Turia (2014) in her address to the Te Aho Summit Programme argues that we need to think actively about defying the interpretations, the assumptions, and deficit thinking that constrain and reduce our potential to be successful as Māori.

The findings from Hei Manaaki are consistent with research from seven or more years past. Furthermore, the findings across these research projects are also consistent with recognised principles of adult learning. For example, the TEC's *Starting Points* (TEC 2008) guide acknowledges the following principles of adult learning:

- Adults are self-directed learners and capable of independent learning
- Adult learners draw on their previous experiences of life and learning and bring these to bear on new learning
- Learning needs to be directly related to the developmental tasks of an adult's social roles and directly applicable to real-life problems
- Motivation factors for adult learnings are deep-seated and internally derived.

This current and previous research provides richer insight into how these general principles work in practice for Māori learners. The next step required then, is to take these sets of rich information and transform them into normal teaching and learning practices for adult literacy and numeracy. That is possible when we deconstruct structural and political impediments and clear the way to focus on existing strengths and potential.

4.2 Dialogues of meaning: literacy and numeracy in Aotearoa New Zealand

If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings. (Freire, 2005: 88)

Approaches that seek to deal with the issues of literacy should firstly be made problematic. For it is through problem-posing that “education... [becomes] an instrument for liberation” (Freire, 2005: 7) and, secondly, any approach needs to be understood in connection with other strategies and initiatives that are multifaceted and transforming.

Tariana Turia when launching the Māori literacy report “Te Kawai Ora: Reading the Word, Reading the World, Being the World” in Parliament (2003) stated that literacy for Māori extends beyond having a command of the English language and being able to read squiggles on a page well enough to hold down a decent job and participate effectively in the family and community life of the knowledge community.

For tangata whenua literacy means bi-literacy being able to function in both iwi and pakeha [sic] worlds. Otherwise the reality and world views of tangata whenua are doomed to wither away, and our people are doomed to live forever in someone else's reality (Turia, 2003).

Literacy Aotearoa is an organisation of adult literacy providers and a leading commentator on literacy issues in Aotearoa New Zealand. It sees critical literacy as an important element to empowering and transforming the lives of those identified as ‘illiterate’ in various work and educational contexts. Te Poutama Painga, the Quality Assurance Standards of Literacy Aotearoa, states that

[...]literacy is listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and critical thinking interwoven with the knowledge of social and cultural practices. Literacy empowers people to contribute to and improve society (Literacy Aotearoa, 2013)

The 2013 Literacy Aotearoa Report also mentions the impact of literacy workplace initiatives for Māori, stating that “Māori adult students and their whānau gain confidence through engaging and learning literacy, language, numeracy and Te Reo, their confidence levels increase and their lives are transformed” (Literacy Aotearoa, 2013: 6) With more than 25 years of experience in developing and delivering accessible literacy services to adults, Literacy Aotearoa aims to ensure “people of Aotearoa are ‘critically literate’” (ibid: 60).

4.3 The discourse of literacy knowledge communities

Conventional understandings of literacy are products of our times, legitimised by those authorised to name the world, through the signification of truth and practice, at a particular period in time. Paulo Freire states that

...dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming—between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression. (Freire, 2005: 88)

Alice Johnson (2000) in her study “Changing Skills for a Changing World: Recommendations for Adult Literacy Policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand” discusses how the advances in technology in the 1990s, for example, have shifted the focus and definition of literacy internationally.

For an advanced technological society...the goal is an active literacy which allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question in order to participate effectively in society. (Reid cited in Johnson, 2000: 21)

Johnson then explains how in Aotearoa New Zealand, specific understandings of literacy in an educational context have been developed. At the turn of the century, for example, the Ministry of Education described literacy as a “complex web of reading, writing, speaking, listening, problem-solving, creative thinking and numeracy skills” (Ministry of Education cited in Johnson, 2000, 21).

The discourse or knowledge community created around literacy over the past few decades in Aotearoa New Zealand, whether globally or nationally focussed, identifies literacy as a conventional issue, and informs what constitutes literacy, its definition, its purpose and significance according to current constructs. There is a tendency towards reducing literacy to a technical skill in order to provide consistent measure and assessment of ability. In doing so, the wider social practices and context of literacy becomes less visible.

