Provider Survey - Phase One

The provision of adult literacy services in Wanganui

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Provider Survey – Phase 1

The Provision of Adult Literacy Services in Wanganui

Results and Discussion

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This project has been reviewed, judged to be low risk, and approved by the researchers under delegated authority from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz
Summary of main points

Client demographics

It was difficult to describe a ‘typical literacy client’ in Wanganui.
- The ratio of males to females varied widely among providers. When calculated as an average, the ratio of female clients was larger (58:42).
- When averaged across all 12 providers, clients with English as a Second Language accounted for approximately 15.29% of the total client base.
- A large number of participants were unemployed (40.5%) or taking part in some form of unpaid work (26.7%). 20.1% of the participants in literacy programmes were in work, with 15.6% being in part-time work. 4.5% were estimated to be in full-time work.
- A high proportion of participants were in the age group 16-19 (accounting for approximately 38% of clients). From this point there was a tailing off of participation in the age groups. Of all age groups, 70 plus was not represented at all, while 60 – 69 only accounted for an average of 1% of clients. The under 16 age group was very low (3%).

Provider characteristics

- All providers interviewed had NZQA accreditation or had approval of it pending.
- There was wide variety in the length of time providers had been operating in Wanganui, ranging from about two months to twenty years. The average length of time in operation was approximately 8.3 years.
- The number of regular clients currently registered with each provider ranged from 5 to 500.
- The number of regular clients seen per week was generally the same as the number of clients seen per month.
- The number of casual (i.e. unregistered) clients seen was relatively low.
- Initial identification of client need was in most cases made by ‘other agencies’
- It appeared that the majority of clients were either referred by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), or self-referred.
- Nearly 60% of the providers sampled provided services that are specific to certain groups within the population, for example, the Maori population, WINZ clients, or the unemployed.
- The majority of providers used advertisements to let people know about their services. Over 50% also passed on information through outside agencies.

Programme characteristics

The results obtained for these questions indicated the differences in methods operation among the providers, and highlights how it must be difficult sometimes to share resources and information when clientele and approaches are so diverse.
• The majority of learners were seen at the literacy programme, followed by other community facilities and the learners’ home.

• 42% of providers reported that they teach predominantly work-related skills, while 25% reported that they taught predominantly general literacy skills. 25% of providers taught both.

• 33% of providers reported that the skills they taught were applicable to general life skills, while 25% reported that skills taught were applicable to their course. 42% noted that the spread was about even.

• Most providers preferred the integrated approach to teaching. The most popular skills taught were problem-solving, number, reading and writing, (using an integrated approach) in almost equal proportions.

• The most commonly reported stay for clients was 1-2 years, with 6 – 12 months being the second most common. The minimum stay mentioned was for clients staying for 1 – 5 weeks.

• There was a wide range between what different providers accepted in terms of continuity from their clients. This ranged from 5 or more days to 6 or more months.

**Addressing client literacy needs**

• Maths was the most frequently reported need, with 11 of 12 providers reporting this. Reading, spelling and writing were all reported by 9 providers. ‘Other’ needs included ‘whole communication field, including verbal skills,’ ‘speaking, listening’, having an attitude to self as ‘dumb’, and lack of self-confidence.

• The most common assessment method was by ‘agency-developed test’, followed by ‘client description’ of his or her own skills. No providers reported the use of formal assessment tools. Formal assessment tools were defined here as those nationally and/or internationally standardised tools that are used across all providers. It was found that there is no such thing as a government sanctioned standardised assessment tool for adult literacy in New Zealand. However, the providers involved in this survey did make use of rigorous assessment procedures and diagnostic processes, some of which incorporate elements of internationally standardised formal tests.

• The most commonly used method of identifying client progress was by ‘informal observation’.

• In terms of progress reports, ‘formal written progress report’ was the most popular type, followed by ‘formal verbal progress report’.

• Training for a job was seen as an important motivator (chosen by 40% of providers); particularly as most of the literacy clients were not in paid employment. Tutor help/expertise was also viewed as an important motivator of clients. 50% of providers reported ‘other’ motivators for clients to improve their literacy skills.

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1 It is important to note that progress is being made toward standardised assessment procedures through work being undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Workbase, and other exploratory projects. Also, each provider funded by TEC, makes use of pathway plans and literacy pathway plans for each learner and the development of elements of holistic learning plans for use within provider agencies is currently underway.
• Eight of the providers reported completion rates of over 80%.
• Personal issues were seen to have a large impact on the participant’s completion or non-completion of the course.
• All providers indicated that they use some type of course evaluation.

Most providers have referred clients to other providers during the last year, although the percentage referred on varied widely. This usually occurred because the other agency provided a different, accredited course, or for the client’s benefit.

Funding and resourcing issues

• 67% of providers felt that their clients were seen as frequently as necessary, while 25% noted that they were not. 8% reported that this depended on other variables. Further variables need to be explored to gain a better understanding of provider’s views on this issue.
• 27% of providers reported that their funding was sufficient to cover the amount of time clients should be seen. 27% reported that their funding was not. 46% noted they were funded in a different way, and so could not contribute to the question. As with the finding above, further investigation is needed to clarify this issue.
• All of the providers reported sharing resources or expertise with other providers.
• Providers mostly shared information with one another, followed by books/library and staff/trainers/tutors.
• An average of 70.9% of students (across all providers) had been funded by external agencies during the last year.
• All except two providers were funded to some degree by TEC.
• The main changes recommended by providers were increased funding for resources, programmes and staff development. There were a great variety of responses to this question, which not only outlines the expanse of the problem, but also highlights the differing needs and range of needs of the providers.
• Many other suggestions for changes to funding were also made for the continued success of adult literacy services in Wanganui. These included funding for counsellors, funding to be in specific areas such as employing qualified tutors, funding for advertising.

