Learners in Targeted Training Programmes

A Discussion Document prepared for the Educational Attainment Working Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Targeted training programmes provide courses for people, particularly school leavers with low or no qualifications, and those who are at risk of long term unemployment. Statistics show high numbers of Māori and Pasifika learners in targeted training programmes with much smaller numbers of European and Asian ethnicities being enrolled.

The original purpose of the training opportunities programme, introduced in 1993, was to raise the achievement levels and increase the participation of groups under-represented in education and training. Programmes are currently undergoing considerable change. Training for Work, administered by the Ministry of Social Development, seeks employment outcomes after just thirteen weeks whereas the Future –Focused Training Opportunities programme (administered by the Tertiary Education Commission) includes progression to further education and the achievement of qualifications as legitimate outcomes. The 2011 budget included a significant increase in the number of placements in the Youth Guarantee programme which will result in youth training being subsumed into this programme.

There is considerable debate amongst providers as to whether the narrowly defined outcomes currently being used are the best way of measuring the success of the programmes for learners many of whom present with complex needs. These often take long periods of time to address fully and many factors are outside of the control of the training providers (although they may take steps to ameliorate their impact). Government agencies are under increasing pressure from providers to recognise short and intermediate outcomes such as improvements in the well-being of learners and their ability to contribute more fully to society although the sustainability of these benefits also needs to be evidenced.

There is relatively little research available that provides a good understanding of the features of these programmes that contribute to learner success. Information that is available suggests that contributing actors include high levels of pastoral and learning support along with small class sizes as well as teaching staff that are both skilled and passionate about working with youth. Programmes are also reported to be characterised by a high level of learner-centeredness and one-on-one approaches to teaching. However, questions remain about the effectiveness of these strategies in creating independent learners.

Introduction

This paper lays a foundation for wider discussion to take place around the issues faced by learners in targeted training programs in Aotearoa New Zealand[1].

Discussions will be led by the Educational Attainment Working Group (EAWG), convened by Ako Aotearoa as it seeks to examine how New Zealand's tertiary system can best serve the needs of priority groups outlined in the Tertiary Education Strategy.

Targeted training programmes cater for learners with the most complex challenges. Many have had negative experiences at school, unsupportive home environments, a lifestyle involving drugs, alcohol, gang involvement and a disposition toward violence and criminal activity. They are often found to have no goals or aspirations when they enter programmes.

The focus of this paper is on the educational aspects of these programmes and primarily what providers can do to create good outcomes for learners. It is the role of the Ministry of Education to examine the success of targeted training programmes from a national policy perspective.

The recent Budget announcement regarding the Youth Guarantee programme will significantly change the way Youth Training programmes operate as they will be merged with Youth Guarantee. These changes will see a shift in the focus of youth training from a 'second-chance' programme to one where schools can transition learners directly into further training. Details of how this will occur are yet to be announced but there is much to be learned from the earlier programmes as to what will help learners succeed and where the challenges still remain.

Background

The historical development of targeted training programmes

The Training Opportunities Programme (TOP) was introduced in 1993 to replace the ACCESS scheme[2] which involved employment schemes for low-skilled workers. ACCESS was principally targeted towards people who were disadvantaged in the labour market, and for whom traditional training methods were unsuitable or unavailable. However, a decrease in the number of low-skill jobs available at that time saw TOP courses introduced which were aimed at:

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[1] This paper is one of a suite of three developed for the Educational Attainment Working Group the others being about "part-time learners" and "transitions into and out of relevant programmes".

[2] Māori ACCESS, administered by Māori authorities, ran alongside the ACCESS schemes but was subsumed into TOP toward the end of 1993.

"raising achievement levels; increasing the participation of under-represented groups and individuals in education and training; increasing opportunities in the post-school sector; and ensuring that the system is more responsive to changing needs". (ETSA 1992:8)

Although the new programme retained some of the features of ACCESS it was targeted more specifically at school leavers and long-term job seekers with low or no qualifications[3] at risk of long-term unemployment. Courses included entry-level skills targeted at areas of high labour demand, skills for job-seekers such as C.V preparation, personal grooming and presentation, interview skills, and developing an improved attitude toward work.