If there is to be any real and positive change in the way we understand literacy, language and numeracy, we must firstly be aware of the prevailing ideologies, attitudes and values that normalise everyday thinking and practice, and how these have been harmful to the achievement and success of many students in education.

4.4 The dangers of domesticating knowledge

Foucault’s (1980) knowledge-power concept reminds us that Western societies have an authoritative knowledge system that takes precedence over others. Members of a society become either subject to particular Western culture and knowledge, or outcasts of it. More importantly, those who use the Western culture and knowledge, also become the very constituents through which that knowledge is normalised. Inevitably, the knowledge and those subjected to it become culturally domesticated.

The two examples of definitions used by Johnson (2000) to describe literacy can be described as products of domesticated knowledge. The assessments we use to measure competency in those fields can also be described in this way. In each case, certain truths and assumptions are established that signify what is considered as “illiterate”, “unskilled” or “unemployable”. Those who fail to measure up to the assessment criteria are labelled and seen as being in need of urgent fixing.

It is the individual rather than the structures defining them that become scrutinised, researched and pathologised.

4.5 The silencing of cultural literacies: deconstructing rhetorical devices

A system of literacy and numeracy devoid of cultural diversity has the potential to silence other cultural literacies. Johnson's statement below supports the narrowed view of literacy and numeracy that helps to construct literacy and numeracy industries to meet current cultural and economic structures. These industries include the Assessment Tools industry, the resource developing industry and the professional development teacher training provision industry which all tend to focus on reading comprehension and writing – coupled with the way that each of these areas is funded, by whom and based on what criteria.

In the increasingly knowledge-based world of the 21st Century, adults need a solid foundation of essential skills more than ever before. A person's knowledge and skills have a profound impact on their lives at home, in their community and on the job. In the workplace in particular, expectations of what people need to know and be able to do are continually increasing across occupations and the stakes have never been higher for those with low skills. Gone are the days when one could manage a sheep station or earn a good living from manual labour without regular use of reading, writing and numeracy skills. To survive and prosper in a world of rapid change, adults need to continuously improve their knowledge and skills through a lifetime of learning. (Johnson, 2000: 7)

The above statement reflects a reality imposed upon society. The presumption is that our world is not only increasingly knowledge-based, but also, in order to have access to knowledge, one needs to be able to read and write. This is contrasted by research that indicates that our world has become too focussed on specific knowledge-based communities, compliant and based on standardisation and is, thus, losing touch with the creative, diverse and pluralistic nature of knowledge – in other words, society and education is losing its soul (Robinson, 2014).

Gruenewald (2004) suggests that, “the discourses of economism and governmentality narrow the purposes of education to the creation of a docile, if sometimes competitive, workforce” (p78). It could be argued that the very policies set up by governments to address literacy and numeracy issues have, in fact, set up mechanisms or devices that disadvantage rather than empower.

Gruenewald calls this vision of people created by the literacy discourse “human capital for market gain” (78). Wrapped up in Johnson's statement is the “familiar rhetorical device” (84) that is self-evident and self-validating, and therefore common sense or ‘natural’. The ruse is in continuing to use the term of literacy as if it is a broad one, and continuing to tell the general public that certain sectors of society (i.e. Māori, Pacific or immigrant), are low skilled and thus need fixing. The use of the words, “low skilled” once again promotes the deficit labelling of groups of people who may be very highly skilled and very highly knowledgeable in other cultural contexts, however, the narrow definition of what literacy is and how it is to be measured, fits within industrialised, economic and globalised notions. As such, various other literacies become silenced or subjugated as do their experts.