Staffing issues

• For three providers, the number of employees was about equal to the number of literacy tutors. For eight of the other providers, the number of employees was substantially higher than the number of literacy tutors.
• 66.7% of providers had staff leave their organization in the last 6 months. The main reason for staff leaving was ‘job elsewhere’.
• 91.7% of providers had staff join during the past 6 months. The main reasons for them joining were ‘increased job opportunities’ reflecting the increased work demand over this period.
Challenges faced by literacy providers in Wanganui and Districts

- Lack of funding in general was seen as a challenge by nearly 60% of providers.
- It is suggested that this ‘challenge’ referred more to lack of funding for training, resources etc, than for issues such as client recruitment.
- Many other challenges were also referred to, including the need to address multicultural needs, the need for standard assessment tools, and the changing nature of literacy in terms of technology.

Significant changes that could improve adult literacy

- Two providers noted that more involvement and acknowledgement from the community would be a significant change that could improve adult literacy.
- Two other providers felt that schools needed to play a bigger part in promoting literacy.

  Other significant changes suggested:
  - A holistic approach to identifying the need
  - Having more time with the trainees, spending longer on literacy
  - Acceptance of self and the ability to improve
  - Promotion of help available

Information, resources, or support required for the continued success of literacy services in Wanganui

Many providers chose the ‘other’ category as their response. Requirements included:
- An adult literacy qualification completed by NZQA
- Adequate funding and pay scales for tutors
- A professional body for literacy practitioners
- Increased research and realism about literacy

General comments

Providers made many valuable additional comments at the end of this survey. These are summarized under the following themes:
- Diversity across literacy organizations and approaches.
- The quality of service provision: monitoring to ensure standards are met.
- Literacy in Wanganui is worse than imagined. Maths skills have been identified as poorer than English skills.
- Government funders need to recognize that many literacy students require further training rather than moving straight into employment as an outcome of their course.
- Challenges for small providers as required to keep on top of many tasks.
- Large variety of learning difficulties to be recognized and catered for
• Deepening of professional capacity is required: the theory used needs to be as solid as possible around current practice
• Unit standards empowering employers to upskill staff.
• Library role as a source of resources for literacy providers to explore.
Background Information

Following a series of meetings in early 2004 with groups in Wanganui as part of the Massey research team’s orientation to the community, the need for a more thorough understanding of providers of adult literacy courses was identified. Discussion clearly indicated that information about providers, the services offered and the challenges they faced could be used by the community with immediate benefit for both providers and clients of literacy services (Caseley, 2004).

The Wanganui District Library (WDL) and the Department of Communication and Journalism, Massey University, (MU) worked together to derive a two-stage survey from which the first phase would allow for more understanding of what services were available in terms of adult literacy provision in Wanganui and Districts.

In August 2004, the first phase of the adult literacy providers survey began. The two objectives of the first phase of this survey were:

1. To produce a snapshot of adult literacy services currently available in Wanganui.

2. To provide a description of the features that impact on the effectiveness of current provision of services for adult literacy in Wanganui.

Contribution to Larger Project

This survey will contribute to the full research project by:

- Gathering data on the perceptions of providers on adult literacy needs in Wanganui and Districts
- Clarifying barriers to the provision of adult literacy services
- Providing a base for future comparisons between provision of adult literacy services in Wanganui and other centres in NZ.
- Providing information that can be used to target further studies of direct relevance to the Wanganui community.
Methodology

Development of Interview Questions

Initial interview question topics were developed by Allyson Caseley as part of the research proposal completed at MU. Questions were then reviewed by Bob Dempsey (WDL) and passed on for review to the library interviewers. The WDL and MU team met several times to refine the questions further.

Piloting of the Questions

The questions were then tested by the interviewers with the assistance of an adult literacy provider in the Wanganui and Districts community to remove ambiguity. This process led to further refinement of the questions and a final process to correct formatting and the sequence of questions. Discussions were held between the WDL interviewers and MU to ensure that any possible provider queries during survey would be answered in a standard way.

Sample selection

The initial list of providers were selected from a list held by the Adult Community Education Network (Wanganui), with additional information on other operating providers being ascertained as new research partners joined the project. Thirteen providers of literacy training for adults in Wanganui were approached to determine if they wished to participate in the survey. Twelve of the thirteen agreed to take part. Every effort was made to include every adult literacy provider in the region that fit the definition of “providing adult literacy training services as a programme or part of a programme (including those that contract in such services, but not referral agencies)”. The sample used for the current survey is believed to represent at least 90% of the known literacy providers in Wanganui.

Data Collection

Individual interviews with staff from 12 Wanganui literacy providers were completed by Gillian Tasker and Denise Tinnion of the Wanganui District Library, following a standardized format (see Appendix 1). Information packs, consent forms and sheets for pre-recording some of the required data were sent to providers before the interview date. Interviews lasted approximately one hour, and took place between August 11 and September 1, 2004. Written responses were entered into a database with answers categorized according to their relevant themes by MU. Analysis of this data was carried out by Niki Culligan (MU) and Deborah Neilson (WDL).
Interviewers also completed feedback sheets on their perceptions of the interviews. This feedback showed that for 5 of the 12 interviews, some factors were present which may have influenced responses given, for example, interruptions or more than one person providing information. Seven of the interviewees encountered one or more questions they were unable to answer, generally because the data required was not collected by the provider. In a number of cases, information additional to the survey questions was also provided. These, and any additional topics identified by the interviewers, will be discussed for inclusion in the second phase of interviews.

