

LITERACY & NUMERACY

IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE



THE PLAIN-ENGLISH INTRODUCTION THAT WILL HELP YOU
UNDERSTAND WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS TALKING ABOUT

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Literacy and Numeracy - It's Not Rocket Science

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That Will Help You Understand
What Everyone Else Is Talking About

By Graeme Smith © August 2020

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Welcome...!

The purpose of this short ebook is to help you be more successful in your teaching journey by introducing and explaining some of the fundamentals of adult literacy and numeracy education.

This is in no way a comprehensive treatment of everything you need to know.

However, once you've finished reading, you will have a better understanding of basics including how this relates to technical and vocational education and training.

In fact, if there's three major takeaways for you they should be something like this:

- Literacy and numeracy AREN'T rocket science.
- If you understand what literacy and numeracy are and how they work, they can help you teach better.
- If you teach better, you're more likely to see better results with your learners.

There are three sections. Here's what's ahead:

1. What do we mean?

We'll take a look at what people mean when they talk about adult literacy and numeracy.

We'll dig into what's different or the same about the various kinds of literacy and numeracy, including in the context of vocational education.

2. What's under the hood?

We'll also look at some of the frameworks that can guide us to better teaching.

This includes specific literacy and numeracy frameworks, but also approaches from NZ Māori and Pacific perspectives that might be relevant to your learners.

3. What's causing the problem?

Lastly, we'll look at some of the factors that cause low levels of literacy and numeracy in your learners.

We can't cover everything here, but we'll touch on the main things

1. What do we mean?

Introducing literacy and numeracy

The idea behind this book is that if you integrate literacy and numeracy into your teaching then you can do the following:

- Increase learner understanding
- Improve learner outcomes overall
- Become a more successful teacher, tutor, trainer or learning support person

There are different ways to achieve this. You might hear people talk about *contextualising* literacy and numeracy, or as is the case with vocational education, you might hear talk of *embedding* literacy and numeracy.

But something that you need to know before you start splitting hairs about the finer points of contextualising or embedding are some plain-English definitions for words like literacy and numeracy.

So, let's look at some definitions. There's at least six we need to cover. The first three are words that I've used already They are:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Embedded literacy and numeracy

But I also want to add these three:

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Māori literacy and numeracy
- Pacific literacy and numeracy

ESOL is a bit different because we're concerned with second language learning, whereas literacy is usually associated with first language learning.

However, it's useful to include in this short discussion because some of our adult learners struggling with literacy in English are actually ESOL learners.

And it's also useful to look at what literacy and numeracy mean from different perspectives and worldviews. Looking specifically at Māori and Pacific literacy allows us to take a look at lessons learned from work in New Zealand since 2007 including drawing on indigenous knowledge and working with different communities.

Let's make a start.

Literacy

What is it?

We need to define **literacy** for a couple of reasons. One is that you'll hear it in the news media from time to time.

Most governments participate in research that looks at the literacy and numeracy levels of their populations and this includes comparisons and ranking against other countries.

This, and other reasons, means that talking about literacy is often political. Sometimes "literacy" is a useful trigger word for media talking heads, especially in the context of research that shows declining literacy levels.

So, one thing to remember is that when people in the media talk about literacy, and this is usually politicians or government bureaucrats being interviewed, even if they don't mention it by name, they are likely to be thinking about some research that happened recently.

If you're interested, you might want to find out what research they're referring to and do your own reading.

Another reason that we need to define our terms here is that these days there are lots of different ideas about what a word like "literacy" means. And, to make matters more interesting, there are many different kinds of "literacies".

Some obvious ones that you've probably heard might include:

- Financial literacy
- Digital literacy
- Health literacy
- Media literacy

Mostly, these newer literacies are beyond our scope here. If you're interested, there are lots of resources available online if you want to have a look.

What we want to do is start with some definitions that are a bit more pedestrian.

If you look online, you'll see that there are lots of definitions. For our purposes, though, this is quite a good places to start:

Literacy is the ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to get everyday things done.¹

This usually implies:

- Understanding written words and sentences
- Making sense of text in charts and diagrams
- Comprehending, interpreting and evaluating more complex texts.
- More of a focus on reading rather than writing

There is, of course, more to literacy than just reading. However, let's stay with this for a moment.

How is literacy relevant to me?

This definition of literacy allows us to talk about the “state of the nation” when it comes to literacy. We need to be critical and aware of how the term is being used, especially in the media.

Also, as we'll see later, while a definition like the one above is a useful starting point, it's not the full picture when it comes to understanding literacy and teaching success.

But, research based on definitions like the one above does allow us to compare ourselves with other countries or our own past performance.

¹ Ministry of Education and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (2016). *Skills and Education: Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*. Wellington: Ministry of Education and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, p.4.

This won't help you in the classroom or improve your teaching directly, but it might help you feel better to know a couple of things.

One is that most countries, and I'm referring to most Western democracies, have a similar problem when it comes to literacy. This is that large chunks of the adult population don't have the literacy skills they need to succeed.

And these chunks of the adult population may include students in your course or programme.