4.6 Using multiple modes of meaning

...students are to find their own voice so that they may speak or write their reading of the world... The student's own language is the means of developing a positive sense of self-

worth, 'fundamental in the development of emancipatory literacy' (Meek cited in Freire and Macedo, 2005, p VII)

Meek suggests that, as a form of cultural politics, "literacy becomes a meaningful construct to the degree that it is viewed as a set of practices that functions to either empower or disempower people" (cited in Freire and Macedo, 2005: p, IX – X). In advocating literacy of emancipation, what Freire, Macedo and Meek are urging educators, policy makers and teachers to consider, is that language, learning and literacy are not neutral processes of acquisition, in fact, they are culturally biased in the context of mainstream education. This includes assessments, such as the Assessment Tool. Therefore, the question for those working in education, is how do we assist those groups without the appropriate cultural capital to master the 'prevailing language of the wider society'? For Freire, this is an important factor, as he is a supporter of acquiring the dominant syntax or language so that students become linguistically empowered and able to engage in dialogue, with wider sections of society.

One solution is to use the vernacular and syntax of the students. This is a not an easy task for educators, for it means teachers must have an understanding of the language and vernacular of the students in their classroom. The use of slang, colloquial language and jargon is sometimes seen as being inarticulate, or a reflection of low literacy levels. However, the language and vernacular of the students you teach should be understood not as a barrier, but as the preferred meaning-making system – no different to the cultural capital of the students who already have mastered the dominant language. The challenge, however, is using the language and vernacular of the students to also appreciate and master the dominant language of wider society.

What this approach to literacy suggests is that there are multiple literacies that need to be considered in the context of raising conventional, standard dominant language literacy levels. Jeffery Wood (2007), describes how literacies should be understood not only as multiple meaning-making systems, but also as multimodal.

Literacies can be, and should be, thought of as any meaning making system: maths, science, dance, art, computer gaming, reading, writing, etc. and they are multimodal... That is, literacies are rarely found in isolation and in fact are often used together to support the meaning making process as well as often having many modes for carrying their message...for example, language has four modes: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Rarely is communication done using only one mode. (Wood, 2007, p16-17)

Since this project was conducted, a new reading assessment within Assessment Tool has been released known as Te Ata Hāpara. This assessment uses Māori cultural content to engage learners.

4.7 Key conclusions from the research

As teachers and educators, how do our existing teaching and learning practices and strategies allow for multimodal literacies to be used? How do we tap into the divergent modes of meaning and sense-making of our students that will enable them to easily manage a convergent literacy mode such as the Assessment Tool?

This discussion of the literature advocates for more critical and reflective approaches to research, teaching and learning in regards to literacy, language and numeracy. It encourages policy and decision-makers to critically understand the cultural and historical influences that govern how and why we make decisions about literacy and numeracy purposes and relevance.

Researchers, educators, practitioners and policy makers need to be more reflective of the discourse(s) of 'knowledge communities' that constitute what literacy is, how it is measured and the implications of such decisions. This will go some way to allay the concerns that have been created through the rhetoric of "low skilled", "illiterate" pathologies attached to literacy or 'literacies' of individuals. This means that there is a need to ask questions around existing policies and whether they mitigate existing literacy and numeracy issues, or instead actually disadvantage those who do not meet the national literacy and numeracy standards accepted today. These are critical and relevant questions policy makers, educationalists and teachers need to consider in the challenges we face in educational achievement and success.

In response to such questions, propositions from a kaupapa Māori perspective provide alternative understandings of literacy, and how these views can contribute to conventional thinking and practices about literacy.

These alternative views are by no means new. In fact, the synthesis of the literature gives evidence to outcomes that are already working to produce successful educational outcomes for Māori. Therefore, if studies have already identified what works for Māori, why then are projects such as this still required?

5 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this chapter, the findings from the data collection have been triangulated to facilitate a deeper understanding. While the quantitative analysis provided a measure of the achievement and success in relation to Assessment Tool data and Hei Manaaki, the workshop sessions, document analysis and follow-up interviews all provided insights into the qualitative elements within the programme that contributed to improved literacy outcomes.