**Survey results and discussion**

**Client demographics**

Table 1 indicates the demographics of clientele of each of the participating providers. Those figures in bold under the Age Groups indicate the age grouping where the highest number of clients sits. It is also important to note that there were some variations between providers in terminology used about employment status. This table demonstrates that it is difficult to describe a ‘typical’ adult literacy client in Wanganui.

Table 1: Demographics of Clientele by Provider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider #</th>
<th>M: F ratio (%)</th>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>85:15</td>
<td>15% 16-19; 30% 20-29; 25% 30-39; 20% 40-49; 10% 50-59</td>
<td>98% not in workforce; 2% full-time employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50:50</td>
<td>25% 16-19; 35% 20-29</td>
<td>100% unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>53:47</td>
<td>7% under 16; 44% 16-19; 25% 20-29; 10% 30-39; 10% 40-49; 5% 50-59</td>
<td>70% unemployed; 10% ‘other’ employment; 20% unpaid employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30:60</td>
<td>11% 16-19; 44% 20-29; 33% 30-39; 11% 40-49</td>
<td>100% unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>59:41</td>
<td>5% under 16; 30% 16-19; 38% 20-29; 10% 30-39; 10% 40-49; 5% 50-59; 2% 60-69</td>
<td>70% unemployed; 4% part-time; 7% ‘other’ employment; 12% not known; 7% full-time employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10:90</td>
<td>15% 20-29; 30% 30-39; 35% 40-49; 15% 50-59; 5% 60-69</td>
<td>50% homemakers; 11% unemployed; 8% part-time employment; 6% not known; 25% full-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>70:30</td>
<td>8% under 16; 64% 16 – 19; 16% 20-29; 4% 30-39; 2% 40-49; 2% 50-59</td>
<td>50% part-time employment; 50% unpaid employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>40:60</td>
<td>90% 16 – 19; 10% 40-49</td>
<td>100% unpaid employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>25:75</td>
<td>60% 16 – 19; 12% 20-29; 12% 30-39; 12% 40-49</td>
<td>70% unpaid employment, 30% Domestic Purposes Benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5:95</td>
<td>12% under 16; 65% 16 – 19; 3% 20-29; 10% 30-39; 5% 40-49; 5% 50-59</td>
<td>75% unemployed; 25% part-time employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10:90</td>
<td>12% 16-19; 76% 20 – 29; 12% 30-39</td>
<td>80% part-time; 20% unpaid employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>60:40</td>
<td>40% 16 –19; 20% 20-29; 20% 30-39; 20% 40-49</td>
<td>60% unemployed; 20% part-time employment; 20% full-time employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment Status**

Figure 1 below showed that a large number of participants in adult literacy programmes were unemployed (40.5%) or taking part in some form of unpaid work (26.7%). 20.1% of the participants in literacy programmes were in work, with 15.6% being in part-time work. 4.5% were estimated to be in full-time work.

![Figure 1. Estimated employment status of clientele averaged across all participating providers.](image)
Literature and government policy refers to findings of a strong link between literacy level and subsequent employment. Recent policy in New Zealand regarding adult literacy has largely been based on the findings of the International Adult Literacy Survey carried out in NZ in 1996. The aim of the IALS was to ascertain literacy proficiency levels for 22 participating countries. To do this, the IALS assessed respondents on three types of literacy: prose, document, and quantitative and graded literacy proficiency along five levels. A score of two or below indicated a low literacy level, and a score of three or above indicated ‘functional literacy’ – that is, the literacy skills necessary to function within today’s economic market. The IALS found a relationship between literacy level and employment status.

NZ performed relatively well on the IALS, with overall scores on all three literacy scales slightly above average in comparison to the other countries2. However, NZ had nearly 50% of its population at literacy Levels 1 and 2 (OECD, 2000).

One example of the IALSs effect on policy can be seen in the Adult Literacy Strategy – More than Words (Ministry of Education, 2001). The findings resulted in policy targeted specifically at addressing the literacy needs identified by the IALS, of which the Adult Literacy Strategy is one such document. This document reflects the link between literacy and employment with its three key elements being:

- Developing capability to ensure adult literacy providers deliver quality learning through a highly skilled workforce with quality teaching resources
- Improving quality systems to ensure that NZ programmes are world class
- Increasing opportunities for adult literacy learning by significantly increasing provision in workplaces, communities and tertiary institutions.
  (Ministry of Education, 2001, p3)

Findings within phase one of the provider survey suggest support for the argument that literacy level and employment status are linked, given that the majority of clientele across the providers are not in work. However, it is important to note that the IALS only notes a relationship between literacy and employment status. It did not investigate whether there was a causal link and indeed, the data could be interpreted to show that the link is not linear, for example, there is a proportion of people with very low levels of literacy (as defined by the IALS) who are in white-collar type jobs as well as those with high levels of literacy who are unemployed. It is also relevant that there have been criticisms of the IALS approach, particularly the way in which the IALS measured and defined literacy (see Hamilton & Barton, 2000, for a discussion). Other criticisms of the strength of the link between literacy and employment are discussed in an article by Black (n.d.).

Age Groups

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As noted below in Figure 2, a high proportion of participants in Wanganui and Districts adult literacy programmes were in the age group 16-19 (accounting for approximately 38% of clients). From this point there was a tailing off of participation. Of all age groups, 70 plus was not represented at all, while 60 – 69 only accounted for an average of 1% of clients.

