

The Manako programme: 2023 Library of Congress Literacy Award Honoree

A beacon of literacy excellence: Transforming adult education

Introduction

Literacy excellence is a significant part of the Manako programme provided by Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. The Manako programme, formerly known as the Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Cultural Capability (ALNACC) programme, continues the Ako Aotearoa partnership with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to enhance educational capability across Aotearoa New Zealand. Embracing our roots and expertise in literacy, numeracy, and both Māori and Pacific cultural capability, the Manako programme expands our commitment to delivering inclusive and effective tertiary education and training.

This briefing paper celebrates the Manako programme, awarded by the United States of America's Library of Congress in 2023 as a 'Successful Literacy Practices honoree', for its comprehensive approach to language, literacy, numeracy, and cultural capability development for adult educators.

It showcases the Manako programme, particularly the Language, Literacy, Numeracy (LLN) and Cultural Capability courses and workshops, the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) and the Tapatoru framework as part of its comprehensive Professional Learning and Development (PLD) programme. It advocates for further support and recognition to underscore its innovative approaches and pivotal role in shaping effective adult education strategies in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.



The holistic educational philosophy of the Manako programme

The Manako programme transcends traditional knowledge transfer by fostering an inclusive and nurturing learning environment, deeply rooted in professional and cultural values such as Whanaungatanga (relationships), Manaakitanga (respect), Wairuatanga (spirit), and Aroha (empathy). This holistic approach is evident in its real-world impact, establishing safe and supportive educational spaces that significantly enhance learner engagement and achievement.



Global recognition

The Manako programme was honoured by the U.S. Library of Congress 2023 Literacy Awards for 'exceptional literacy practices,' including professional development services for language, literacy, numeracy (LLN), and cultural capabilities, specifically for adult educators in Aotearoa New Zealand. They follow in the footsteps of their predecessor in Aotearoa, the National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults (NCLANA), who were a 'Successful Practices Honoree' in 2016 in the 'Research-based Professional Development' category.

Impact on educational practices

The Manako professional learning and development courses and workshops have significantly influenced teaching practice, with a focus on individual learner needs and integrated with tikanga Māori and cultural values, and increased inclusion of Māori and Pacific cultural success in teaching practice. The Manako impact evaluation results, coupled with data drawn from sector engagements and stakeholder relationships, demonstrate that engagement in the Manako programme has been highly valued, substantially enhancing professional practice and influencing future professional development plans. This is consistently supported by the impact evaluation data, with the most recent data, covering the January – May 2024 period, indicating the extent of the impact it is making on teaching practice and how well it is being received by course participants:

- » 85% of PLD participants rated the course/workshop as 'very high' or 'high' quality ($n = 72$).
- » 79% of PLD participants rated the course/workshop as 'extremely' or 'very' valuable ($n = 72$).
- » 77% of PLD participants intended to change their practice as a result of engagement in the course/workshop ($n = 72$).
- » 90% of PLD participants valued the interactive support mechanisms in our courses/workshops ($n = 72$).

Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) and Tapatoru programmes

The Manako programme encompasses significant elements such as the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) and the Tapatoru Ako Professional Practice Award. These initiatives have set new standards in educational excellence, with the DFQM focusing on supporting tertiary education organisations in becoming dyslexia-friendly and the Tapatoru programme enhancing the overall quality of tertiary education through value-based teaching.

Both programmes are designed to lift whole-organisation capability in supporting learners. Fourteen organisations have so far achieved the DFQM, with another fourteen still being supported through the journey. Eighty-five % of participants reported that engaging with the DFQM has made a difference for their stakeholders, including whānau, employers, the organisations they work with, and, most importantly, their learners.



The Tapatoru programme is also making a significant impact on organisations, their educators and learners. Almost 75% of Tapatoru participants reported their teaching practices had considerably changed since beginning their Tapatoru journey. One participant reported:

“My experience with this programme was one of the most moving, and personally significant experiences of my teaching and education career. It’s absolutely game changing. What amazing leaders Graeme and Annette are!”

Conclusion

The Manako programme, recognised by the 2023 U.S. Library of Congress Literacy Awards, effectively integrates language, literacy, numeracy, and cultural capabilities, grounded in Māori and Pacific values. Its innovative DFQM and Tapatoru frameworks have notably advanced adult education in New Zealand and internationally.

The programme’s holistic approach, emphasising values like Whanaungatanga and Manaakitanga, sets a global standard for adult education. It’s recommended that educational stakeholders further support and potentially utilise this model to enhance literacy practices worldwide, respecting the cultural values and ways of being unique within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Educational policymakers and leaders are encouraged to invest in and adopt the Manako model. Such commitment will not only uphold cultural values but also significantly improve global adult education standards.

