



“You have changed my life!” Hairdressing and the Youth Guarantee Scheme

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About this publication

This publication describes three practices that have delivered high student success and retention outcomes in the *National Certificate in Salon Support (Hairdressing) (Level 3)*, offered by Tauranga PTE Hair to Train.

The Youth Guarantee scheme is a government initiative designed to meet the educational needs of a group of learners whose needs are not being met elsewhere. Our learners are 15- to 17-year-olds and many come from home environments in which education is not prized; some of our students are from fourth-generation beneficiary families.

Hair to Train recognised that it wouldn't be enough to simply deliver a programme in a traditional pedagogical format of formal classroom teaching. Accordingly, we have developed a threefold ethos of relationship building, cultural celebration (Māori students comprise 53 *per cent* of our roll), and embedded literacy and numeracy skill coaching.

This publication describes some of the strategies employed and outcomes achieved in the first two years of delivery.



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Introduction

The private training establishment (PTE) Hair to Train, also known as Tauranga Hair Design Academy, has been in operation in Tauranga since 1997 and has a good reputation in the industry. The two directors, manager and eight teaching staff all have extensive industry experience and qualifications in hairdressing, education and Māori language. The organisation has two sites: premises in Mount Maunganui where the Youth Guarantee programme is delivered to approximately 30 students a year, and a salon, classrooms and offices in Tauranga, which house the First (Level 3) and Second Year (Level 4) Certificate in Hairdressing students.

The Youth Guarantee scheme is a fully government-funded policy programme for improving educational opportunities and achievement for 16- and 17-year-olds not currently engaged in education. Objectives are: all learners achieve at least NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent tertiary qualification; overall achievement for Māori, Pasifika and learners with special education needs is improved; and the overall number of young people not in employment, education or training is reduced (TEC, 2013).

In 2011, Hair to Train became one of only four Youth Guarantee Hairdressing providers in New Zealand, offering the *National Certificate in Hairdressing (Salon Support) (Level 3)*. This is a 40-week programme, which is included in the local *Certificate in Elementary Hairdressing (Level 3)*. There are considerable challenges: many of our learners have come to us with poor schooling outcomes and experiences, with fewer than half having any NCEA qualifications; some have had a record of non-attendance and disengagement at school since the age of 11. Yet in our two years of running the programme we have enjoyed significant success – this publication details the practices that we believe can make learning ‘stick’ for this at-risk group, and the results, which testify to the fit.



Part 1: Three underpinning strategies for success

Hairdressing is a creative career, and we endeavour to match our delivery to the students’ interests and learning preferences across all modules within the programme. Above all, we try to ensure that our practice is as learner-centred as possible and differs from students’ previous, often negative, experience of schooling in the compulsory sector. A key difference here is our integration of personal development and the ‘citizenship’ skills necessary for engagement in society, with



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hairdressing content knowledge, and literacy and numeracy competence. The following sections discuss our threefold approach to introducing various strategies and initiatives to enact this vision.

Relationship building and the sense of family

We find that almost before we can enable growth and learning, we need to develop and maximise self-esteem, a sense of caring for one another and mutual respect (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hattie, 2009). Accordingly, pastoral care and personal affirmation and understanding are paramount. Relationship building, and intentionally fostering a sense of 'family' offer a platform for us to equip our students with the life skills to become fully functional members of their own community, and eventually to build successful families of their own. Some of our students come from fragmented homes and our school environment may be their first experience of the power of whānau support.

Because this ethos of belonging and connectedness underpins everything we do, it can be difficult to isolate a few, essential initiatives that we would recommend to others. Instead, the following list of strategies attempts to showcase the range of what we do at Hair to Train; we hope that readers may use this as a 'pick and mix' selection of ideas, which may be easily transferable to their own organisational contexts. Therefore, the strategies which we have found to support this approach include:

- *Pre-enrolment social gatherings.* We encourage whānau to attend with students and emphasise that their support is critical to students' success. Students studying on Youth Guarantee programmes are not eligible for student loans, and most will need accommodation with family or caregivers. We are very open that lack of support can affect acceptance onto the programme. This is also a good opportunity for students and staff to begin to develop a sense of 'group'. Key to relationship building is knowing our learners and respecting their diverse backgrounds – we are good listeners.
- *Family days and parent meetings.* We encourage whānau interest and involvement throughout the academic year. Many of our students' relatives drop into the training salon



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regularly, just to see what we are up to, as well as when we might have to ask them in to discuss a disciplinary issue. Family days let students showcase their prowess.