These results may reflect one or more of the following:
- less need in the older age groups progressively for literacy skill training
- less participation progressively by older age groups in such programmes
- less knowledge of the services on offer in terms of adult literacy in the older than 19 age groups progressively

The under 16 age group was very low (3%), which possibly reflected the concern of some providers that while this age group has a need for literacy services, funding is not available in these particular programmes overall to fill this need. It is possible that a lack of funding combined with other unknown factors creates a backlog that accounts for the large proportion of adult literacy clients being in the 16 – 19 year old age group.

Figure 2: Age groups of clientele across all participating providers.

**Gender**

The ratio of males to females varied widely among providers, for example, one provider reported 85% male:15% female, and one reported 95 % female:5% male. When calculated as an average, the ratio of female clients was larger (58:42).

*English as a Second Language (ESL)*
When averaged across all 12 providers, clients with English as a Second Language accounted for 15.29% of the total client base.

**Provider characteristics**

**Accreditation**

All providers interviewed had NZQA accreditation or had approval of it pending.

**Length of time providers have been in operation**

There was wide variety in the length of time providers had been operating in Wanganui and Districts, ranging from 0 months (commencing formal literacy contract in 2005) to twenty years. The average length of time in operation was approximately 8.3 years.

**Client Numbers**

There was a wide range in the number of current registered clients across providers, ranging from 5 to 500. This variation is illustrated in Figure 3.

![Figure 3. Number of regular clients currently registered by provider.](image_url)

Figure 4 illustrates the number of regular and new clients that were seen across all the providers every week and every month. Note that these results included individual sessions and group sessions, which reflected the variation in operation across providers.
The number of regular clients seen per week was generally the same as the number of clients seen per month, possibly indicating that most clients were seen weekly. This is to be investigated further. The average number of clients seen per provider varied widely, from 5 seen per week/month to 500. The average number of new clients seen per week/month also varies quite widely across providers, from no new clients, to 30.

Only 4 providers reported seeing any casual clients (i.e. unregistered), in numbers ranging from 2 to 12 per month.

Referral Sources

Initial identification of client need

Note that ‘initial identification of need’ refers to a different concept than ‘referral’, which is discussed on the following page. It is most useful to consider these two issues together.

Four providers reported that, in all cases, client literacy needs had initially been identified by other agencies. For another provider, this had occurred in 95% of cases. Answers to this question were not given for 5 other providers.

Only one provider reported that needs had been identified by a range of sources, including 20% agency, 40% other, 20% family and 15% self.

With regard to referral, Figure 5 indicates that the majority of clients were either WINZ referred or self-referred. The high number of WINZ referrals is interesting as it is noted later in this report that they are not the main funder for most providers.
It is of note that 'self-referral' accounted for just over 25% of clients. Self-referral can occur for various reasons other than self-identified literacy need, for example, a client may refer him/herself to a provider for a carpentry course and while there he or she undertakes literacy training. It is important to note that while self-referral may have occurred, this does not necessarily mean that the person themselves has been the one who initially identified the need, or in fact that a literacy need has even been identified as in the previous example.

Communities that providers work within

Nearly 60% of the providers surveyed provided services specific to certain groups within the population, for example, the Maori population, Work and Income clients, and the unemployed.
These results show that there is variation in the Wanganui and Districts providers regarding the parts of the community that each provider services. No one provider appeared to have the exact same group of clientele as any other. This variation could arise from the need to cover as broad a cross-section of potential learners as possible. In a personal communication with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), it was stated that within the targeted funding programmes such as Youth Training and Training Opportunities, TEC endeavour to maintain a range of programmes by industry/vocational type across the geographic spread of the area. Within a small budget however, this spread is sometimes difficult to attain and so duplication in terms of delivery style or target group of programmes is not usually ideal. However, programmes have to meet the needs of the learner group, and TEC states that if the need is obvious, duplication of programmes/target groups could be considered.

Within this personal communication, TEC went on to state that:

“[t]he Tertiary Education Strategy has an emphasis on building collaboration and rationalisation. The approach is to encourage providers to move towards complementary training without the need for TEC to impose solutions to potential duplication...The Tertiary Education Strategy has the development of Foundation skills as a major priority, so...we would endeavour to increase literacy provision rather than reduce it.”.

Advertising Methods

The majority of providers reported using advertisements to let people know about their services. Over 50% also passed on information through outside agencies. Figure 7 below outlines the various advertising methods.

Other methods included:

- Cold calling
- Visiting workplaces
- Providing Information
- Engagement in community activities
- Networking
- Presentations to providers
- Attending hui
Figure 7. Advertising methods used across all providers.

N.B. Note that providers could choose more than one of these options.

**Programme Characteristics**

*Locations where clients were seen*

As Figure 8 shows, clients were most frequently seen on the premises of literacy programmes (10 providers). A number of providers also saw people in community settings (6 providers), or in the client’s home (5 providers).
Figure 8. Venue within which clients were seen across all providers.

N.B. Note that providers could choose more than one of these options.

Average length of client stay

The most commonly reported stay for clients was 1-2 years (6 providers), with 6 – 12 months being the second most common (5 providers). The minimum stay mentioned was for clients staying for 1 – 5 weeks (one provider). The maximum stay was 2 or more years (1 provider). Note that some providers gave more than one response.

Length of time elapsed before clients no longer considered active

There was a wide range between what different providers accepted in terms of continuity from their clients. This ranged from 5+ days to 6+ months, dependent on the provider.
Types of Skills Taught

42% of providers reported that they teach predominantly work-related skills, while 25% reported teaching predominantly general literacy skills. 25% of providers teach both. These results are illustrated in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9. Type of skills taught averaged across all participating providers.
Applicability of skills taught to general life or specific course

As in Figure 10, 33% of providers reported that the skills they taught were applicable overall to general life skills, while 25% reported that skills taught were applicable mainly to their course. 42% noted that the spread was about even.