So, in terms of being a more successful teacher, you can think about the ability of your learners in the same way that the researchers did when they surveyed thousands of people.

And this is where it starts to get real. Literacy has a practical focus. In other words, it's about using language "to get everyday things done." This should help you focus your teaching.

- Literacy is about doing stuff in the context of everyday life and work.

That means that if your approach to literacy is more academic, then you should consider adopting an approach like this encourages people to use language to get things done.

The definition for literacy mentioned above doesn't explicitly include writing, listening or speaking.

It also doesn't include any aspects of digital literacy, critical thinking or cultural competency. But it probably should.

Or at least, we need to be thinking about more than just working with written texts if we're going to see our learners succeed.

So let's make the case that a more comprehensive adult literacy framework includes a wider range of skills. We'll talk about this some more shortly.

And don't forget:

- Population research on literacy levels gets quoted by political and educational leaders at times like elections. So it's good to reflect on whether what you're hearing lines up with the realities of your own classroom.

Numeracy

What is it?

We need to define numeracy for many of the same reasons that we need to define literacy. This includes the fact that you'll hear it pop up in the news media from time to time.

Journalists and others sometimes love to stir up controversy about maths, especially if it involves a return to some earlier time, possibly a golden age of maths, when all children learned their times tables the same way and used the same methods, especially for doing subtraction and long division.

But another good reason that we need to talk about what we mean by numeracy is that it might turn out to be more important than literacy when it comes to things like getting a good job and avoiding debt.

Look up **financial literacy** if you want to know more about that. But for now, let's just unpack a more basic kind of numeracy. If you're a teacher, here's what you need to know below in terms of a definition.

Numeracy is the ability to use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations.²

This includes an understanding of at least some of the following:

- Quantity
- Dimension and shapes
- Patterns
- Data and chance
- Visual displays

² Ministry of Education and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (2016). *Skills and Education: Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*. Wellington: Ministry of Education and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, p.4.

How is numeracy relevant to me?

As with the definition for literacy, researchers and politicians can compare the numeracy levels of our learners, our country and other countries. But for us, it should have a practical focus on using maths for a purpose.

As with literacy, numeracy shouldn't be mindless repetition and practice. There is a place for rote learning of basic facts, but numeracy is practical and this, too, should help to focus your teaching:

- Numeracy is about solving problems that have meaning in the context of everyday life and work.

This is relevant to your teaching because this isn't about the maths that you, or your learners, got at high school. This is about how to use maths ideas and knowledge to do stuff that you - that your learners - need to do.

The kinds of situations that are relevant to your learners and your teaching should provide you with the kinds of maths and numeracy that you need to do. But more on that in the next definition.

As with our discussion about literacy, if your approach to working with numbers and maths is too academic you should consider reflecting on whether you can change what you do to take a more practical approach.

One of the ways in which you can do that is by providing some reasons why people need to learn the mathematical concepts and ideas that you have to teach them.

This can be challenging if you've never done it before or if you teach in a very academic environment.

But for most people, it simply means taking a look at the kinds of maths that real people, often in trades and vocational areas, use to do their jobs everyday.

If you come from a trades or vocational background then you have an advantage here over people that don't.

If you don't come from a trades or other practical background, then start thinking about the kinds of jobs that your learners do, or want to do, and ask:

- What kind of maths do you need to be a ...?

Embedded literacy and numeracy

What is it?

What we mean by “embedded” literacy and numeracy has been an ongoing conversation in Aotearoa New Zealand since at least 2007, as well as elsewhere around the world.

Here’s where we landed a few years ago. Embedded literacy and numeracy means:

Combining the development of literacy and numeracy with vocational and other skills.³

This is where it gets more interesting for technical and vocational education. Literacy and numeracy skills:

- Are contextualised to the programme. In other words, it’s not literacy and numeracy for everything. It’s literacy and numeracy for farming. Or agriculture. Or employment skills. Or whatever it is that you teach.
- Provide learners with competence, confidence and motivation to succeed in the vocational or other training programme.
- Are embedded at the level of the learner, programme and organisation.

Also, while this definition focuses specifically on vocational education, it is possible to use the same approach with any subject.

For example, aside from vocational education contexts like the ones mentioned above, I’ve seen teachers embed literacy and numeracy into all kinds of programmes including things like journalism and research methods papers at postgraduate level.

³ Tertiary Education Commission (2013). *Adult Literacy and Numeracy: An Overview of the Evidence, Annotated Bibliography*. Wellington: TEC, p.5.

How are embedded literacy and numeracy relevant to me?

This definition is highly relevant for many of us because it gets to the heart of why we enjoy teaching and stay in this profession despite the bureaucracy and other frustrations. This is:

- Embedding literacy and numeracy helps create the conditions for learner success.

In other words, it's about learning how to mix in the kinds of literacy and numeracy learning that your learners need to really succeed at your course.

It's also relevant because this - creating the conditions for learner success - is what you, as a teacher, are paid to do.

It should be just business as usual. You can't teach vocational courses, at least not at the lower levels, without integrating a contextualised approach to literacy and numeracy.