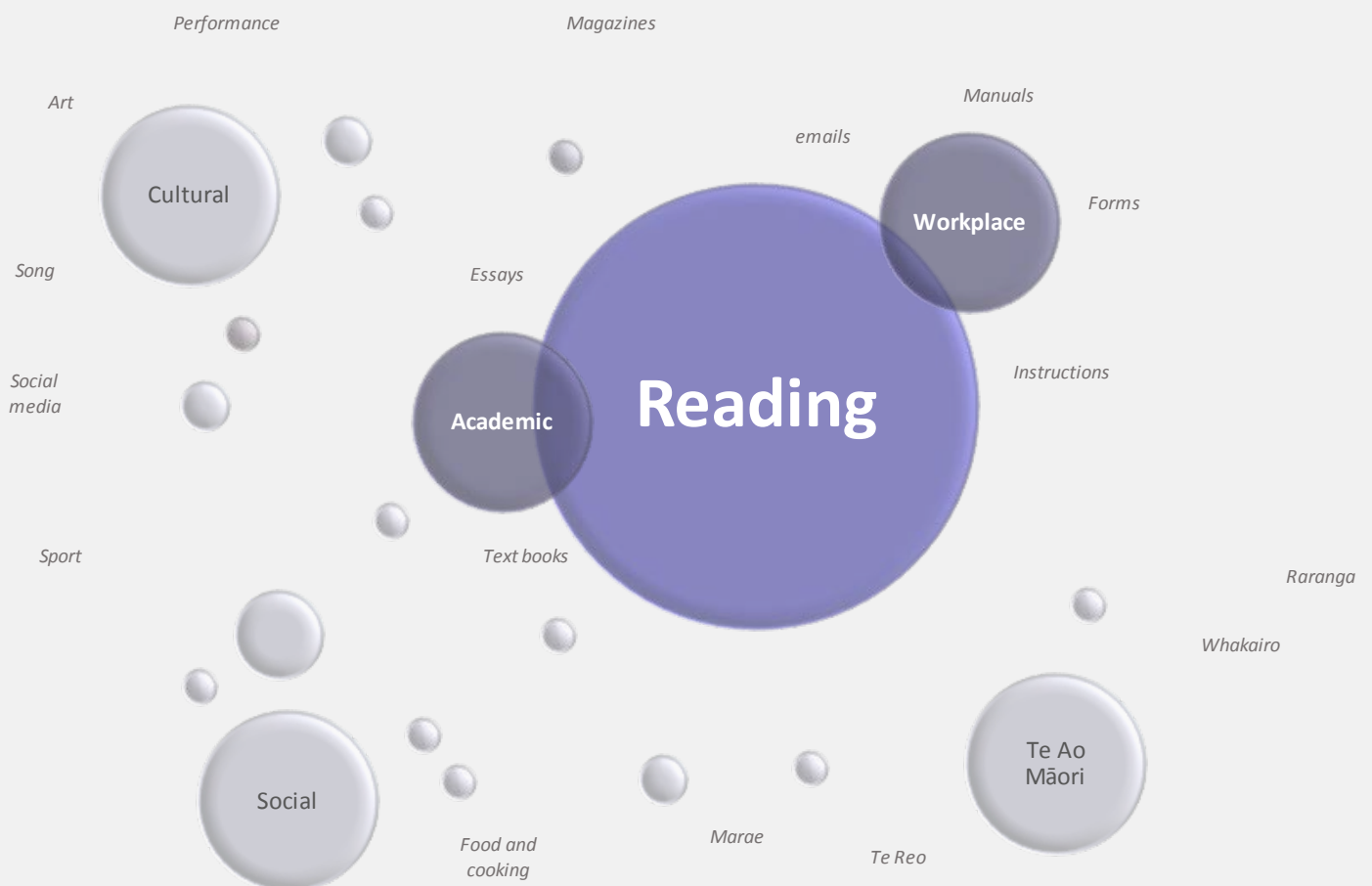
The use of both qualitative and quantitative data in this study was important as it provided both insights into the inner workings of the programme, its students and the teachers, and also the role the Assessment Tool has played, not only to teaching and learning, but also in providing a deeper understanding of literacy in the context of education as a whole.

A return to a Freirean understanding of literacy as a means of emancipation, is advocated for. Freire (2005) argues that it is essential for those students who are culturally illiterate, to appropriate the cultural capital of the 'dominant language of the wider society' so that they can become linguistically empowered and able to engage in dialogue, with wider sections of society.

