

Pathways to capability building in foundation education: Addressing the challenges

This year has seen a range of significant changes within the tertiary sector, including the outcomes of RoVE, changes to tertiary funding from 2023, and changes relevant to qualifications, including micro-credentials and skills standards. The changes in the requirements for [Learner Success Plans](#) to be more learner-centric are a further significant factor. For Ako Aotearoa a key question is what the impact of these changes will be for educator capability building in the tertiary foundation sector.

Over the past few years Ako Aotearoa's Manako team has highlighted the need for more targeted and flexible pathways to capability building through a range of hui and publications:

1. A full-day hui at TEC with key sector stakeholders on 31 March 2021. You can [view the recording of the presentations here](#).
2. We prepared a [Context Review](#) to provide an overview of national and international literature, policy documentation, and research findings.
3. We prepared a [discussion paper](#) with two focus questions, which we discussed with sector stakeholders on 18 November 2021.

In a nutshell, the kōrero so far has centred around the fact that educators in foundation education have diverse professional learning and development (PLD) needs. Traditionally, qualifications, particularly the New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (NZCALNE), have been the standard requirement for educators. More recently, micro-credentials, digital badges and [Tapatoru](#) have been introduced in an attempt to provide educators with more flexible PLD options that are more targeted to people's roles and practice. Also on the agenda was the need for organisational commitment to staff engagement in continuous PLD, and how this commitment can be incentivised.

While the issues identified remain key concerns, subsequent developments may impact on the discussion so far. These include the [White Paper](#) we presented to the Minister's Office, which received ministerial acknowledgement, the establishment of Workforce Development Councils and their role in setting standards and developing qualifications, the development of Te Pūkenga's new Ako Framework to support educator capability building, the changes in learner success reporting requirements, and the introduction of the Unified Funding System.

At our upcoming hui in November 2022 we'd like to discuss ways to address the main challenges, and focus on the following:

- Educators need to be empowered to design their personal PLD pathway, e.g., through stacking digital badges toward micro-credentials, and stacking micro-credentials toward qualifications. The Tapatoru Professional Practice Award can guide educators through this process.
- We need to move away from qualifications as the one-size-fits-all credential for educators in foundation education, and possibly other contexts as well. Relevant micro-credentials and digital badges need to be recognised as valid alternatives to qualifications.
- The recently published TEC guidance on the Learner Success Plans will have implications on the need for enhanced capability building of educators to support learner success.