Contextualising and integrating literacy and numeracy means your teaching becomes more relevant, more helpful for your learners. You'll teach better.

This doesn't mean it's easy though. So, let's dig into that for a bit.

Your learners are complex bundles of motivations. Much of the time you can't control all the variables. But the idea here is that you can start with what you can control.

And that's your approach to teaching.

Your approach is internal to you. You have complete access to yourself. There might be limitations in terms of resources you have to use or coursework that you have to get through.

You might have the most challenging learners to work with. But you can choose how to approach all of this.

And that's powerful.

Harness this power and you will teach better and in new ways.

You can't know what state your learners will be in when they show up next week on Monday (or even if they will show up).

But by taking an embedded approach, that is combining the development of literacy and numeracy with vocational and other skills you can set up the best conditions for learning to happen.

That makes you a better and more successful teacher.

This is the kind of approach that we're most interested in. The embedded approach allows you to succeed with vocational education or any kind of specialised training where you're a subject matter expert.

What you need, and what we'll introduce later, is a teaching framework that allows you to identify the next literacy and numeracy steps for adult learners in your teaching programme.

ESOL

What is it?

ESOL stands for English for Speakers of Other Languages. This gets used in a few different ways.

On the one hand, international students, for example, are often ESOL learners due to the fact that they are learning in English, which is not their native language or mother tongue.

On the other hand, though, ESOL may be used to refer to:

Adult refugees and migrants who are preliterate learners or learners who have very low levels of English language and literacy. Preliterate learners are those who need exposure to the purposes and uses of literacy.⁴

Beginner ESOL learners like this may struggle in vocational education programmes. Keep in mind:

- Pre-literate learners might have no concept of our alphabet and also have no literacy in their own language.
- Learners who are refugees may suffer from trauma or stress.
- Many will have difficulties with most forms of communication in English.

ESOL is often a catch-all phrase that gets used to refer to all kinds of learners for whom English is not their first language.

There are also other acronyms that you might hear or see as well. Some of these include:

- ESL: English as a second language.
- EFL: English as a foreign language.

⁴ *Intensive Literacy and Numeracy - ESOL*. (2017, January 31). Retrieved from <http://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/funding/fund-finder/intensive-literacy-and-numeracy-esol/>

- EAL: English as an additional language.
- ELT: English language teaching.

How is ESOL relevant to me?

If all of your learners all speak English as their first language, then this section may not be relevant. Feel free to skip ahead.

But for a lot of teachers, especially vocational educators, many of their learners are also second language learners.

And with some, English might be their third or fourth language. You might have people like this in your programme. And if not now, then sometime soon.

As a teacher, you may have little or no control over the learners that get accepted into your programme. Or there may be no way to check learners' language abilities beforehand.

If that's the case for you, you should expect all kinds of communication issues. And you should have some strategies in place to deal with these.

As a trades or vocational teacher, some ESOL needs might be beyond what you can deal with.

However, knowing more about your ESOL learners and asking good questions can help you figure out what your options are. Sometimes this means more specialised help for these learners.

Later on we'll introduce a framework that you can use to identify strategies you can use if you're working with ESOL learners with limited ability in English.

New Zealand Case Study: Māori literacy and numeracy

Here we move from the general to the specific. Let's look at some of the lessons learned from the New Zealand Case Study. This is relevant if your learners are:

- Māori and you work in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- From other ethnicities, nationalities and cultural groups with strongly defined worldviews.

What is it?

For Māori:

Literacy is the lifelong journey of building the capacity to 'read' and shape Māori and other worlds.⁵

What's key here is that the idea of literacy is:

- Holistic, philosophical and spiritual.
- Incorporates the idea of being literate in two languages - Māori and English.
- Informed by Māori knowledge and Māori ways of knowing (Mātauranga Māori) as well Māori principles and values (kaupapa Māori).

How is Māori literacy relevant to me?

If you live in New Zealand, then this definition is relevant. Many learners in vocational programmes in New Zealand are Māori. Many vocational tutors teach courses where they have 100% Māori learners.

And many of these learners have experienced repeated failure in mainstream education. So have many non Māori, as well.

⁵ Māori Adult Literacy Reference Group. (2001). *Te kawai ora. Reading the world, reading the word, being the world.* Report to the Hon. Tariana Turia, Associate Minister of Māori Affairs. Wellington, p.11.

If you live elsewhere in the world, particularly in a country with a history of colonisation, then you probably have a parallel situation with other cultural groups, in particular first nations groups.

The point is that if we want to make a difference to these learners (and many others) we need to look at different ways of teaching and learning.

As we'll see later on, we can tap into Māori ways of thinking about teaching that can disrupt - in a good way - the kinds of mainstream approaches we've always used.

It's an understatement to say that the mainstream approach doesn't work with most learners who identify with a different culture, language or ethnicity.

Mainstream Western approaches to teaching and learning are grounded in an academic tradition that goes back to Greek and Roman times.

It's not wrong. But it poses challenges for some of our learners and this often includes learners from groups outside of the mainstream.