Convergent or singular approach to literacy improvement

In a disconnected system that employs a convergent approach to improving literacies, there are few links to the multimodal of literacies of the student. Instead, the focus is put on a single literacy which aligns with the dominant culture

Model 1: Weak support for students' cultural and social capital



Educators, policy makers and teachers need to understand that language, learning and literacy is not a neutral process, but is instead a cultural one. In the context of mainstream education, this includes assessments, such as the Assessment Tool. At this time of this research project, the Assessment Tool was relevant and contextual, but only to a particular culture – mainstream culture or those who already have the cultural capital of that group – the tool was very effective in assessing this particular literacy. However, problems occur when teaching and learning strategies always use the cultural capital of mainstream, where the students they tend to work with have an abundance of such capital. Subsequent to the research, a new reading assessment has been added to the Tool, which uses Maori cultural content to engage learners. The question for teaching and learning is how this approach can be used more generally within the classroom and not just in

Divergent or multiple approach to literacy improvement

A divergent approach means knowing the student’s existing literacies, to support them to complete their qualification. In this approach, knowing the student goes beyond analysing their assessment results, then teaching according to the literacy progressions. This has resulted in students improved literacy assessment level.

In the Hei Manaaki programme, Te Ao Māori is central and the literacies of the student are strongly linked, recognised, and validated. Teachers and students are able to recognise that the Assessment Tool measures a particular literacy, and while this is important, it is also important to recognise the value of multiple literacies for teaching and learning success.

Model 2: Strong support for students’ cultural and social capital



a specific reading assessment.

If the aim of policy makers and educationalists is to improve a particular literacy of a particular group, this report argues that an approach that uses the literacies of the students as a starting point is most effective in improving singular or convergent literacy.

What this approach to literacy suggests, is that there are multiple, as well as divergent literacies that need to be considered in the context of raising conventional (standard dominant language) literacy levels. Jeffrey Wood, (2007) describes how literacies should be understood not only as multiple meaning-making systems, but also as multimodal. In other words, the meaning of a written text, can be elicited from another mode such as film, art, dance or a ballet.

As teachers and educators, how do our existing teaching and learning practices and strategies allow for multimodal literacies to be used? How do we tap into the divergent modes of meaning and sense-making of our students? These are critical and relevant questions policy makers, educationalists and teachers need to consider in the challenges we face in educational achievement and success.

The literacy (reading and comprehension) success and achievement of the Hei Manaaki programme supports the use of multiple and divergent literacies. However, it also contributes other important considerations for similar programs, if they are going to succeed.

