FRST Literacy and Employment Project Progress

In-Depth Interviews

- Non-Participant Interviews

All interviews with people not participating in literacy programmes have been completed.

- Participant Interviews

We are 85% completed interviewing those people who are taking part in literacy programmes.

These interviews are longitudinal and the same people will be followed up at the end of this year, and next year. We hope to determine both participants and non-participants perceptions of skills for employment, what literacy means to them, explore their life experiences both past and present, perceptions of the course they are on (if participants) and their ideas of what barriers there are in their lives (if any) to attaining literacy skills and/or employment.

- Where to from here?

  o Analysis

We are in the throes of the preliminary analysis at the moment, but will be using this analysis as one way of looking for further ideas to explore. Also, at a later stage we will be inviting yourselves (as providers of adult literacy services) into the process by asking you to discuss and suggest questions that you would like to see asked in the next round.

  o Follow-up Interviews at the end of 2005 and again mid-end 2006
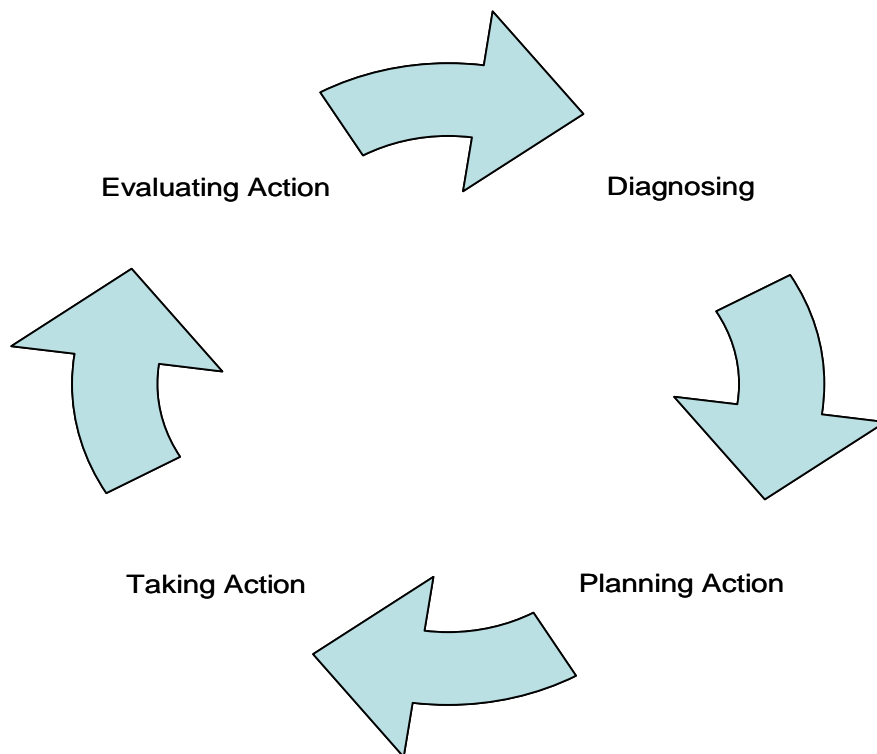
Action Research

- Planning Process

We are currently in the midst of discussing a few ideas with providers.

- <u>What is Action Research?</u>

Action research can be described as a form of collaborative problem solving. It transforms research questions into practical and reflective action which is directed towards solving everyday problems in the lives of the research participants.

In other words, in pure action research, the research question is not defined by outside researchers. It is defined by the people themselves, both practitioners and/or the participants or students. The **process** is circular and consists of an initial **idea** or **diagnosis** of a problem, **planning** that leads to some form of **action**, **reflection**, or **evaluation** of that action which continues on to a further cycle of further **planning, action** and **evaluation,** continually refining the practical outcomes or problem solving.

Evaluating Action   Diagnosing

Taking Action   Planning Action

We are looking for another action research programme that involves the literacy learners in defining the question that the research will address. If you are interested in discussing some ideas with us further, please contact the Project Manager, Niki Culligan, on 06 356 9099 ext 5941 or n.s.culligan@massey.ac.nz.

Focus Groups

- <u>Employer Focus Groups</u>

Dr John Franklin has been facilitating employer focus groups in Wanganui of late. These groups have been discussing issues that include skills shortages, skills needed for employment, and the role of literacy in employment. Initiatives used to address training needs of employees within organizations have also been discussed.

- <u>Stakeholder Focus Groups</u>

We are also looking to set up some focus groups of stakeholders and community agencies to discuss their perceptions of literacy and employment soon.

Case Studies

- <u>Planning Process</u>

Case Studies are being planned at the moment and we are hoping to begin at least one of these in the next month. These are in-depth investigations of specific groups of people who are involved with some form of literacy training.

Provider Survey Phase 1: Feedback

No "typical literacy client"

- Two-thirds unemployed or in unpaid work

- Majority under 40: highest proportion 16-19

- More female than male

Providers

- Most clients referred by WINZ or self-referred

- More than half of providers cater for specific client group

- Most providers used advertisements to attract clients

- Most providers used an integrated approach to teaching literacy

Programmes

- Most providers teach work and life related skills

- 1 in 4 focus on general literacy skills

Needs

- Maths most frequently reported need

- No commonly used formal assessment tools at time of entry to programmes

- Student progress measured through informal observation and a variety of approaches

Motivation

- Training for a job seen as important

- Tutor help/expertise

- Personal issues main reason why clients do not complete a programme

Recommendations for changes

More funding for resources

- More funding for training

- More funding for quality programmes

- Need for physical resources

- Need for increased liaison

Funding

- Divided opinion on sufficiency of funding

- Two-thirds of providers see clients as frequently as they consider necessary

Provider Survey phase 1 report

- Were there any surprises in the report?

- What information did you find interesting, helpful?

- What additional information/feedback would have helped you in your work?

- Which parts of the research need expanding in Phase 2 of the survey?

Phase 2 Survey

1. How critical is literacy/core-skills training to your programmes?

2. What does "literacy" mean to you and your clients? What are the links between literacy and employment?

3. What motivates people to improve their literacy? Are there some who fall between the gaps?

4. Do the literacy needs of Maori differ from others?

5. What is the fit between funder expectations and the resourcing you receive?

6. What are the major challenges in providing literacy within an integrated programme?

7. What are the most significant barriers to providing effective literacy support?

8. What is the significance of social and personal issues?

9. What resources, other than funding, would help meet the clients' literacy needs?