Figure 10. Assessment of providers as to applicability of skills taught to general life versus the specific course.
Methods of teaching: Stand-alone or integrated

Most providers preferred the integrated approach of teaching literacy skills (defined as reading, writing, numeracy and problem solving skills). All four of these skills were taught (using an integrated approach) in almost equal proportions across all the providers surveyed. Figure 11 illustrates this and provides figures of the stand-alone and integrated courses across all providers for these four skills.

![Figure 11. Proportions of stand-alone and integrated reading, writing, numeracy, and problem-solving courses across all providers surveyed.](image)

N.B. A few inconsistencies within providers’ answers were found upon analysis, which will be explored when in-depth interviews are conducted. However, the data did reveal the following trend.

This section on programme characteristics highlighted some differences in operational methods between the providers and indicated that there may sometimes be difficulties in sharing resources and information when clientele and aspects of approaches are so diverse.
Addressing Client Literacy needs

Frequently Reported Client Needs

It was found that overall ‘maths’ was the most frequently reported need, with 11 of 12 providers reporting this. Reading, spelling, and writing were all reported by 9 providers. ‘Other’ needs included the ‘whole communication field, including verbal skills,’ ‘speaking, listening’, having an ‘attitude of self as dumb’, and a ‘lack of self-confidence’. Figure 12 illustrates the most frequently identified literacy needs of clients averaged across all providers.

Figure 12. Literacy needs of clientele as identified by providers.
NB Providers were able to give more than one response to this question.
Assessment methods

This question focussed on assessing client needs at the beginning of their work with the provider rather than during the course or at the end.

Figure 13 shows that the most common assessment method was by agency-developed test, followed by client description of his or her own skills. No providers reported the use of formal assessment tools in terms of nation-wide standardised assessments.

![Figure 13. Methods of assessing literacy need upon entry to programme across all the providers.](chart.png)
Methods of Identifying Client Progress

This question focussed on assessing client needs either during or at the end of their work with the provider. Figure 14 shows that the most commonly used method of identifying client progress was ‘informal observation’ (reported by 10 providers). ‘Formal test’, ‘skill sample’ and ‘tutor mark’ were all used by 8 providers each.

Figure 14. Methods of assessing client progress across all providers.
Types of progress reports given

Figure 15 shows the type of progress reports that are given by the providers surveyed to their clients. A ‘formal written progress report’ was the most popular type given, followed by ‘formal verbal progress report’. One provider indicated that they do not give progress reports.

![Bar chart showing the number of providers using different types of progress reports](chart.png)

Figure 15. Type of progress reports given to clients across all providers.

Client Motivation

As illustrated in Figure 16, ‘training for a job’ was seen as an important motivator of clients who wanted to improve their literacy skills (chosen by 40% of providers).

Assuming that participants are coming to the courses because they view literacy skills as important to obtaining a job allows us to compare these results with those of a community phone survey carried out in early 2004 as a part of the Literacy and Employment Project. The community phone survey results indicated that the wider community did not automatically think of literacy skills as necessary for employment. This perception may reflect different definitions of literacy for different people, i.e. ‘reading and writing’ compared with a wider definition of ‘communication’.
Figure 16. Providers perceptions of motivators for client improvement of literacy skills.

N.B. Providers could select more than one option.

‘Tutor help/expertise’ was also viewed as an important motivator of clients. There is a difference here between motivators that encouraged the person to enrol or lead to the person enrolling, and motivators that influence learning once in the course.

50% of providers selected ‘other’ motivators that act on clients to improve their literacy skills. These included achieving in the course, a need such as gaining a licence, frustration with not coping, the need to improve educational qualifications, a need to communicate and to be understood, to gain confidence, to gain self-empowerment and on the advice of case managers.

Completion of courses

Eight of the twelve providers reported completion rates of over 80%.

Non-completion of courses

Figure 17 indicates the importance of personal issues that impact on the participant’s completion or non-completion of the course. It also shows that once a goal is reached, for example to ‘get a job’, the course was no longer required by some clients (just over 30% of those who did not complete).
‘Other’ reasons for non-completion included:
- Clients leave when feel they’ve had enough or reached their learning goals (courses are on-going)
- Non-compliance with attendance criteria
- Not the career path they want
- Self-confidence issues
- Release from prison
- Imprisonment

Course evaluation

All providers indicated that they used some type of course evaluation. While 4 of the providers completed either written or verbal evaluations with their clients, the majority (7 providers) completed both.

Referral to other providers

Eleven of the twelve providers interviewed reported that they have referred clients to other providers during the last year. Of these, 4 providers had referred less than 9% of their clients. Only two providers had referred 40% or more of their clients.

Over 40% of providers referred on because the other agency provided an accredited course they did not offer. Similarly the perception that the client would benefit more from the other provider was chosen as a reason for referral by over 30% of providers.
'Other' reasons for referring on included:

- Part of contract with TEC

**Future Plans**

Many providers indicated that a high percentage of clients went on to further study (on average 59.75% of clients). This requires further investigation.

**Funding and resourcing issues**

**Funding Sources**

An average of 70.9% of students (across all providers) had been funded by external agencies during the last year. Figure 18 shows the main external funding agencies for the twelve providers surveyed.