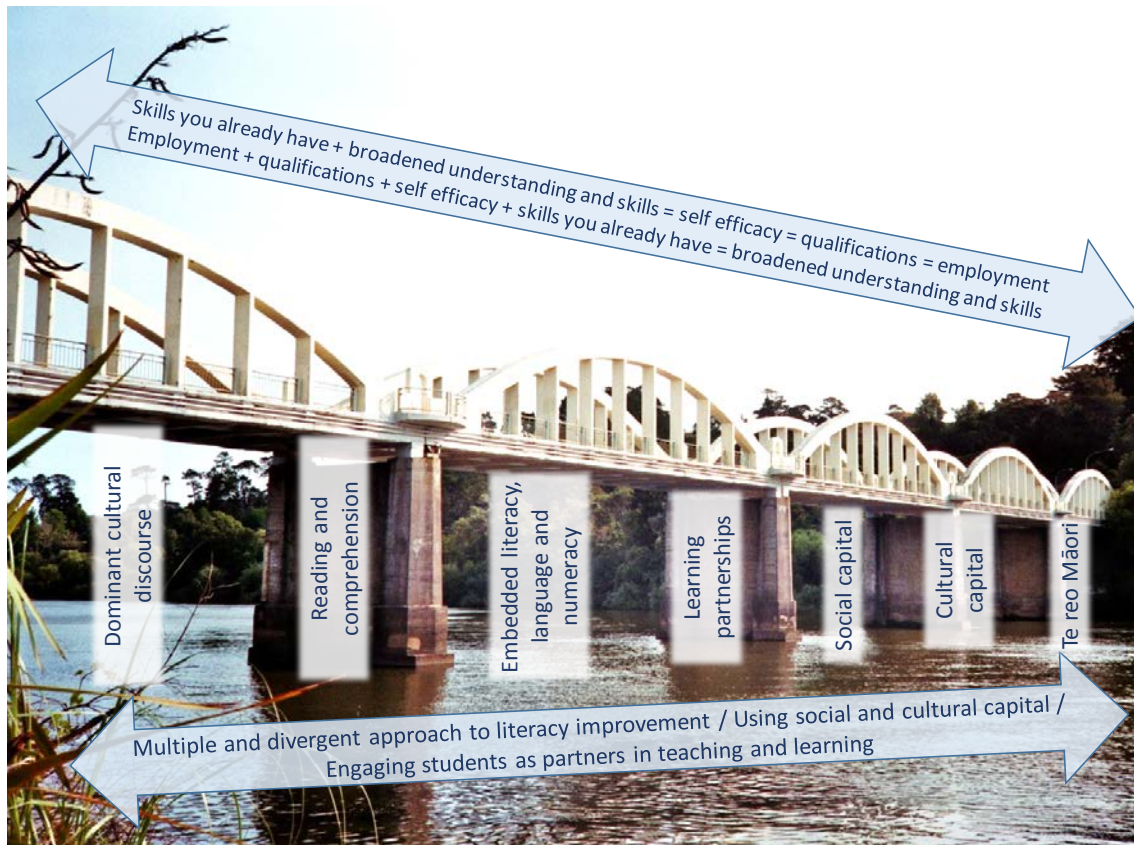
5.1 Bridging the cultural divide through an embedded literacy approach: Teachers as a bricoleur of literacy improvement

The success of Hei Manaaki students in managing the convergent nature of literacy assessed by the reading comprehension Assessment Tool is illustrated below in Figure 7 as a “cultural bridge”,

The pillars of the bridge create a bricolage of the multiple literacies and knowledge. A bricolage is a construction that makes use of a diverse range of materials that are at hand. The teacher and student use it to not only attain meaning, but also to develop new and specific literacy skills. In a teaching context a bricolage refers to a multidisciplinary approach where the teacher is not only familiar with multiple modes of literacy, but is also cognisant of how the bricolage is influenced by his or her perspective. This teacher uses a divergent and embedded approach to improving literacy that recognises the pillars that are relevant and meaningful to the students, and negotiates the bridge utilising the stronger literacies of the student to develop weaker ones.

In the Hei Manaaki programme, embedded literacy was achieved through resources, class readings and activities that deliberately included reading progressions where teachers scaffolded the students through them by referring back-and-forth between them and the literacies they already know and use. This embedding practice includes also the linking of learning outcomes and standards of assessment.

Figure 7:
Hei Manaaki Cultural Bridge



In conducting research, Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) advocate that such a multidisciplinary approach requires “a new level of research consciousness” (p. 316). A teacher as a bricoleur of literacy improvement recognises and reflects the complexities and realities of the lived experience of their students and understands the complexity of such an undertaking. Conventional approaches to literacy improvement can become assessment focussed, while alternative approaches are student-centred.