- *Sports afternoons* are usually held on a Tuesday afternoon, the students' first day of the study week (see 'catch-up Mondays' below). We go for beach and scenic walks, or walk to a local indoor sports centre or park for a range of team sports. Students can offer suggestions and vote on preferred activities. Attendance is mandatory for these two-hour sessions, although students can choose to be supporters rather than participants in team games. All bags and cell phones must be left in the classroom! The all-time favourite? Our annual Easter egg hunt and Hair to Train's Amazing Race.
- *Shared breakfasts* organised by the students every Tuesday promote team spirit and offer a good opportunity to share cooking and budgeting skills and encourage healthy eating choices.
- *Field trips*, such as to the public library and the Information Centre for bus timetables.
- *Beauty therapy* introduction 'pamper' sessions and vouchers for students or family for free services are given for good results in assessments, attendance and attitude. These are highly sought after and a great extrinsic motivator.
- *Visits from Police and other community agencies*. Sex education experts from Family Planning talk to students about contraception, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. St John's staff demonstrate first aid and resuscitation.
- *'Role model' guest speakers* give students a chance to see professionals from a range of sectors talking about their work and their career pathways. Examples from 2012 include Hannah from Tauranga City Council Waterways, and Jodi (a Hair to Train graduate) about hairdressing on a cruise ship.
- *'Student of the week' certificates* awarded for a range of desirable attributes, such as attitude, good work ethic, peer support.
- *Life skills sessions*: cooking, sewing, ironing, making your own organic shampoo and hair treatments, customer care – making and serving tea and coffee, personal hygiene and grooming, maintaining bathroom and toilets to salon standards – job hunting, CVs and interviews.
- We make a point of modelling and drawing attention to *etiquette and good manners*. One of the first exercises is a 'class contract' developed as a group to outline acceptable and



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unacceptable behaviour and consequences. Signed by all and displayed on the wall for the remainder of the year, this is also a good tool to reinforce positive class dynamics and individual responsibilities.

- *Graduations* are a dress-up celebration with whānau and supporters. We have had family members travel from Australia to attend. We present qualifications and awards, and include a full-fee scholarship for our most promising Youth Guarantee student to pathway into our Level 4 programme.

Focus questions for providers:

What types of relationship do you aim to build with your learners? What strategies do you consciously employ to develop this?

Developing cultural identity and pride

Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success

(Ministry of Education, 2010) sets the direction for improving educational outcomes for Māori learners. The overall vision is of Māori learners enjoying education success as Māori, and the importance of “successful learning and education pathways” is emphasised (p. 2). However, there is some way to go in achieving this vision. In 2010 Māori (47.8%) and Pasifika (59.2%) students had lower rates of school leavers attaining at least NCEA



Level 2, compared to Asian (84.4%) and European/Pākehā (74.0%) students. And despite recent increases, Māori and Pasifika students are still recording lower qualification rates than their non-Māori and non-Pasifika counterparts (Ministry of Education, 2012). This has repercussions, not just for the individuals, but for their families and society in general; qualifications are linked to job status and incomes.

We find that students not only need to know themselves, they also need to know where they come from before they can see ahead to where they might be going. We encourage our students to embrace their culture, so that their sense of who they are underpins their learning and their aspirations. With Māori students comprising 53 *per cent* of our roll, we try hard to infuse a dual-heritage awareness across our curriculum. Specific strategies include:



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- We ensure that we integrate te reo and tikanga in our delivery. Some of our tutors have or are studying te reo, and use it in class for greetings, instructions or as metaphors. One non-Māori tutor says that she is happy to invite more fluent speakers to correct her pronunciation – this demonstrates respect and commitment to getting it right, and shows the students that it is fine to make mistakes. The learners become teachers and their prior knowledge is recognised and valued (Brookfield, 2005; Cercone, 2008).