![Figure 18. Average amount of funding by external funding agency across all the providers surveyed.](image)

TEC provided the highest amount of funding across providers (see Figure 19 for further details on how much of each provider’s activities are funded by TEC).
WINZ and client funding accounted for less than 10% of overall funding to providers each. This funding profile was different from what would have been expected given the information about referral sources provided on page 12 (i.e. the high number of self-referrals and referrals from WINZ).

Figure 19. Proportion of TEC funding by provider.

All except two providers were funded to some degree by TEC.

Other sources of funding included:
- Department of Corrections
- Employers
- Workbase

Frequency clients are actually seen and frequency they are funded for

Figure 20 shows that 67% of providers felt they saw their clients as frequently as necessary, while 25% noted that they did not. 8% reported that the relationship between the frequency of
seeing clients and frequency of funding per client was not clear and depended upon other variables. Some further variables need to be investigated to gain a better understanding of provider views on this.

Figure 20. Overall perception of providers as to appropriateness of frequency of client contact.

N.B. Answers to the following questions were extrapolated for each provider from answers to related survey questions, and then summarized to provide an overall picture.

Figure 21 shows the percentage of providers (averaged across all twelve) that felt the allocated funding per client was sufficient or not sufficient. As can be seen in this figure, 27% of providers stated that their funding was sufficient to cover the amount of time clients should be seen. 27% reported that their funding was not. 46% noted they were not funded ‘per client’, but in a different way, for example through TEC, fee-paying clients, prison programmes, or by funders who did not specify time frames per client. These methods of funding will need to be investigated further to make this issue clearer.
Figure 21. Average percentages of providers that perceived the funding per client was sufficient or not sufficient for the provision of their services.

Recommended changes to funding

Figure 22 outlines some of the main changes providers would like to see to funding of literacy programmes in Wanganui and Districts. These recommended changes largely related to better resources, programmes, and opportunities for staff development. There were a great variety of responses to this question, which not only outlined the expanse of the problem, but also highlighted the wide range of needs of the providers in terms of funding.

This variety in responses also made for a large ‘other’ category, within which the responses included:

- Full funding
- Funding contracts to be more transparent and for longer than one year
- Funds to recognise the complexity of the work
- Social issues requirements i.e. funding for a full time counsellor to work alongside the practitioners with the participants
- Funding that recognises community and vocational needs
- Funding for advertising the programmes offered and open days for clients to see what providers are like.
- Funding needs to be in specific areas such as qualified tutors (provision and training)
- Utilising the current funding better
- More start-up funding
- An increase in the funding for TEC required components
- More workplace provision for workplace placements
- Need an accurate measure of what a quality provider is
- Equality of funding based on experience of providers

Figure 22. Recommended changes to funding across all participating providers.

Sharing resources or expertise with other providers

All of the providers reported sharing resources or expertise with other providers.

Providers mostly shared information with one another, followed by ‘books/library’ and ‘staff/trainers/tutors’. The sharing of ‘staff/trainers/tutors’ is interesting given the competitive nature of the industry, but could also reflect a shortage in appropriately qualified and/or experienced staff.

‘Other’ resources shared included:
- Workshops
- Unit standards
- Resources
- Access points
- Infrastructure (administration)
Information, resources, or support required for the continued success of adult literacy services

As can be seen in Figure 23, the majority of responses fell into the ‘other’ category for this question, reflecting the variety of responses and needs of the providers surveyed. Physical resources such as more staff/books etc were mentioned by a couple of providers, as was increased liaison between provider agencies. Schools playing a bigger part in ensuring literacy skills were taught was also seen as important, as were support from other community agencies in working with clientele.

![Figure 23. Information, resources and support identified by the providers as needed for the continued success of their services.](image)

The ‘other’ responses included:

- An adult literacy qualification to be completed by NZQA which includes knowledge of special needs/learning difficulties
- TEC to provide adequate funds and a pay scale for tutors
- Continuity of support instead of having to go out and seek funding
- More research and realism about literacy – what are the real needs, numbers etc
- Professional body for literacy practitioners independent of politics
- Ability to undertake research outside of practice
- Funding that recognises the nature and potential of the service
- Quality providers need to be given recognition
- Relevant meetings between literacy providers
- Resources to identify literacy needs and the information to address them
• To be able to spend more time with trainees on literacy

Staffing Issues

Figure 24 illustrates the average number of employees across the provider agencies by the average number of literacy tutors. It shows that overall literacy tutors within the provider agencies, make up less than half of the full number of employees. However, it should be noted that it is unknown whether the employee and literacy tutor total includes volunteer staff for all the providers.

![Bar chart](image)

Figure 24. Average number of employees vs. number of literacy tutors.

For three providers, the number of employees was about equal to the number of literacy tutors, indicating that literacy was their main focus. For eight of the other providers, the number of employees was substantially higher than the number of literacy tutors, indicating that the organisation also focussed on other types of training. One provider did not indicate how many employees they had.

Loss of staff

66.7% of providers reported that staff left their organisation during the last 6 months.

The main reason for staff leaving was ‘job elsewhere’.

‘Other’ reasons for staff loss included:

• WINZ pulled funding for the position and
• Death

Staffing additions
91.7% of providers reported that staff joined their organisation during the past 6 months. The main reason given was ‘increased job opportunities’ (accounting for 50% of providers), which may have reflected an increased work demand over this period.

‘Interest in the field’ was considered to be more of a personal reason, (accounting for 8.3% of new staff joining across the providers), whereas ‘increased job opportunities’ was considered an organisational focus.