One key takeaway here is that if you can embrace a more holistic view of literacy and numeracy, you'll find that you can become a more successful teacher. This is true regardless of your culture and ethnicity.

What matters most is having some empathy for your learners and an openness to look at other ways of knowing and being.

If you glance back to the definition above, you'll see that the word "read" is in inverted commas. Say it out loud with air quotes...

- What's the difference between reading and "reading"?

For many of your learners this idea of "reading" includes many things that we don't think of as traditional literacy, but that matter very much.

Here are some of the things that literacy can include under a more holistic way of thinking about the world. Consider how you would “read” the following:

- Body language
- Facial expressions
- Geography
- Stories and songs
- Prayers and chants
- Genealogies
- The sun, moon and stars
- Traditional symbols

For many groups, not just Māori, it’s impossible to separate literacy and numeracy from customary practices. For examples, consider:

- Navigation
- Carving
- Weaving
- Tattooing

For more on these ideas, including concepts, approaches and a framework for thinking about teaching and learning from a Māori worldview as well how to increase learner success by applying this kind of cultural lens to your teaching you should read the following:

- [What is learner centred? 12 concepts from Te Ao Māori you should embrace to create learning success.](#)
- [Three simple approaches you need for learner-centred teaching.](#)

New Zealand Case Study: Pasifika Literacy

This is the second part of the New Zealand Case Study. Pasifika is a term that is unique to Aotearoa New Zealand.

It was made up by government agencies to describe migrants from the Pacific region and their descendants, who now call Aotearoa New Zealand home.

Pasifika refers to the Polynesian nations of the Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu, Tokelau. Strictly speaking, Fiji belongs to a group of nations referred to as Melanesians, but is usually included as well.

Regardless of where you work, you need to think about this one, too, especially if your learners:

- Identify as belonging to a Pacific people's group.
- Come from other ethnicities, nationalities and cultural groups with strongly defined worldviews.

What is it?

Being "literate as Pasifika" means:

Success in participation and access, in culture, in service and advocacy, and in economic terms (p.84).⁶

What are some key features of Pasifika literacy? Pasifika literacy stresses the importance of:

- Skills in reading and writing in English, and in speaking, reading and writing one's own Pacific heritage language to a high level.
- Skills in both oral and non-verbal communication.

⁶ Adult and Community Education (ACE) Aotearoa (2014). *Pasifika Success As Pasifika: Pasifika Conceptualisations of Literacy for Success in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Wellington: Adult and Community Education (ACE) Aotearoa, p.84.

- Strength in identity and the knowledge of one's Pacific cultural heritage including knowledge of and respect for other cultures within Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Possessing and living in a way that is responsive to shared Pacific values.
- Producing and reading cultural designs, patterns, and art forms with understanding.
- Understanding and using digital technology.

How is Pasifika literacy relevant to me?

Many learners in vocational programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand are Pasifika as well. This is especially true in the bigger centres.

Also, some learners might identify as both Māori and Pasifika. Inter-marriage is quite common amongst Pasifika peoples or with Pasifika peoples and other cultures.

For example, it is not unusual in New Zealand to have learners who may identify as both Samoan and Tongan, or New Zealand Māori and Cook Island Māori.

As with Māori learners, many have experienced repeated failure in the school system. Or at least a failure to progress at school and work in a way that compares with the rest of the population.

You can learn a lot from your Pacific students if you take the time to get to know them and earn their respect.

They really want to succeed and achieve, but as with Māori learners, the system often seems to be against them when it comes to how they like to learn.

As we'll see later, there are things you can do to make things better for your Pasifika learners. Not only will it make you a better, more successful teacher, they'll appreciate it and respond in kind.

As with Māori, there are frameworks you can adopt to help you think holistically about your teaching. We'll introduce one that's designed to encompass a range of Pacific perspectives. More to follow on that soon.

Thinking more deeply about what we mean

It's one thing to read about definitions for literacy and numeracy. It's another thing to figure out for yourself what you think about them.

With that in mind, it's a good idea for you to have a go at making some notes on the six definitions we've talked about so far.

There are a couple of reasons for this. One is that the process of making notes will help you think more deeply about the learning.

Another is that you should be able to talk about similarities and differences between these definitions. This is an important foundation for the work you need to do later on.

To start with, you should know what the definitions are and have a sense of how each is relevant to you. You can skip back and check on these details.

Questions

Let's pause for a few moments. Reflect on your answers to these questions below for each of the concepts we've covered.

- What does it mean?
- What are the key features?
- How is it relevant to success in your teaching context?

Reflecting on what's relevant for you

The idea behind this book is that you can be a more successful teacher if you can integrate, embed or otherwise contextualise literacy and numeracy into your programme.

We started out by saying that we need to be clear what people mean when they talk about literacy and numeracy.

We've looked at a few different meanings for literacy and numeracy, including several from our New Zealand Case Study.

If you can adopt this dual focus on teaching literacy and numeracy alongside your course content you'll be more successful because you'll become more learner centred.