- We bring in Māori speakers about a range of topics, providing role models of success from many fields – including but not limited to hairdressing.
- Our institution’s kaumātua, Craig Ahipene, runs cultural awareness sessions and discusses concepts of custom, culture and tradition, tapu and noa. He attends family days and graduations and offers the students a safe place to begin learning about te ao Māori.



- One of our first class activities is the creation of individual ‘culture squares’ designed to be displayed as a celebration of each individual’s unique heritage. This exercise allows the student to share their background with their group and be proud of their heritage. This also causes the students to have conversations with their family to gather information.
- Our programme timetable, combining curriculum content with family and community activities and pastoral life skill learning, is, we believe, a good example of the principles of holistic teaching and learning explored by many New Zealand educational and health theorists, such as Durie’s (1985) Te Whare Tapa Whā, which says that to achieve well-being, all four components of self need to be in balance. These include te taha wairua (spiritual well-being), te taha hinengaro (mental well-being), te taha tinana (physical well-being) and te taha whānau (family well-being). A second, relevant approach is Rose Pere’s (1991) Te



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Wheke model, which shares the holistic theme and the need to address wairua at some level.

Focus question for providers:

How do you model and incorporate respect for cultural diversity within your programme?

Embedding literacy and numeracy

Alongside the skills of salon support and hairdressing, we use the National Assessment Tool to target group and individual initiatives to extend literacy and numeracy competence. We make all our teaching and tasks fit within the real-world context of a commercial salon, so that students do not perceive these skills as irrelevant – an important part of breaking down the resistance many have brought with them from secondary school.



Strategies to embed language, literacy and numeracy include:

- *Our daily icebreaker exercise.* Students are given a small quiz with the same items to start their day. There is a new item of Māori vocabulary to practise, dictionary skills looking up the definition of an English word, a maths puzzle, a clock to draw in the time and a joke. First finished gets a lollipop! Students can become quite competitive over this simple exercise, and by observing them unobtrusively, we find that many make remarkable improvements over the year.
- *Catch-up Mondays.* Our study week begins on Tuesday, but tutors are available all Monday and students can use this time to catch up on missed classes, to resubmit assignments, or get extra assistance with literacy and numeracy issues on a one-to-one basis. This idea is outlined in greater detail in an article by Wesseling (2008), which describes how both tutors and students benefit, with no adverse impact on course completion and retention rates.
- *Travel allowances.* In 2012, funding for Youth Guarantee providers made an allowance of \$800 per student available for travel costs. The students need to produce receipts and show mileage to account for the \$5 a day, which can be increased if necessary; non-attendance



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means this is not paid out. We are still determining the best way to distribute this funding: we have tried petrol vouchers and bus passes, but are currently paying the entitlement directly into bank accounts. A drawback is that we have had incidents of this money being withdrawn by family members and students being unable to get to class – but this may also offer an opportunity to introduce some banking and finance management skills into the programme if we assist students to open their own accounts.

- A lot of *salon and class activities involve numeracy*: measuring, mixing, timing treatments, taking payment, stock taking. We also use cooking and budgeting sessions, scoring for team sports and board games as ways to introduce numeracy in a practical context. Literacy is supported through workbooks, following and writing instructions and recipes, timetables, diaries, posters, price schedules, job advertisements, CVs, invitations and more.

Focus question for providers:

What opportunities does your programme content offer for developing students' literacy and numeracy capability using authentic materials and workplace tasks?

Part 2: Measuring success

The recent report *Lifting our game: Achieving greater success for learners in foundational tertiary education* (Ako Aotearoa, 2012) noted wide variation in success rates between similar providers of foundation-level programmes, varying between 10 and 80 *per cent*. It is clear that we need better collection and use of data to understand these programmes and the students who enrol in them. Hair to Train collects evidence of student engagement and achievement from a variety of sources, as outlined below.

Attendance, completion, graduation

Our focus has been to achieve a high percentage of graduates with a Level 3 outcome, with an institutional target of 80 *per cent* completion, which has been achieved in both years – see Table 1. Close monitoring of attendance allows us to respond quickly to at-risk students and to reinforce expectations and responsibilities through strategies as described in the second part of this publication.