Initially, TOP was funded solely through Vote Education and administered by Skill New Zealand (formally known as the Education and Training and Support Agency). In 1998 TOP was divided into two separate programmes with $24 million being transferred to the Department of Work and Income, (now the Ministry of Social Development (MSD)), for work related training and other assistance. The remaining funding was retained by Vote Education and continued to be administered by Skill New Zealand. The two programmes continued as:

- Youth Training; catering for 16 and 17 year olds (15 years old with exemption); funded from Vote Education and administered by Skill New Zealand.

- Training Opportunities; for those 18 years of age and over; funded by MSD with Skill New Zealand (now the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)) contracted, by MSD, to administer it.

In 2009 there were around 25,000 learners on these programmes compared to over 150,000 studying at Levels 1-3 on non-targeted programmes funded through the Student Achievement Component (SAC) fund. These two programmes continued with relatively minor changes to their purpose, goals, and administration until 2011 when 40% of the funding for TO programmes, previously administered by TEC transferred back to MSD to be administered by them as the new Training for Work (TFW) programme. TFW involves the delivery of short (13 week), industry-focused courses linked to local employment needs. It is targeted towards work-ready clients seeking employment which is the sole outcome being sought for the programme.

From 2011 the TEC-led programme was renamed Foundation-Focused Training Opportunities (FFTO). The two broad outcomes being sought from FFTO are:

- Employment or progression into further education and training; and

- The acquisition of qualifications or credits towards a qualification.

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[3] 'Low or no qualifications' were considered as fewer than 3 School Certificate passes and later fewer than 40 credits

As mentioned earlier, the recent Budget announcement to merge Youth Training programmes with the Youth Guarantee scheme signals major changes for this area. Many details are yet to be released but it will be important to build on the things that have worked well for learners in these programmes in the past.

<u>Learner characteristics</u>

Private Training Establishments (including community education providers) provide courses for over 90% of the participants in Training Opportunities and Youth Training programmes each year. 2007 statistics show that courses mainly include subjects/topics from the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) broad fields of Society and Culture (35%) and Food Hospitality and Personal Services (23%). Enrolments in Mixed Field programmes (15%). Management and Commerce (10%), and Agriculture, Environmental and related studies (9%) declined steadily over the decade to 7%, 8%, and 7% respectively.

The Ministry of Education conducted an analysis of the statistical information available, for the two programmes resulting in two reports; *The Youth Training Statistical profile: 1999 – 2008* and *Training Opportunities: Statistical Profile 1999 – 2007*. These reports show that, based on the averages across the period surveyed, for Youth Training just under half of all participants are Māori[4], another 40 percent are European, and 10 percent are Pasifika, with other groups making up the remainder. Around 30% of participants are in Auckland with 60% participation in the main centers.

Similarly, the averages show that the participants in Training Opportunities are most likely to be Māori (40%), aged 29 years or younger, and be based in Auckland (27%). Māori and European participation fell dramatically from 2000-2005 with another sharp decrease in the participation of Māori in 2009. There has been a 4% increase in the number of Asian and 'other' nationalities (up to almost 12%) participating in TOPs programmes in the period 1999 – 2007.

Both TOP and youth training placements have undergone a consistent decrease in numbers, falling by 30%, from 2000 – 2009. Therefore, some of the changes in participation are likely to be the direct result of the overall decrease in the number of placements available.

Compared to learners at level 1-3 of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework funded through SAC, Youth and Training Opportunities programmes have significantly high proportions of learners who identify as Māori and Pasifika, and correspondingly lower percentages who identify as being of European or Asian ethnicity (see Table 1). This may be strongly influenced by the specific targets that exist for Māori and Pasifika in these programmes

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[4] The over-representation of Maori was not unexpected as there had been targets for Māori and Pasifika participation in the programme,

The participation of Māori and Pasifika in all these programmes is also significantly higher than at other tertiary levels. Māori, Pasifika, and 'Other' ethnicities, make-up around a quarter of the total number taking part in Level 1-3 programmes. Participation by European and Asian learners is much lower.

The proportion of learners with few or no qualifications entering youth and training opportunities programmes is also much higher than those entering SAC funded level 1-3 programmes.