Now let's look at some of the questions you can ask as you reflect on what's relevant for your teaching context and what's going to help you create greater success. Pause for a few moments and consider your answers to the following:

Literacy

- How much of your focus should be on literacy?
- People who succeed in your industry or vocation have good literacy skills and behave in certain ways.
- What does this literate behaviour look like in your field?

Numeracy

- How much of your focus should be maths and numeracy?
- People who have good numeracy skills in your industry or vocational also behave differently to people who don't.
- What does numerate behaviour look like among professionals in your field?

Thinking holistically

- Should you take more of a holistic approach?
- Would this help your learners, and therefore you, succeed?
- How can a more holistic definition of literacy and numeracy, such as from Māori or Pasifika help you?

Economics

- How conscious are you of any economic incentives behind strengthening literacy and numeracy in your industry?
- What are these economic drivers and how important are they to the economy?

Social

- What are the social consequences to improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for your learners and their communities?
- Out of literacy or numeracy, which is more important for your learners and their families?

Political

- When political leaders and media personalities talk about literacy and numeracy, what do they mean? Or what agendas are they pushing?
- What are the political consequences of strengthening literacy and numeracy in the adult population? What about in different segments of the population or specific communities?

ESOL

- How much does your approach to vocational education need to encompass English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)?
- If this is not relevant for you right now, how could it be important in the future?

2. What's under the hood?

Some frameworks that can help when you're working with literacy and numeracy learners

As well as knowing what people mean when they use words like **literacy** and **numeracy**, or **embedding**, we also need to know what kind of thinking helps to support these concepts and leads to learning success.

Getting to this is like popping the bonnet or hood of your car and having a look at what's underneath.

You can drive a car without knowing much about the engine. But you're more likely to be a successful car owner if you know a little about how things work.

In fact, there are at least a couple of times when you do want to know more about how things work.

Every car needs a service from time to time. The more you know about how your car works, the more likely you'll be able to keep things running smoothly. And that brings us to the second thing.

Sometimes, you need to change things up a bit. This might be to make things run better, or to stop things from breaking down.

Either way, teaching better means looking at how things run beneath the surface. This means understanding what approaches lend themselves to increased learner success at the end of the day.

There's more on some basic approaches [here](#) and concepts from Te Ao Māori [here](#) if you want to dig a bit deeper.

But first we need to explore some of the frameworks that underpin our how we think about literacy and numeracy and how we can create the conditions for learning success.

We're going to look at five frameworks from our New Zealand Case Study. They are:

1. The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy
2. The Learning Progressions for Adult Numeracy
3. Te Whare Tapa Wha
4. Fonofale Pan Pasifika
5. ESOL Starting Points.

Each of these frameworks provides you with a set of tools for looking at your work including the content of your resources and programme, as well as ways of understanding your learners.

Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy

The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy are one of the main frameworks we use in Aotearoa New Zealand for understanding how to embed literacy. We often refer to it as just the Literacy Progressions.

It's part of a pair of resources we use in adult teaching. The other one is the Learning Progressions for Adult Numeracy. More on that in the next section.

What's it for?

The Literacy Progressions are a guide to identifying the next literacy steps in a learning sequence for adult learners.

The progressions provide a framework that shows what adult learners know and can do at successive points as they develop their expertise in literacy learning.

The progressions also describe what is learned in the order that it is usually learned. This means it's a tool for helping us teach better and increase learner success.

We can use the Literacy Progressions to:

- Identify the English-language demands of specific workplace, community, or personal tasks and texts.
- Analyse an adult learner's current skills, strategies and knowledge in oral and written English.
- Decide on a sequence for teaching and learning specific literacy skills.

The easiest way to understand what the Literacy Progressions are is to see them. There are four grids. One for each of listening, reading, listening and speaking.

These four grids are called strands. Together they are the framework we use for literacy. Here is the reading strand (minus all of the details for now).

Read with understanding

Koru/ Step	Decoding	Vocabulary	Language & Text Features	Comprehension	Reading Critically
1 st					
2 nd					
3 rd					
4 th					
5 th					
6 th					

In the reading strand above you can see five columns. These columns are the progressions.

If you look across the top, you can see what they are called. For example, in the reading strand above, the first column is the Decoding Progression and the second is the Vocabulary Progression.

Each progression has several boxes. These boxes are numbered. At the top, the first box is called koru 1 or step 1. As we go down, the koru or steps increase. At the bottom of the progression is step 6.

Sometimes several koru or steps are combined. For example, in the vocabulary progression you can see koru 1, 2 and 3, but then a combined koru 4/5 which is a larger box. These double steps mean that the learning at this step takes time to develop and really sink in.

The reference material, [which you can access here for free](#), has expanded versions of these progressions with lots of detail in each step.

Here's the writing strand next.

Write to communicate

Koru/ Step	Purpose & Audience	Spelling	Vocabulary	Language & Text Features	Planning & Composing	Revising & Editing
1 st						
2 nd						
3 rd						
4 th						
5 th						
6 th						

Again, you can see some single steps and some double. As with the reading strand, [the full version of each strand in the reference material](#) has a lot of information at each step.