28.6% of providers reported ‘other’ reasons for the addition of staff. These included:
- Replacement for staff who had left and
- To fit in position specifically funded by WINZ

66.7% of providers had staff leave their organisation in the last 6 months and 91.7% had staff join their organisation in the last 6 months. This implies that, at least for the last six months covered by this survey, the provider agencies were growing in terms of staff. However, this does not necessarily mean there were more resources available overall, for example, a full time staff member may have left to be replaced by two or more casual part-time staff.

**Challenges faced by Providers**

As can be seen in Figure 25, a lack of funding in general was seen as a challenge by nearly 60% of providers. With consideration to the discussion of ‘funding changes required’ (as above), it is suggested that this ‘challenge’ refers more to lack of funding for such issues as training and resources, than for client recruitment.

Challenges noted in the ‘other’ category included:

- Addressing multicultural needs
- Keeping up to date in a competitive environment
- Changing nature of literacy (technology)
- Assessment and determining the level of literacy assistance needed for clients. A need for a national assessment of literacy that every provider uses was noted.
- WINZ needs to follow up on recommendations
- Awareness of community needs; measures (to) counteract the needs
- Providing help for those in the greater community with undiagnosed literacy needs
- The huge percentage of people needing help
- No leadership
- Lack of knowledge of quality resources and processes for literacy provision
- Nutrition (inadequate food)
Figure 25. Challenges to provision of literacy services as identified by providers.

Significant changes required to improve adult literacy levels in the Wanganui and Districts community

Here, as illustrated in Figure 26, each provider chose the one change they felt would be the most significant change that could occur to improve adult literacy levels in Wanganui and Districts. Two providers noted that more involvement and acknowledgement from the community would result in a significant change for them. Two other providers felt that schools needed to play a bigger part in promoting literacy. Finally, another two providers felt that an increase in funding or an increase in resources available for providers would allow for a significant improvement in adult literacy levels in the region.

‘Other’ significant changes proposed included:

- A holistic approach to identifying the need: the key providers and the funders to put it in place
- Having more time with the trainees, spending longer on literacy
- Acceptance of self in the trainee and the ability to improve
- Promotion of help available to prospective trainees
- Skills of the tutor/facilitator to switch students on to learning
There were some interesting comparisons to be made between the provider viewpoint and that of the general community in the community phone survey. As mentioned above, this phone survey showed that, in general, the community does not necessarily believe literacy (defined as reading, writing, and numeracy skills) to be a main skill required for employment. This lack of public acknowledgment fits with the viewpoint of two of the providers surveyed, who stated that they did not see enough community support for adult literacy services.

Another point of comparison from this analysis was that two providers in the current survey stated that schools need to play a bigger part in promoting literacy, whereas the community members surveyed by telephone stated that, on average, the schools were doing a very good job in teaching reading, writing, and numeracy skills.

**General Comments**

Providers made many valuable additional comments at the end of this survey. These are summarized under the following themes:

- Diversity across literacy organizations and approaches
- The quality of service provision: monitoring is necessary to ensure standards are met
• Literacy in Wanganui is worse than imagined. Maths skills have been identified as poorer than English skills

• Government funders need to recognize that many literacy students require further training rather than moving straight into employment as an outcome of their course

• Challenges for small providers: There are many tasks to deal with

• Large variety of learning difficulties to be recognized and catered for

• Deepening of professional capacity is required: The theory used needs to be as solid as possible around current practice

• Unit standards are empowering employers to upskill staff

• The role of the Wanganui District Library as a source of resources for literacy providers to explore
References


Appendices
Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Stage 1 - Survey of Literacy Providers in the Wanganui District

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. We are aiming to get information on the types of literacy programmes currently available in Wanganui, the number of clients, the funding channels available to organizations, staffing issues, and any general comments about the challenges literacy providers face.

Questions in the survey are clustered around a particular focus, the first of which is simply information about your organization.

Name of organization: __________________________________________

Name/position of person answering survey: _________________________

Address:_________________________________________________________

Contact details: Phone ___________ email _________________________

Total number of employees in this organization:_______________________

Number of literacy tutors in this organization:________________________

NZQA Accreditation: Yes No Some N/A If N/A, please outline why:_________________________________________________________

Questions in this next section of the survey focus on the courses your organization offers and the clients who currently access this service.

1. Do you see yourselves as teaching predominantly work-related skills or general literacy skills?__________________________________________

2. In how many courses do you teach these skills as stand alone?
   _____ Reading
   _____ Writing
3. In how many courses do you teach these skills as an integrated component?
   ___ Reading
   ___ Writing
   ___ Number skills
   ___ Problem solving
   ___ Do not teach any of the above as an integrated component

4. If these skills are integrated within a course, do you teach reading, writing number skills and
   problem solving as being most applicable to the course itself or to general life skills?
   Most applicable to the course
   About even
   More applicable to general life skills

5. How many clients were seen by your organization in the:
   ___ last week?
   ___ last month?

6. How many new clients were seen by your organization in the:
   ___ last week?
   ___ last month?

7. On average how many regular clients, are presently registered with your organization?____

8. On average, how many clients made use of your service on a casual basis over the last
   month?____

9. Please, estimate the percentage of clients who are:
   Male: ____________
   Female: ____________

10. How many clients currently registered with your organization have English as a second lan-
    guage?____

11. Over what range of time do clients generally stay with this service?
One session
One week
Less than a month
One - two months
Two - three months
Three months – six months
Six months – one year
One year – two years
Two years or more

12. On average, how frequently are clients seen? __________

12a. On average, how many sessions would ideally be allocated per client?

12b. On average, how many sessions are allocated by funders per client?