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Table 1: Final programme results 2011–2012

	Withdrew from course	Achieved NCSS	Achieved CEH	Attendance 90% and above	Graduated
2011					
n=29 (52% Māori)	7	22	17	14 (64%)	22 (50% Māori)
2012					
n=28 (50% Māori)	5	23	12	16 (70%)	23 (48% Māori)

Notes: NCSS: National Certificate in Salon Support Level 3 (75 credits); CEH: Certificate in Elementary Hairdressing Level 3 (133 credits)

When reporting to TEC, results from both programmes (NCSS and CEH) are aggregated; therefore our 2011 results are registered as 79 *per cent* completion, with 2012 results unavailable at the time of writing. This puts Hair to Train in the upper quartile of all Youth Guarantee providers nationwide – an extremely pleasing result, especially when it is taken into account that our programme of 133 credits at Level 3 is ranked alongside providers who may only deliver 40 credits, and only at Levels 1 and 2.

The National Assessment Tool

Over the two years in which the Youth Guarantee programme has been operating at Hair to Train, every student who has completed the qualification, and was therefore tested at the end of the study period, progressed within the step or improved at least one step. Tables 2 to 4 show this trend of improved reading, writing and numeracy competence across the two cohorts. Key shifts are summarised under each table.

Table 2: Literacy and Numeracy TEC Assessment Tool results: Reading

		Entry Level	Exit Level			Entry Level	Exit Level
2011	Step 1	4	2	2012	Step 1	2	0
	Step 2	13	3		Step 2	10	8
	Step 3	6	17		Step 3	9	7
	Step 4	0	2		Step 4	0	3
	Step 5	0	0		Step 5	1	2
	Step 6	0	0		Step 6	0	1

Key shifts: In reading, the majority of the students in 2011 were at Steps 1 and 2 on entry; on exit testing most of the class had moved to Step 3. In 2012, only 10 students were initially at Step 3 or above, but by exit 13 were at these levels, and none were still at Step 1.



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Table 3: Literacy and Numeracy TEC Assessment Tool results: Writing

		Entry Level	Exit Level			Entry Level	Exit Level
2011	Step 1	4	0	2012	0	0	
	Step 2	7	2		1	0	
	Step 3	12	13		12	5	
	Step 4	0	9		10	13	
	Step 5	0	0		0	1	
	Step 6	0	0		0	3	

Key shifts: In 2011, students made strong improvements in writing skills, with 22 students testing at Step 3 or above on exit, compared to 12 on entry. In 2012, 22 students out of 23 were at Step 3 or above at both entry and exit points, but a higher number had moved to Step 4 or above by exit testing at the end of the programme.

Table 4: Literacy and Numeracy TEC Assessment Tool results: Numeracy

		Entry Level	Exit Level			Entry Level	Exit Level
2011	Step 1	5	1	2012	0	1	
	Step 2	2	1		4	1	
	Step 3	8	7		9	7	
	Step 4	5	11		8	6	
	Step 5	1	3		0	5	
	Step 6	1	1		1	0	

Key shifts: Students made improvements in numeracy in both years. In 2011 there were 15 students at Step 3 or above on entry; by exit testing, there were 22 students across the same range of levels. In 2012, there were 18 students in this range across both entry and exit tests, but by exit, there were 5 students at Step 5.

External benchmarks and review

In July 2012, NZQA completed the first draft of their review of Hair to Train, in which a specific focus of their external evaluation and review (EER) was the Youth Guarantee programme, the *National Certificate in Hairdressing (Salon Support) (Level 3)*.

NZQA reported that they were ‘highly confident’ in both Hair to Train’s educational performance and capability in self-assessment. They also ranked as ‘excellent’ our provision of services in both areas across all six key evaluation questions (how well learners achieve; the value of outcomes; the fit of programmes to learner needs; effectiveness of teaching; how well learners are guided and supported; and institutional governance and management). The report was highly complimentary, noting the organisation’s above-national-average achievements in qualification completion rates and progression towards higher level study (NZQA, 2012).



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A second external source of evidence as to the effectiveness of Hair to Train’s work with Youth Guarantee students comes from comments made by Lynda Rewita, an education analyst and TEC National Assessment Tool assessor with Edvance Workplace Training Ltd. She commented:

On my return to this group to Exit test, as an assessor, I observed a group of well-mannered students who displayed a huge increase in self-confidence in their personal appearance, stature and interaction...[they] showed a huge shift in their ability to give their best efforts to succeed. This was a huge contrast to the poorly presented, negatively outspoken group that met me back in February. I wish to congratulate the group and their tutors (Personal communication, October 2011).