We've taken out all the details for now. This is just an introduction and, at this stage, you just need to get the idea of it without getting bogged down in the details.

To sum up, The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy are organised into four strands:

- Listen with Understanding
- Speak to Communicate
- Read with Understanding
- Write to Communicate

Each strand contains a group of progressions. Each progression highlights a particular area of learning within a strand, for example vocabulary.

Each step or koru in a progression represents a development step as learners build their expertise. And these steps contain specific details about what learners need to know and do.

How is it relevant?

The literacy progressions are relevant because they can help you teach better by pitching your teaching at the literacy level of your learners.

It's beyond the scope of this short eBook, but you can learn how to use the literacy progressions framework to help you do the following.

- Work out the literacy demands of your teaching.
- Design strategies for embedding literacy into your programme.
- Understand your learners' literacy needs better.
- Plan how to embed literacy into teaching and activities.
- Assess learner literacy progress.

What this means for you is that if you familiarise yourself with this framework you'll have a recipe for creating literacy success for your learners. You'll be able to better understand:

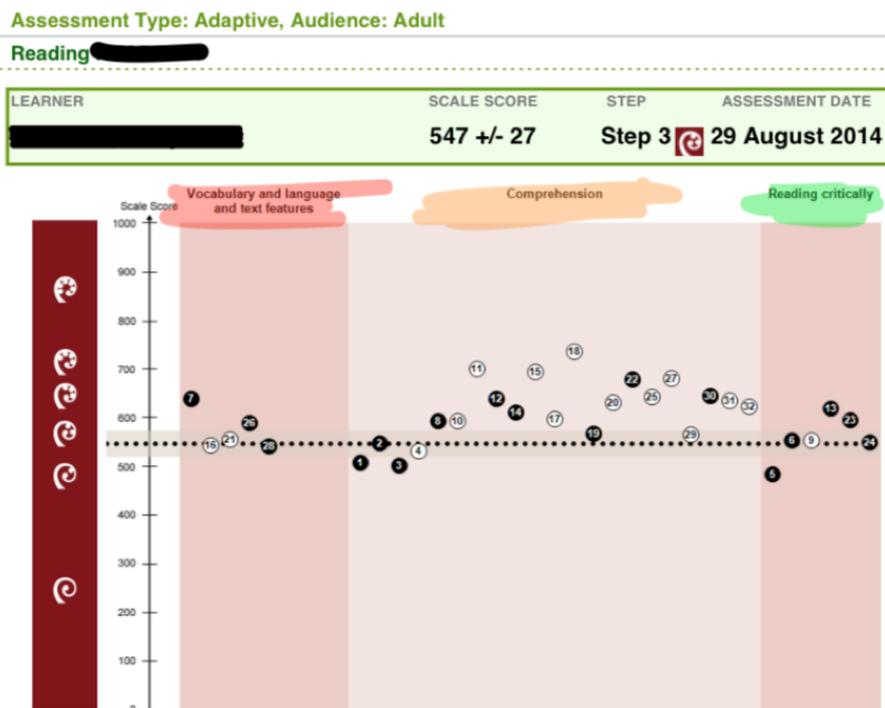
- The literacy demands of your training.
- The literacy needs of your learners, and
- What you need to do to bridge any literacy gaps between where your teaching is at and where your learners are at.

Another implication for you relates to assessment. Some teachers and tutors already assess their learners using specific literacy and numeracy assessment tools.

New Zealand Case Study: The Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT)

The assessment tool used by many vocational educators in polytechs and private training establishments is called the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT).

This tool was designed using the Learning Progressions frameworks. It generates a detailed literacy report for each adult learner that looks like this below.



Some tutors assess their learners using this or other tools, but never get to see the results. If that is you, then ask for the reports or data. Otherwise, it's a wasted opportunity for better teaching and learning.

Also, keep in mind that as a teacher or a trainer, you can't make sense of this information if you don't understand how these kinds of assessments are put together.

Teachers who do understand how the learning progressions work can use the information to make better decisions, strengthen literacy, and increase learner success.

Better decisions, after all, mean better teaching.

If you can, it's worth finding someone who can show you this assessment tool and how it works.

Stay tuned for some further information from me about how you can assess your adult learners' literacy and needs; and how you can develop your own assessment tools for your specific vocational training context.

Learning Progressions for Adult Numeracy

The Learning Progressions for Adult Numeracy are Part Two of the Learning Progressions framework. We use the numeracy progressions to help us understand how to embed numeracy.

Part one was the Literacy Progressions discussed in the last section.

What's it for?

The numeracy progressions are a guide to identifying the next numeracy steps for adult learners.

As we saw with literacy in the last section, the Numeracy Progressions provide a framework that shows what adult learners know and can do at successive points as they develop their expertise in numeracy learning.

The progressions describe the numeracy skills that are learned in the order that they are usually learned.

And just as we can with the Literacy Progressions, we can use the Numeracy Progressions to:

- Identify the numeracy-related demands of specific workplace, community, or personal tasks and texts.
- Gain a basic picture of an adult learner's current skills, strategies and knowledge in numeracy.
- Decide on a sequence for teaching and learning specific numeracy skills.