Ethnicity	Training Opportunities Number	Percentage	Youth Training Number	Percentage	SAC-Funded Level 1-3 Number	Percentage
European	5,843	36.9%	3772	37.9%	90,318	59.5%
Maori	6,131	38.75%	4536	45.5%	42,369	30%
Pasifika	2,101	13.3%	1396	14%	13,031	8.5%
Asian	967	6.1%	104	1%	14,155	9%
Other	777	5%	155	1.5%	4,686	3%
Total	15,819		9,963		151,783	

Table 1: *Comparison of participation numbers and percentages[5] by ethnicity for training opportunities, youth training and level 1-3 programmes; 2009 (Ministry of Education 2011)*

2001 Review

The Ministry of Education conducted a significant review of TOPs and Youth Training commencing in late 2001 and resulting in the report; *Te Aro Whakamua Building Futures: The Final report on the review of Training Opportunities and Youth Training (2002).*

The review was prompted largely by concerns that despite a range of initiatives and strategies introduced by Government over the previous years, high number of school leavers (18 per cent) still had no or low qualifications. Furthermore, Māori and Pacific school leavers featured high in the statistics (37 per cent for Māori and 27 percent for Pasifika). The review considered the

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[5] Note that learner ethnicity has not been prioritised therefore numbers for individual ethnic groups do not sum to the total number of learners.

objectives of the programmes, how well they were working and changes that might improve their responsiveness and effectiveness.

The review team concluded that there was a continuing need for the two separate programmes with Youth Training needing to retain its focus on under 18 year – olds. The report outlined a large number of recommendations. These included:

- Basing the future objectives of the programme on the acquisition of foundation skills aimed at ongoing education, and/or sustainable employment.

- Confirming the eligibility criteria to include those who, due to a lack of foundation skills, face significant barriers to further education and sustainable employment.

- Improvements to programme delivery such as better collaboration between government agencies, alignment of career and learning plans, and job seeker agreements and improved post-placement support.

- Retaining employment and educational outcomes, better measuring longer-term employment outcomes, and recognising intermediate outcomes or life skills obtained by participants.

From a teaching and learning perspective, the emphasis placed on learners achieving a suitable combination of 'foundation skills' was an important feature of the review. The review team considered that "learning to learn" is the essential element of foundation skills. As well as literacy and numeracy, the report considered that foundation skills include interpersonal skill areas such as communication, adaptability, self-confidence, resilience and group effectiveness.

There appears to be no evidence to suggest that there was any further discussion of the recommendations in the report. However, providers report that the recent TEC-led work to support the improvement in literacy and numeracy has impacted positively on learners.

Successful elements of targeted training programmes

Targeted training programmes straddle the boundary between employment and education which creates a number of tensions when attempts are made to measure the success of the programmes for the different groups and individuals affected. What the Government may view as success may be different to that for a provider or the participants themselves.

At system level

The success of targeted training programmes, as a policy intervention, is measured by the numbers moving to employment or engaging in further training. Although the overall aim is for 'sustainable employment', the only real measure is employment, as recorded by the tertiary

education provider, 2 months following the end of the course. Data to 2007 show a relatively high level of success in that:

> "The proportion of those experiencing a positive outcome – either moving to employment or engaging in further training, irrespective of credit attainment – two months after completing a placement increased steadily from 71% in 1999 to 81% in 2007". (Mahoney 2009a).

However, how many of these short-term outcomes translated into sustainable gains is largely unknown.

What works for learners

Much of the data about what creates success for learners from a teaching and learning perspective is either focused on specific aspects of programmes such as access or pastoral care or is anecdotal.

The information available suggests that class size, the way courses are designed, pastoral care and learning support are the most important elements contributing to success for learners.

Targeted training programmes are generally able to provide smaller class sizes; around 10-12 learners per class. This means that classes often have a mix of ages and ethnicities which can have positive and negative influences on class dynamics. Smaller classes also enable a more individualised approach to identifying individual learner needs, more one-on-one tuition as well as better monitoring of progression.

The use of individual learning plans (ILPs) are a feature of many successful courses. An ILP is developed following a robust pre-enrollment (pre-course) assessment which involves determining the learner's level of literacy and numeracy as well as considering their past experiences and future goals and aspirations.

TEC recently developed a literacy/numeracy assessment tool that targeted training providers are required to use to establish a learner's level of progression. This is an on-line assessment tool designed specifically to assist an assessment of literacy and numeracy on entry as well as throughout the course. Its use is still relatively new but anecdotal information suggests that it is a valuable resource in determining a learner's ability in these areas with the information being used to inform the design of an appropriate programme of study.

