

PIAAC and the value of lifelong learning in tertiary education

Introduction

The key components of the PIAAC survey are Literacy, Numeracy, and Adaptive Problem Solving (APS). These are critical elements for fostering a resilient and adaptable workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand. This briefing paper highlights the intersections between the PIAAC 2024 findings and the value of lifelong learning.

The Manako programme is provided by Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, and was formerly known as the Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Cultural Capability (ALNACC) programme. The Manako programme continues our 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 education, informed by the values and needs of all New Zealanders.

PIAAC is the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, and an initiative of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). The OECD is an international, intergovernmental organisation with 38 Member countries, whose message is “Better policies for better lives”.

Key findings from PIAAC 2024

» Expand support services:

- » To build capability in literacy, numeracy, and adaptive problem solving

» Adaptive Problem Solving (APS):

- » APS skills are essential for navigating complex tasks and applying knowledge in diverse contexts.
- » Individuals with strong APS skills demonstrate better academic performance and higher levels of motivation.

» Lifelong learning:

- » Contributes to personal and professional development, enhancing employability and adaptability.
- » Addresses educational inequalities and promotes social inclusion.



Importance for tertiary education

» Enhancing curriculum:

- » Integrating literacy and numeracy, and APS into tertiary education curricula can better prepare learners for the evolving job market.
- » Emphasising digital literacy and AI competencies ensures learners are equipped with relevant skills.
- » Valuing lifelong learning and encouraging its development will scaffold learners into learner pathways for their continued education and to evolve their careers.
- » Lifelong learning is part of UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education.

Supporting adult learners

- » Tailored programmes for adult learners can bridge skill gaps and promote continuous learning.
- » The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy and Numeracy provide a structured approach to developing essential skills.

Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- » Ensuring educational practices recognise and support Māori as Tangata whenua, in line with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- » Promoting understanding and application of Te Tiriti principles in educational settings to foster equity and inclusion.

Recommendations

» Policy development:

- » Develop policies that support the integration of literacy and numeracy, APS, and lifelong learning into tertiary education.
- » Encourage collaboration between educational institutions, industry, and government to create relevant learning opportunities.
- » Ensure policies are aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi, promoting equity and inclusion for Māori learners.

» Funding and resources:

- » Allocate funding to support lifelong learning initiatives, APS skill development programmes, and literacy and numeracy improvement efforts.
- » Provide resources and training for educators to effectively implement these programmes, with a focus on culturally responsive teaching practices.

» Awareness and advocacy:

- » Raise awareness about the importance of lifelong learning, active problem solving, and literacy and numeracy among stakeholders.
- » Advocate for the inclusion of these principles in national education strategies, ensuring alignment with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.



Conclusion

Investing in lifelong learning, adaptive problem solving, and literacy and numeracy is crucial for building a resilient and adaptable workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand. By integrating these principles into tertiary education and aligning with Te Tiriti o Waitangi, we can ensure that learners are well-prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