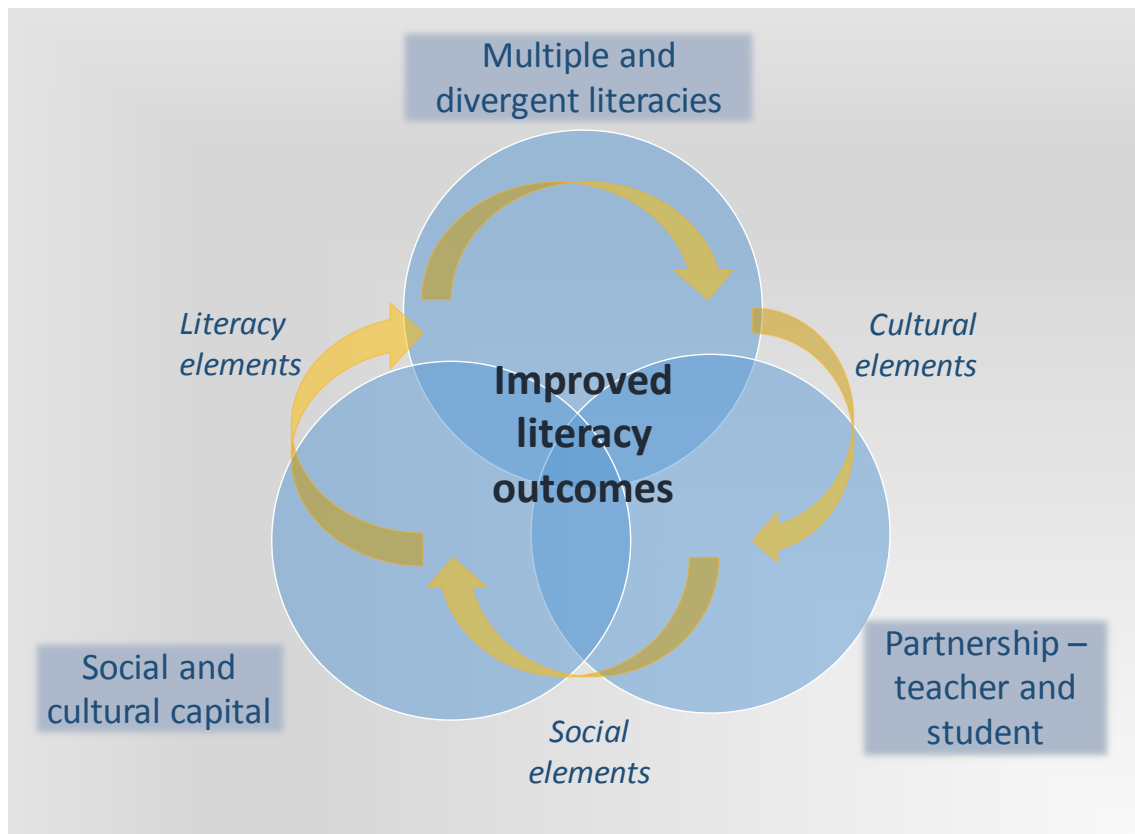
The pillars of the bridge represent the diverse literacies, knowledge and social and cultural capital that students and teacher bring to the classroom.

5.2 An alternative approach to improving literacy, teaching and learning

This report argues that an approach that uses the literacies of the students as a starting point is most effective in improving a singular or convergent literacy. Such an approach is consistent with findings of previous research and recognised principles of adult learning. Existing multiple literacies and divergent approaches need to be considered in raising conventional literacy levels of students. The model below (following Smith and Bidois’ models) proposes that multiple strategies and interventions need to occur simultaneously for the best outcomes.

Figure 8

360° degree approach to improving literacy, teaching and learning



The model provides an inclusive approach to improving different literacies in different contexts. It does not matter which literacy one is trying to improve, whether it be reading and comprehension in the case of this research, or to improve cultural literacy of teaching staff who are working with Māori students, or to improve the critical literacy of undergraduate students in a mainstream university, the singular or convergent literacy is always made sense of first through the multiple literacies of the students.

Teachers have a greater chance of removing the barriers to improving specific literacies, and creating greater opportunities for success and achievement, by raising levels of self-efficacy and engagement, through acknowledging and using students' literacies and creating a classroom environment that is based on shared and collective learning.

The classroom environment referred to includes cultural, social and literacy element identified by Hei Manaaki students as influencing their success, and as elements of transformation that their teachers demonstrated. The teachers and the programme recognise:

- Rangatiratanga: students bring a wealth of knowledge that is acknowledged and the teachers are knowledgeable enough to share with them (English language, Western dominant discourses, social capital, mātauranga Māori, Te Reo Māori). The concept of *rangatiratanga* also signifies one's ability to make links between content, context and outcomes, where teachers weave together the localised knowledge, concepts and experiences of the students in creating dialogues of meaning.
- Manaakitanga: caring about students is important with food, extra help and time (learning partnerships).