A number of other assessment tools are also available and used by providers. For example, the VARK assessment to determine learning styles[6] (Fleming and Mills 1992) and an assessment

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[6] It is noted that questions have been raised around the utility of the VARK assessment tool.

tool that determines a learner's level of self-esteem. The extent to which these, and other assessment tools, are used or are helpful is not known.

Successful courses tend to involve a mix of foundation skills, vocationally orientated learning, life skills, pastoral care, and time in the workplace. Learners in youth programmes often have few goals and little knowledge about what they want to do with their lives. Therefore, time is needed to present them with possibilities for work which will often raise their motivation and create a disposition toward learning. Collaboration with other providers is sometimes required to ensure that learners are able to access the right mix of topics into their learning plan. Some providers report that this can be problematic in regions where there are a number of organisations competing for funding with some creating barriers to entry for learners from other providers.

The need for high levels of pastoral support is often mentioned as an extremely important feature of targeted training programmes. In 2010, TEC commissioned a report into Youth Training Programme which sought to provide an understanding of what made the programmes distinctive. The report was based on interviews with providers, learners, government officials and others with an interest in youth training. It found that the Youth Training programmes were learner-centered and able to respond well to the social, emotional, physical, and learning needs because of the strong pastoral support that underpins the interaction between staff and learners. This was largely due to the fact that staff:

- Have appropriate backgrounds and understand youth culture, needs and barriers to engagement;

- Leverage this understanding and actively work to meet the needs of youth; and

- Are strongly networked within their local communities.

Staff are regarded as not only teachers but as good role models engendering trust, encouraging regular attendance, improving confidence, self-esteem and motivation which are all necessary to improve learner engagement.

A strong positive disposition toward teaching youth must of course be coupled with an appropriate skill-set. The National Certificate of Adult Literacy has become the basic qualification for all tutors involved in targeted training programmes. A comprehensive evaluation of this qualification could provide a better understanding of the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

The report identified the main barriers to participants accessing the programme to be transport, living situations, poor initiative and an inability to organize themselves. Providers report that they often needed to spend considerable time to "un-teach" learners bad habits learnt whilst they were at school or unemployed.

Te Rau Awhina: The Guiding Leaf published by NZQA in 2008 reported on good practices in Māori and Pacific PTEs. This study found that providers considered that a holistic approach was important for the success of learners from all cultures. The report also explained that a Māori world-view considers pastoral care as providing Manaakitanga (hospitality and kindness) whanaungatanga (relationship, kinship, a sense of family connection) and awhi (to embrace cherish, assist). Māori providers preferred to refer to these values as the term 'pastoral support' had somewhat clinical connotations.

The importance of pastoral support and good role modeling cannot be underestimated. Although not specifically about targeted training programmes, Skills New Zealand (2001) found that PTEs emphasis on the learner and developing and/or restoring the learner's mana was critical for learners. Similarly *Te Rau Awhina* reported that learners who feel valued are more likely to succeed.

The NZQA report also identified one-on-one individualised learning as the most effective delivery technique although there were no specific data to confirm this. Group work, quizzes/games, practical hands-on activities and the use of language/te reo/culture were also identified as effective delivery methods. The degree to which these feature in successful programmes is not known. NZQA (2008) concluded that it would be useful be able to relate good practice measures to outcome measures such as course completion, employment obtained or continuation to higher study.

To be certain about the effectiveness of the various delivery methods and what actually creates successes for learners in an educational sense requires a more coherent programme of qualitative research and evaluation studies than is currently available. In particular, whether such approaches create a dependence on the individual teacher rather than creating more self-reliant, autonomous learners needs careful investigation.

Problem areas

Responding to the needs of learners is an important part of any education programme however, providers of targeted training programmes have to address a number of issues, other than learning needs, in order get their learners to engage with the learning process. Problems experienced by learners tend to vary by region and some are culturally-bound. Learners and providers in rural areas experience different challenges from those in urban areas. For example, learners in urban areas and especially South Auckland are often involved in gangs and inter-gang tensions often interfere with the learner's progress. Family violence, the use of drugs and involvement with selling them, and the lack of basic items of food and clothing are common problems.

Whilst the high level of pastoral support provided in courses is a strength it comes at a cost. Funding to providers has not increased in the last six years but the pressure to do more with less

has. Providers also experience transport-related problems in getting learners to class. Funding[7] is available but it often falls well short of covering these costs, particularly in rural areas where there can be very large distances involved.