Like the Literacy Progressions, the Numeracy Progressions are best understood visually as three grids. These grids are the numeracy strands.

There is one for number, one for statistics, and another for measurement.

Together these three strands are the framework we use for numeracy. Here is the number strand.

Make Sense of Number

Koru/ Step	Additive Strategies	Multiplicative Strategies	Proportional Reasoning Strategies	Number Sequence	Place Value	Number Facts
1 st						
2 nd						
3 rd						
4 th						
5 th						
6 th						

The Number strand has six columns or progressions. In the strand above, the first column is the Additive Strategies Progression.

For now all you need to know is that:

- Additive Strategies includes both addition and subtraction.
- Multiplicative Strategies includes both multiplication and division
- There are six koru or steps going down from top to bottom.

This strand has three strategy progressions on the right hand side. And then you can see three other progressions on the left in grey. These grey ones are knowledge progressions.

This means that the koru or steps on the right includes all the things you need to know, in order to do all the things on the left. So the knowledge needs to come first.

Here's the strand that includes shapes, space, and measurement.

Measurement

Koru/ Step	Shapes & Transformations	Location	Measurement
1 st			
2 nd			
3 rd			
4 th			
5 th			
6 th			

As with the literacy strands we showed you before, we've taken out the details. For now just try to get a sense of how the framework is put together.

Using the Learning Progressions as a tool to map learner demands and then figure out what to do about it is beyond the scope of this book, but that is where you will learn how to work with it to work out the numeracy demands of your teaching or training.

To sum up, The Learning Progressions for Adult Numeracy are organised into three strands:

- Make Sense of Number to Solve Problems
- Reason Statistically
- Measure and Interpret Shape and Space

As with literacy, each strand contains a group of progressions. Each progression highlights a particular area of knowledge or learning within a strand, for example measurement.

And as before, each step or koru in a progression represents a development step as learners strengthen or build their expertise.

How is it relevant?

Everything that we said before about the Literacy Progressions applies here. Except the focus is on numeracy.

The underlying idea is that the numeracy progressions can help you teach better and increase everyone's chances of success with mathematical concepts.

You can use the numeracy progressions to do the following.

- Work out the numeracy demands of your teaching.
- Design strategies for embedding numeracy into your programme.
- Assess and understand your learners' numeracy needs better.
- Plan how to embed numeracy into teaching and activities.
- Assess learner numeracy progress.

What does it mean for me?

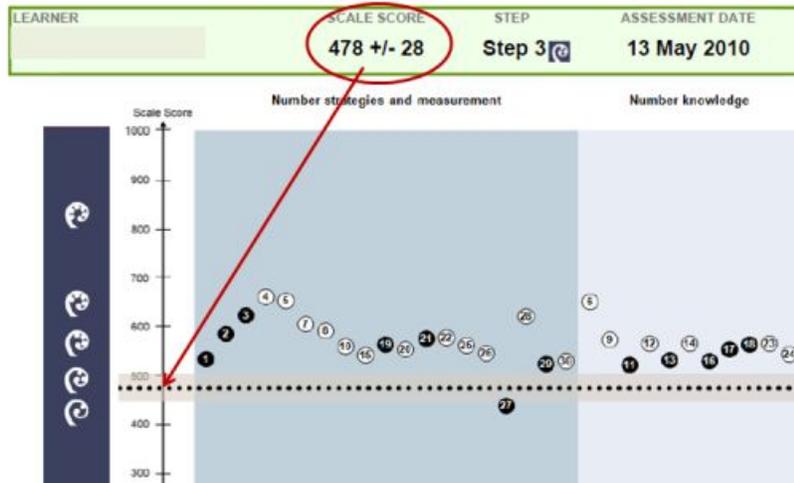
Once you have a working knowledge of the Learning Progressions you'll be able to focus on better teaching by understanding:

- The numeracy demands of your training
- The numeracy strengths and needs of your learners, and
- What you need to do to move your learners on to the next step in terms of their numeracy skill development.

As with literacy there are implications for you relating to assessment. Vocational tutors in New Zealand use the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT) to do numeracy assessments as well.

The LNAAT generates a detailed report for each learner showing key numeracy strengths and needs. It looks like this.