13. In what locations do you see clients?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

14. What are the most frequently seen literacy needs of clients?
   Reading
   Spelling
   Writing
   Maths

15. Please estimate, in percentage, who has identified the literacy needs of clients prior to them contacting this organization.
   ___% self identified
   ___% identified by family
   ___% identified by agency
   ___% identified by employer
   ___% identified by other. Please specify: ______________

16. How do you assess client literacy needs?
   Formal test – developed for national use
   Formal test - developed specifically for this organization
   Sample of skills
17. What do you use to identify client progress?
   - Formal test
   - Sample of skills
   - Assessment of work (through tutor marking)
   - Informal observations
   - Client reports/interview
   - Other

18. Do you give progress reports to your clients?
   - Yes, go to 18a
   - No, go to 19

18a. If yes, what kind of progress report do you give your clients?

_______________________________________________________________________

19. Please estimate the percentage of clients who are:
   - ____ in unpaid employment?
   - ____ full-time employment (30 hours or more per week)?
   - ____ part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week)?
   - ____ currently unemployed?
   - ____ or you don’t know their employment status?
   - ____ other, please specify: ____________________

20. Please estimate the percentage of clients who want to continue with further study?

21. Please estimate the percentage of clients whose further education plans you do not know?

22. Please estimate the percentage of your current clients who are in the following age groups?
   - ____ Under 16
   - ____ 16-19
   - ____ 20-29
   - ____ 30-39
   - ____ 40-49
23. What do you think motivates clients to improve their basic literacy skills?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

24. What are the main reasons clients don’t complete a course?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

25. Can you estimate the percentage of clients who do complete a course?_______

26. What type of course evaluation do you ask your clients to complete?

   Written evaluation
   Verbal evaluation
   Both
   None
   Other___________________________________________________________

27. How long are clients not seen before they are no longer considered clients?_____

Thank you. We're now moving on to questions about staffing and the role of your organization in the community.

28. How long has your organization been a provider of adult literacy in the Wanganui District?___________________________________________________________

29. Have you had any staff leave your organization in the last 6 months?

   Yes    go to 29a    No     go to 30

29a. If yes, what is the main reason for them leaving?_______________________________

30. Have you had any staff join the organization in the last six months?
30a. What is the main reason for them joining?
_____________________________________________________________________________

31. How do you let the community know about the services you provide?
_____________________________________________________________________________

Definition of community from the provider's viewpoint:_____________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

32. Please estimate the percentage of clients over the last six months who have been referred from the following sources?

___ Courts
___ WINZ
___ Probation
___ employers
___ school
___ self
___ family
___ church
___ other

33. Do you refer clients to other training/educational providers?

Yes  go to 33a  No  go to 34

33a. Have you done so in the last year?

Yes  go to 33b  No  go to 34

33b. What percentage of clients have you referred in the last year?
Less than 10%
10-19%
20-29%
30-39%
40-49%
50-59%
60-69%
70-79%
80-89%
90%+

For what reasons have you referred clients to other providers?__________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

34. Do you share resources or expertise with other providers?
   Yes     go to 34a     No     go to 35

34a. What sort of resources or expertise do you share?__________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

35. Who are other providers of literacy support and programmes currently providing a service in the Wanganui region?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

The next two questions are seeking information on funding.

36. What percentage of your activities are funded by the following sources?
   ____TEC
   ____WINZ
   ____client funded
   ____other

36a. Please estimate what percentage of students have been funded by external agencies in the last year?__________________________________

37. What are three changes you would recommend to the funding of adult literacy programmes in the Wanganui region?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Finally, in these last four questions we would like to focus on more general issues in providing literacy in the Wanganui region.
38. What are the 3 major challenges you think literacy providers face in the Wanganui area?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

39. What is the most significant change that you believe could improve adult literacy levels in the Wanganui community?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

40. What information, resources, or support would be most helpful for the continued success of your service?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

41. Any other comments?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

42. Would you be willing to participate in a more in-depth interview at a later date?

Yes  No

*Thank you for your time in completing this survey.*
Appendix 2: Areas for further examination

Client demographics

- Client ethnicity
- Employment status: investigate category of ‘student’.
- Reasons for wide male/female ratio variations across providers.
- Explore issues raised by providers not being funded for under 16’s.

Provider characteristics

- Additional detail about the number of regular and new clients seen per week and per month.
- Further exploration of how providers access clients from specific communities.
- More detailed examination of initial identification of client need.
- Background to courses offered/to be offered. How and why courses were set up and difficulties encountered.
- Personal ties between organizations which could be used to strengthen links and improve service provision.

Programme characteristics

- Examine links between average length of client stay and average length of programme etc, and between what people want to get out of their course. Investigate providers’ perceptions of this
- How courses interconnect with those offered by other providers

Addressing client literacy needs

- Further investigation of the main referral sources
- Identification of any formal tools meeting the needs of the NZ literacy community, e.g. standardized assessments
- How methods for assessing progress are chosen
- Definition of completion/non-completion of course
- Reasons for reported high course completion rates in Wanganui
- Explore types of personal issues that lead to clients leaving courses
- The value of client evaluations? Are these a funding requirement?
- Further study/plans for Education. Where do providers expect clients to go or do next? What is known about overall client life plans? This exploration could be linked with reasons why clients leave literacy programmes
**Funding and resourcing**

- Explore in more detail whether or not allocated funding was sufficient to meet client needs
- Obtain more information about how funding is allocated, i.e. per group, per client, or another way.

**Staffing**

- Investigate implications of the above staffing losses and gains. Is the pattern seen here implying growth in resources/opportunities or are there more staff but working in a fragmented way?
- Data about staffing ratios to be obtained in terms of Full-Time Equivalents, or training hours, rather than numbers of employees/tutors.