- Kaitiakitanga: students' study is contextualised, based in their surroundings and their home (mātauranga Māori/Western discourses and places) In working together to link the content of their course with the unique context in which they are studying, *kaitiakitanga* signifies the preservation and protection of contextualised and localised stories.
- Aroha: students are expected to succeed, because they are already knowledgeable
- Whānau: by working together, reciprocally and in partnership, success is inevitable
- Embedding convergent literacy within the programme, as a normal part of the programme work, and then embedding the Assessment Tool as part of normal programme work, or treating it as just another task, demystifies assessment and supports achievement.

5.3 Summary of what we found out

The findings suggest that multiple interventions need to occur simultaneously for the best outcomes. Described as a 360° Approach to Improving Literacy (and Teaching and Learning), the model presented in this chapter identifies three key considerations for policy makers and educators.

Creating dialogues of meaning: multiple and divergent approach to literacy improvement:

The multiple literacies of the students are acknowledged, and that they have different ways of making meaning (divergent) yet can be used to find an intended meaning of a particular text (convergent). In the act of meaning-making students and teachers refer to multiple literacies to make sense of a given text. e.g. Dance, art, song, oral traditions, whakatauki, symbols,

Drawing on the multiple literacies of the students and a divergent approach to developing literacies of the student, can assist with the understanding of convergent literacies such as reading, writing and math. In this case, conventional literacies meaning and understandings are made sense of by drawing on other literacies more appropriate and relevant to the 'precocious' student (Wood, 2007).

Social and cultural capital: norms of reciprocity and contextualised meaning

Learning environments need to use both the social and cultural capital of the students when seeking to improve a particular literacy. Valuing social (whānau) networks gives rise to helping and doing things for one another. The sharing of resources, ideas and experiences, collaborative group work, reciprocity (mutual assistance) are all forms of collective action that contribute to a shared purpose and both collective and individual success.

Cultural capital acknowledges the cultural literacies, practices and experiences of the students and their value in bringing meaning to other literacies. By making sense of the world through the multiple and cultural literacies of the students, conventional literacy (reading, writing, math) comprehension becomes not only contextualised, but transferable where students read their world, in order to read the word.

Partnership – engaging students as partners in teaching and learning

Teaching and learning becomes a negotiated space where meaning is constructed and agreed by student and teacher, e.g. teacher scaffolds learning and understanding drawing upon student literacies and cultural capital. The teaching and learning relationship between student and teacher is one of partnership and reciprocation, where student voice, culture, knowledge is equal to the teacher.

Teacher-student partnership reaffirms student reality, history, culture, and language practices and resists the power of the dominant syntax and culture, e.g. teacher as a critical and reflective practitioner resists and challenges the ideologies and practices of the dominant culture.

As partners in learning, teacher and student develop a relationship of respect, reciprocity and responsibility where teaching and learning is negotiated and (re)designed to meet the needs of the students. Power-sharing exists as far as student voice contributes to the teaching and learning process (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014).

The model represents a broader and holistic approach to understanding literacy, teaching and learning. The model also reflects an inclusive attitude toward improving different literacies in different contexts. In other words, it does not matter which literacy one is trying to improve, whether it be reading and comprehension in the case of this research, or to improve cultural literacy of teaching staff who are working with Māori students, or to improve the critical literacy of undergraduate students in a mainstream university, the singular or convergent literacy is always made sense of first through the multiple and divergent literacies of the students.

By cultivating high levels of self-efficacy and engagement, through acknowledging and using students' literacies and creating a classroom environment that is based on shared and collective learning, teachers have a greater chance of removing some of the barriers to improving specific literacies, and creating greater opportunities for success and achievement.

The challenge for us all who authorise and constitute the "profession" of adult literacy and numeracy, is to ask ourselves as communities of knowledge (educators, researchers and policymakers) what role have we played in creating the crisis of the illiterate and innumerate population.

This would require us as a community to reflect critically on the structures and systems of education in general and how they may have legitimated and authorised the very structures that created the need for such interventions to exist. This type of reflective approach, it is argued, will ensure that cultural and structural aspirations are taken into account on behalf of all those impacted by the decisions made, and that a political analysis will take into consideration the power engendered through specific 'communities of knowledge' that can either enable or constrain possibilities for action and change.

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