

Tui Tuia

Newsletter of Literacy Aotearoa

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Kia ora koutou e ngā tauira, ngā pouako, ngā kaiarahi katoa, tēnā koutou katoa. Greetings to you all.

Adult Learners' Week - He Tangata Mātauranga has just taken place, providing opportunity to celebrate the achievements of learners, educators and providers. In this issue we celebrate the achievements of adult learners and tutors at KiwiRail and the 'Excellent' rating given to one of our Poupou by NZQA - congratulations to the Whanganui Learning Centre Trust. Another Poupou shares their journey toward providing online access to resources and data for their personnel on and off site.



KiwiRail Core Connexions Programme – Workplace Literacy on Land and Sea

KiwiRail is a large and complex organisation with over 4000 staff working throughout New Zealand. In 2010, Literacy Aotearoa was contracted to deliver the Core Connexions Workplace Literacy Programme to 100 KiwiRail workers in Wellington and Auckland. The programme provides support to learners in written and spoken communication and will continue into 2012.

Learners who have signed up come from a range of KiwiRail's business units including Mechanical, Passenger, Freight, Corporate and Interislander. Their occupations include engineers, coachbuilders, welders, metal workers, seafarers, electrical engineers and industrial painters. Learning sessions take place in the workplace during work time in a variety of locations. The nature of the industry means that workers' shifts can change at short notice. Weather also has an impact particularly for those working on the Cook Strait. These challenges are dealt with by the tutors through good communication and by focussing on the goals set by learners.

Marian Petrie and Helen Slater of Literacy Aotearoa Wellington are tutors for the Core Connexions Programme in Wellington. Programme delivery has provided new experiences for the tutors, such as sailing on the Interislander in rough weather and tutoring on board in a disestablished bar at 2 o'clock in the morning.



"The KiwiRail guys have been great, they are all very keen. Many of the Unit Standards and qualifications these learners are working on involve very technical material. They have challenging jobs that are tough and physical. They are so confident and competent at their jobs – the tutor's role has been to bridge the gap between the 'on the job' demands and the theory," says Marian.

On dry land, Marian worked with the 'paint shop crew' in a small group to prepare them for the new blaster coating qualification. All learners passed the exam and felt they had done so due to the skills, knowledge and confidence gained from participating in the Core Connexions programme. They were recently awarded their certificates and are now all keen to go on to the next qualification.





Another worker, 'M', a father of two young boys, is dyslexic, and at age nearly 50 thought it was pointless trying to improve his skills. His supervisor strongly encouraged him to have a go, despite his misgivings, and thanks to his determination and commitment he has made great progress. The benefits for M include vastly increased confidence, noticed by family members and workmates, and more importantly for him, he is able to read stories to his children for the first time.

Janet Fournier and Joanne Ball, workplace tutors for Waitakere Adult Literacy, have been working with KiwiRail learners in Auckland. One of the learners studied Business in Thailand before coming to New Zealand ten years ago. When he came to New Zealand he knew quite a bit of English but he was unsure of his pronunciation and grammar.

He joined KiwiRail four and a half years ago as a Train Attendant on the Overlander, a tourist train, which travels from Britomart (Auckland) to National Park every day. In 2009, he was promoted to Train Manager. This role involved more face-to-face customer service and required him to read a commentary on the geographical and historical sights tourists might be interested in.

As an attendant he had avoided reading aloud the journey's commentary, for fear of pronouncing the English incorrectly. Once promoted, however, this task became an important part of his job. Unfortunately, due to his strong accent, it was difficult for the customers to understand him when he spoke. This concerned his supervisor and she encouraged him to participate in the Core Connexions workplace literacy programme being offered at work through Literacy Aotearoa.

In January 2011, he began tuition which focussed on improving pronunciation, pace, stress and the intonation needed when reading the commentary. Other areas of study included grammar and understanding Kiwi slang, idioms and expressions. As a result of 40 hours of tuition and the learner's enthusiasm and determination to succeed, he is now able to read the commentary more clearly and confidently.

Recently when his supervisor listened to his commentary she was impressed with how clearly he spoke. "Thank you so much for helping him. I am proud of how he has changed and I feel you should know how instrumental you have been in giving him the tools to achieve such good progress."

Customers are no longer complaining that they cannot understand him. His colleagues have all commented that they are now able to understand him better and that the whole team is able to communicate in a more relaxed manner.

He has been motivated by the learning he has done so far and wants to continue learning at the Waitakere Adult Literacy Office in New Lynn, under the 'targeted workplace' funding.