Stakeholder feedback

Students have numerous formal and informal opportunities to comment on their course, the facilities and the support they receive from staff and management. They keep journals, have regular individual meetings with tutors to discuss their own progress, and have a class representative who can convey concerns to management. An anonymous survey at the end of terms 1 and 4 allows students to evaluate their course, and the majority of the feedback received is overwhelmingly positive:

This is way better than school

I love getting up each day to come to Hair to Train

Do we have to break for school holidays?!

We also receive a lot of informal feedback from **whānau** throughout the programme and at graduation. Recognising the crucial support role whānau offer our learners, a self-assessment outcome following our first year of delivery turned stakeholder feedback into action when we chose to invite family or carers to the pre-enrolment interview to ensure programme expectations are clear to learners and family. This approach has been followed for 2012 and 2013, and has assisted teaching staff to form close ‘home–school’ relationships with whānau and caregivers, which in turn assists with communication and mutual support over issues such as attendance. As an example, a tutor commented:



A mum said to me, “My daughter hates me.” I told her that means you’re doing a good job!



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We have had numerous parents express their gratitude and tell us that we have ‘turned their daughter/son around’.

The **local hairdressing industry** is a major stakeholder in the programme’s success. All teaching staff annually spend 80 hours updating their skills and current hairdressing techniques as part of their ITO agreement, and this includes a minimum of 40 hours in a commercial salon. The contact and networking opportunities this industry experience allows is invaluable, ensuring reciprocal feedback about programme content and employability of graduates. Evidence of this strong partnership is in the repeat business secured each year as the same salons provide the practical work experience placements for our students.

Fortnightly **staff** meetings allow tutors and administrative staff to raise issues and discuss progress in teaching and learning. All staff participate in an annual Performance Review in which they receive and respond to feedback, and offer plans for feed-forward initiatives. Staff feel that they are an integral part of the Youth Guarantee success, and are passionate and committed to improving the educational and life outcomes for their students. In a representative comment, one of the tutors said:

Our natures mean we care, worry. It can be hard to turn off at the end of the day. But it’s wonderful when past students stay in touch, come back with children, and tell us when they get jobs. We are part of our students’ lives. It’s a big sense of family and we all celebrate together.

There are several groups within the **community** who are direct stakeholders in Hair to Train’s Youth Guarantee programme. First, there are members of the public who come to our training salon for hairdressing appointments, and may well encounter Youth Guarantee students during a visit to the Tauranga premises. Feedback here is collected from regular customer satisfaction surveys.



Another important community group is the **secondary schools** in our region. We work actively with Waihi College, Bethlehem College, Papamoa College, Mount Maunganui College, Te Puke College, Otumoetai College, Tauranga Girls’ College – and have just had our first request from Tauranga Boys’ College. We support their Career Days and Expos, and also offer their students a one-day-a-week experience for eight weeks through the Gateway programme (14 students in 2011; over 16 in 2012). Evidence that we are meeting the needs and expectations of this stakeholder group is the growing number of



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referrals we are receiving, both for the Pathways option, and for enrolment in the National Certificate in Salon Support. In 2013, we received over 69 applications for 32 places, which we take as further evidence of our stakeholders' satisfaction with the service and qualifications we are providing.

Summary

Hair to Train has only been running these Youth Guarantee programmes since 2011, but we are excited about the success we have achieved, and the difference these qualifications will make for our learners as they enter the workforce or progress to higher qualifications – in fact, we are currently engaged in a study of how enduring this early success actually is for our graduates and those from other Youth Guarantee providers. This research interest is indicative of how seriously we take our role as educators and how we are always trying to learn more ourselves in the pursuit of good practice and effective delivery.

As a teaching and management team we meet regularly for planning and brainstorming sessions, but also to ensure that we maintain close consistency in our vision, our expectations and our responses to student issues. We are proud of our recently refurbished salons and classrooms and enjoy seeing our students blossom in a professional environment. We believe that our family-oriented and holistic learning culture works very well with our Māori learners, but is equally supportive for non-Māori. And as a family, we love to see our students succeed, and to know that we have been a part of that success.

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