There appears to be a tension between the need for pastoral support and learning new skills. This means that some providers do not provide the same level of pastoral support as others as they feel that the main function of an education organisation is to teach not to look after the social needs of their learners. NZQA (2008) found that providers offer learners varying levels of practical support. Some went the 'extra mile' picking learners up from their homes to get them to class, providing support in dealing with agencies, providing lunch to learners/food to families, 24/7 access to tutors and support for parents. These are the things that many providers say make a real difference and enable learners to become engaged.

Cultural norms can pose problems for learners for example where younger family members are not encouraged to 'do better' than their older relatives. This can be a particular challenge for providers to overcome.

What counts as 'success' for learners appears to be a contentious issue. The need for the Government to get a good return for its money whilst essential, is sometimes seen to be at odds with meeting the short, medium and long-term needs of the learner. Using only two measures of positive outcomes (employment and progress to further learning) does not enable the intermediate outcomes to be recognised. Often referred to as 'soft skills', improvements in attributes such as self-esteem, communication, and an ability to function more fully as a valued member of society create a pre-disposition toward learning. A person attending a course may simply be provided with a caring environment and role models that create a change in attitude that means they no longer engage in criminal or abusive behaviour. These are very positive short-term outcomes but are often overlooked by officials because they are hard to measure. Whether such interim outcomes can be recognised as a legitimate achievement for an education provider needs to be debated more fully.

What can be reasonably expected of providers is closely linked to the accountability measures. As Stolte (2004) explains:

> "In the Training Opportunities sector the accountability measures tend to focus on the performance of the provider. The provider is responsible for creating the employment outcome [or progression to further training]. While providers are able to capitalize on their knowledge of the local employment situation, there are still many factors outside of their control. The providers are in the business of delivering training, so this is what they should be measured on." (pg 152)

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[7] Travel is allocated on the MSD average of $20.87 (ex GST) per learner per week during 2011. **Note:** Travel support for learners is planned for review by MSD during 2011

Instead, providers who may be delivering good courses but with low outcomes as measured by TEC are likely to lose funding. Stolte (2004) poses a very relevant question which has yet to be answered:

> "How can individual providers be responsible and thus be made accountable for wide social and economic trends and the actions of the unemployed individual?" (pg 151)

There is no argument about the need for accountability for public funds but what constitutes a 'valued-outcome' does seem to be a matter of much debate. Accountability is often linked solely to cost-effectiveness as this is relatively easy to measure. Improvements to the well-being of learners and their communities are much more difficult to define and measure, but this does not mean we should not attempt to do so.

The tensions around outcomes create a 'backflow effect' to other aspects of the programme such as the selection of learners. Stolte (2004) found that because some providers felt under pressure to deliver 'good outcomes' there was a tendency for them to 'weigh-up' potential trainees to decide whether they were likely candidates to be placed in employment before accepting them onto a course. This means that some learners with the greatest need of education i.e. those who would take longer to reach employment or progress to a programme at a higher level would not be selected.

The Training For Work programme implemented this year (2011) limits courses to 13 weeks with employment as the sole positive outcome. There is anecdotal evidence that some education providers consider that this places them in the role of employment broker rather than educator as a greater proportion of the time available is spent on finding employment than engaging the learner in learning new skills. It is too early to determine the likely success of this programme but it will be important for an in-depth evaluation to be conducted at an appropriate time.

The availability of adequate numbers of tutors skilled in teaching literacy and numeracy to adults has been raised as a potential problem. Learners in targeted training programmes have not learned adequate levels of literacy and numeracy at school so the problem is compounded for the tertiary sector. Whilst the TEC assessment tool can find where a learners level of literacy and numeracy is at, highly skilled literacy/numeracy teachers are required to bridge the gap. The current requirement from TEC is to embed literacy and numeracy in courses however; many tertiary teachers are specialists in their industry areas rather than in teaching literacy/numeracy. As mentioned earlier, the National Certificate of Adult Literacy has become the base-line qualification for learners involved in targeted training. TEC has invested heavily in to assist teachers gain this qualification through the Adult Literacy Educator (ALE) Fund accessed through the providers investment plan however, the fund is no longer available and it is unclear as to what further capability building is needed and how it best be achieved.