Whanganui Learning Centre

Tele: 06 348 45

'Where literacy is a basic right'

Learners, stakeholders, staff and governing committee of the Whanganui Learning Centre Trust (WLCT) have recently participated in an NZQA External Evaluation and Review. Te Pou pou Manager Gail Harrison says WLCT is committed to a cycle of continuous improvement through ongoing self-assessment and evaluation identifying how the agency can improve outcomes for learners, their whānau and the Whanganui Community as a whole.

The results of the audit have left many of those involved lost for words. WLCT have been given the highest possible judgments for each area of educational performance and capability in self-assessment. The review took place over two days with assessors using triangulation to gather evidence by looking at quantitative and qualitative data and speaking with those at all levels of the organisation including stakeholders and past students.

The questions that guided the review were:

1. How well do learners achieve?
2. What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?
3. How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?
4. How effective is the teaching?
5. How well are learners guided and supported?
6. How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The NZQA evaluators rated WLCT as 'excellent' in educational performance and capability in self assessment and evaluation for each of the six key questions. The evaluators commented in their report that:

- WLCT governance, management, and staff adhere to a shared philosophy and "strengths-based" model that focuses on what learners can do, rather than a deficit model that focuses on what they cannot do. Improving learner outcomes for the Whanganui community is the reason for the trust's existence.
- Learners achieve well beyond their expectations at WLCT because the organisation has created a genuine learning environment where learners feel safe and are treated with dignity, and where staff are discreet, passionate, and committed to "making a positive difference" for their learners.
- The greatest value for learners is the opportunity WLCT provides to make life changes that will enable them to learn and plan a career, often for the first time in their lives. This happens because WLCT believes in people's ability to transform their lives. The approach encourages self-awareness and self-reflection in an atmosphere of acceptance of all people, irrespective of their past lives.

The report stands Te Pou pou in good stead as a quality provider and will be used to support funding applications.

"The report is an attestation to the Literacy Aotearoa kaupapa. That's why I work within this organisation, it is strength-based and human rights based, focusing on a community development approach within which learners' needs and aspirations are paramount," says Gail.

To read the Audit Report go to: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ngfdocs/provider-reports/7956.pdf> and an article from Wanganui Midweek: <http://www.literacy.org.nz/news-releases.php>



From Jane Gilmour, Manager of Waitakere Adult Literacy inc. (WALI) adlit@xtra.co.nz

At WALI (Waitakere Adult Literacy inc) we found that our early 21st Century technology capability was restricting our ability to meet the demands of our busy tutors and the growing sophistication of our learners and their needs. Webinars, Youtube, Facebook, offsite provision, accessing web resources, are some examples. Shortage of space and computers is also an issue.



At the expert suggestion of our IT person, WALI decided to upgrade our digital environment by installing what is called a 'Terminal Server'.

(This definition on Wikipedia may not be terribly enlightening: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminal_server)

Essentially, it is a server located on the web, which enables anyone with authority to access it, to log in from anywhere internet is available. So each tutor or staff member can work on their own desktop from any computer in our building (hot desking), or from home, or on a laptop out of town. It gives access to all of our documents, templates, e-mails and settings. It also enables our IT man to diagnose and solve server problems remotely. Security of all our data and backups are obviously important features.

Because the access is online, only the server needs to have the latest Microsoft Office Suite installed, and tutors working remotely do not have to upgrade their computers. They can get the benefit of the latest software without the expense.

The hardware for the server is a reasonably high specification computer, at a cost of around \$1200. Add ons might be extra drives for data security and backups.

The software is all available from Techsoup. If you haven't discovered Techsoup yet, it is a social enterprise which is attached to the Office of the Community & Voluntary Sector. "TechSoup New Zealand provides donated and discounted technology products and services from companies such as Microsoft and Symantec to eligible New Zealand charitable organisations. As nonprofits you can access the latest technology via donations or generous discounts." <http://www.techsoup.net.nz/>

In \$\$ terms, we were able to buy more than \$30,000 worth of software for less than \$3000. That's for 45 users – every tutor and staff member and just one common username for students. I am happy to discuss details of the project to anyone who is interested, or your local computer person should be able to advise you.

**Adult Learners' Week –
He Tangata Mātauranga 2011**

31 Whiringa ā nuku (October) –
6 Whiringa ā rangi (November) 2011

<http://www.aceaotea.org.nz/event/s/adult-learners-week>



Literacy Aotearoa
Choice Change Freedom

**Elections
26/11/11**

Information about enrolling and voting is available at: www.elections.org.nz and details about the referendum can be found at www.referendum.org.nz

Back Suite, 449 Richmond Road, Grey Lynn, Private Bag 78800, Grey Lynn, Tamaki Makaurau / Auckland
Phone: 09 3782080 Fax: 09 3782083 Email: admin@literacy.org.nz www.literacy.org.nz

Phone: 09 307 0400 Fax: 09 307 0404 Email: admin@literacy.org.nz www.literacy.org.nz