Information regarding the availability of cost-effective resources may also be problematic. NZQA (2008) suggested that there may be a lack of relevant resources as few were produced in

Aotearoa New Zealand and were therefore not relevant to the PTEs and their learners. There are reportedly now good resources available to support literacy and numeracy learning, although their cost is considered by some to be prohibitive. There appears to be little information available regarding the appropriateness and effectiveness of resources for other aspects of these programmes.

The actual monitoring of outcomes from the programmes, whatever they might be, needs further attention. Mahoney (2009a) did find that a significant proportion (40%) of the positive outcomes involved learners returning to another Training Opportunities programme. The reasons for this so called 'churn' may be related to the learner requiring longer to achieve the attributes and skills to move to a higher level, or employment, but there may also be other contributing factors such as the quality of the programmes themselves.

There is little information available once the learner leaves the programme. What happens to those that enter employment? For example, is the employment full-time, part-time, seasonal, 'skilled' or 'low-skilled'? How long was it for? How many progressed to apprenticeships or gained employment with associated on-job learning to eventually achieve a worthwhile qualification and higher paid jobs? Similarly for those progressing to higher level programmes. What programs did they go to? Were they successful? The introduction of the National Student Number (NSN) will enable some of this information to be available in the future.

The TEC measures provide challenges for providers to maintain their courses, and subsequently meet the needs of learners, especially in changing economic times. When un-employment is high and learners are not ready to progress to further study at a higher level, 60% positive outcomes can be difficult to achieve. In regions where there are a lack of opportunities for youth employment as well as limited access to higher levels of study the pressures can be even more intense.

Lessons for the future

High levels of pastoral support are provided by many providers that lengthens the time taken to reach desired outcomes. Because of this providers will tend to focus on the measures that are in place that enable them to gain funding to be able to enrol more learners. This may have detrimental effects on the actual programme of learning with the focus being on 'where to next?' rather than being able to spend the time on learning new skills. Apart from the provision of intensive levels of pastoral support, the attributes of teachers and the focus on literacy and numeracy, there seems to be little empirical evidence of what makes these programmes work best.

Two research projects currently underway, and being funded by Ako Aotearoa, will likely inform this on-going discussion. These are:

- Strength-based Learner Engagement (Hay et al); based on a facilitated programme 'My Voice' designed to identify critical engagement events and strength-based activities that assist learner engagement.

- Tertiary Bridging Tracks: Holistic teaching and learning practices of pacific PTE's (Fiso et al); this build on findings of *Te Rau Awhina* (NZQA 2008), and to elaborate on those characteristics of the holistic strategy of teaching and learning utilized by Pacific PTEs which have the maximum impact on learners.

Many of the tensions associated with targeted training programmes relate to the wide range of learner needs that have to be met first in order to gain engagement with learning. This occurs in a policy context of a demand for results in gaining the outcomes being purchased via the funding mechanisms. There is a desire by Government to increase its return on investment by increasing the outcome measures for programmes, such as the current 60% measure for employment or further training. However, this needs to be carefully weighed against the real benefits to learners and the opportunities available, especially in changing economic times. The recognition of intermediate outcomes, such as greater self-esteem, better communication and social integration, as steps towards creating sustainable changes in people's lives are worthy of recognition. NZQA has a set of outcome indicators as part of the *Tertiary Evaluation Indicators* used in the quality assurance of providers (NZQA, 2010). These include the achievement of qualifications, entry to employment and engagement with further study as well as other outcomes such as the improvement in the well-being of learners. The NZQA indicators could provide a good basis for on-going discussion around outcomes.

A greater degree of flexibility could be considered in order to ensure that learners can pursue their areas of interest and create better pathways regardless of the funding stream. This may require incentives for encouraging more system-wide collaboration between providers to ensure that learners are able to access the most relevant courses (or parts of courses) especially when there is a need for particular skills to be developed to enable entry to a programme at a higher level.

The focus on literacy and numeracy has gained considerable traction in recent times. Careful monitoring and evaluation of the progress being made needs to be put in place to ensure that the best value is obtained from the investments to date. While learners continue to leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills work will need to continue in these areas.

Finally, targeted training programmes provide a group of learners a real opportunity to change their lives and become productive members of society. There are still many gaps in our understanding of what it is that creates success for learners as well as a number of tensions associated with the administration of these programmes. Some issues will be difficult to resolve. However, the education community owes it to learners to keep the dialogue going and to better understand how these programmes can contribute to learner success.

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