Learner Assessment Report, Numeracy



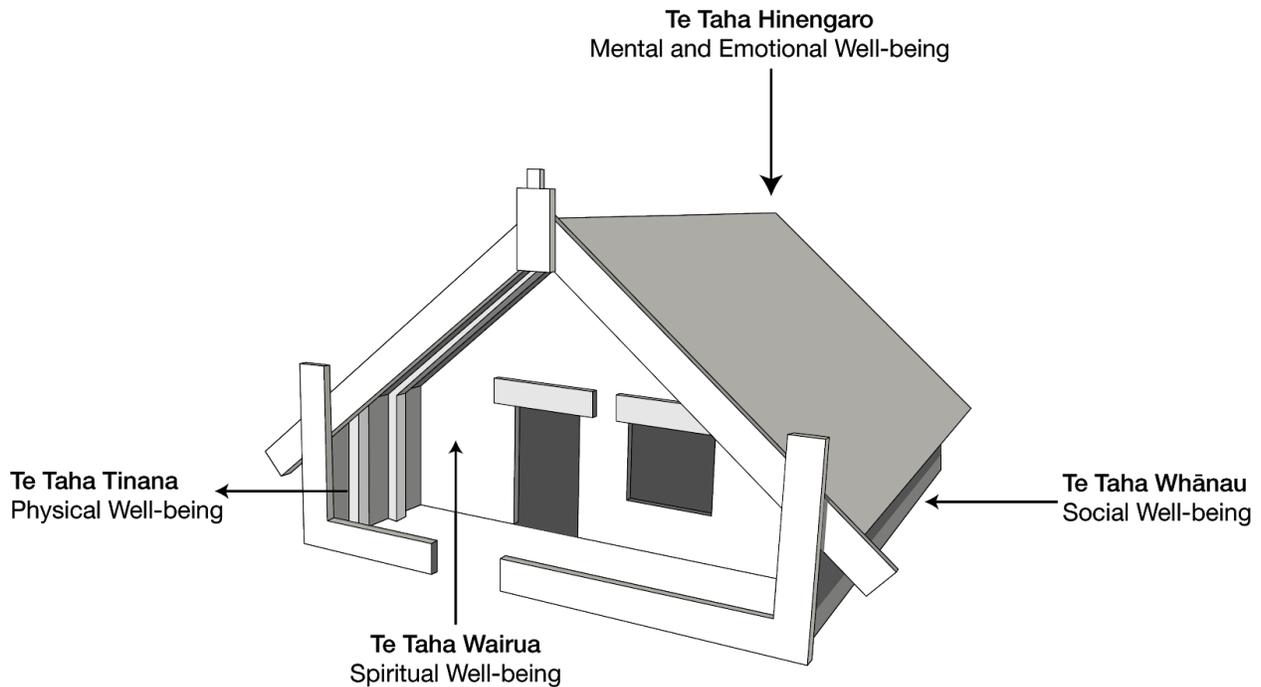
As noted earlier, if you use an assessment tool like this, make sure that you have access to the reports.

In an ideal world, you should have electronic access through the tool itself. But if you don't, then ask your administrator to email them to you.

It's worth looking for further training on this, or asking a more experienced educator to show you how to make sense of all the information.

Also, find someone who can teach you about the different kinds of diagnostic tools and processes you can use to become a better, more informed and more successful educator.

Te Whare Tapa Whā



As part of our New Zealand Case Study, there are some good lessons for vocational tutors to learn from Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā concept.

Te Whare Tapa Whā is a holistic model of health and wellbeing also known as hauora. Originally used in the healthcare sector, it's now used in education and other settings including prisoner rehabilitation and career development.

Māori health expert Mason Durie developed the Whare Tapa Whā model of health in 1982. Professor Durie has affiliations with the Rangitane, Ngāti Kauwhata and Ngāti Raukawa tribes of New Zealand.

For over 40 years, Durie has been at the forefront of a transformational approach to Māori health and has played major roles in building the Māori health workforce.

What's it for?

It's for helping you think in a holistic way about health, education or any other issue affecting yourself or someone else.

Visually, it's a representation of a house that shows a Māori wellbeing in four dimensions. These dimensions are the sides of the house:

- Taha wairua - the spiritual domain or well-being of your learner
- Taha tinana - the physical domain or well-being of your learner
- Taha whānau - family or social well-being or domain of your learner
- Taha hinengaro - the mental domain or well-being of your learner

In education, it's a way of thinking about your learners more holistically. If each learner is like a house, then it's important that they are strong in each of the four dimensions.

For example, if one or more sides of the house is weak or broken, then it's likely the roof will fall in.

This way of thinking about our learners means that we have to think beyond the kinds of content that we want to teach. All four dimensions are necessary for strength and stability.

How is it relevant?

It's relevant because you can use your knowledge of Te Whare Tapa Whā to enhance your teaching. This knowledge is drawn from Māori culture, but it's not limited to just working with Māori.

Te Whare Tapa Whā explains the journey of many Māori and other learners and also outlines the tutor's perspective towards this.

When we talk about a learner from the context of Te Whare Tapa Whā, it means we place our learner at the centre. And that means that we can look at our learners in four different ways.

Most of our students go through a journey into our organisations. From the adult learner's perspective, this is the kind of conversation that they're having with themselves even before they enter your classroom:

1. Do I **believe** I can do this course? (Taha wairua).
2. Do I have the **resources** I need to do this course? (Taha tinana).
3. Do I have the **support** to do this course? (Taha whānau)
4. Can I **cope** with the work in this course? (Taha hinengaro)

What does it mean for me?

If you identify as Māori, the Whare Tapa Whā is a framework that allows you to talk about how you probably already work with your learners.

If you are not Māori, the framework allows you to see your learners, particularly Māori and learners from other cultural groups through new eyes.

In this kind of holistic model, things that you think are the priority in your teaching environment, might not be a priority for some of your learners.

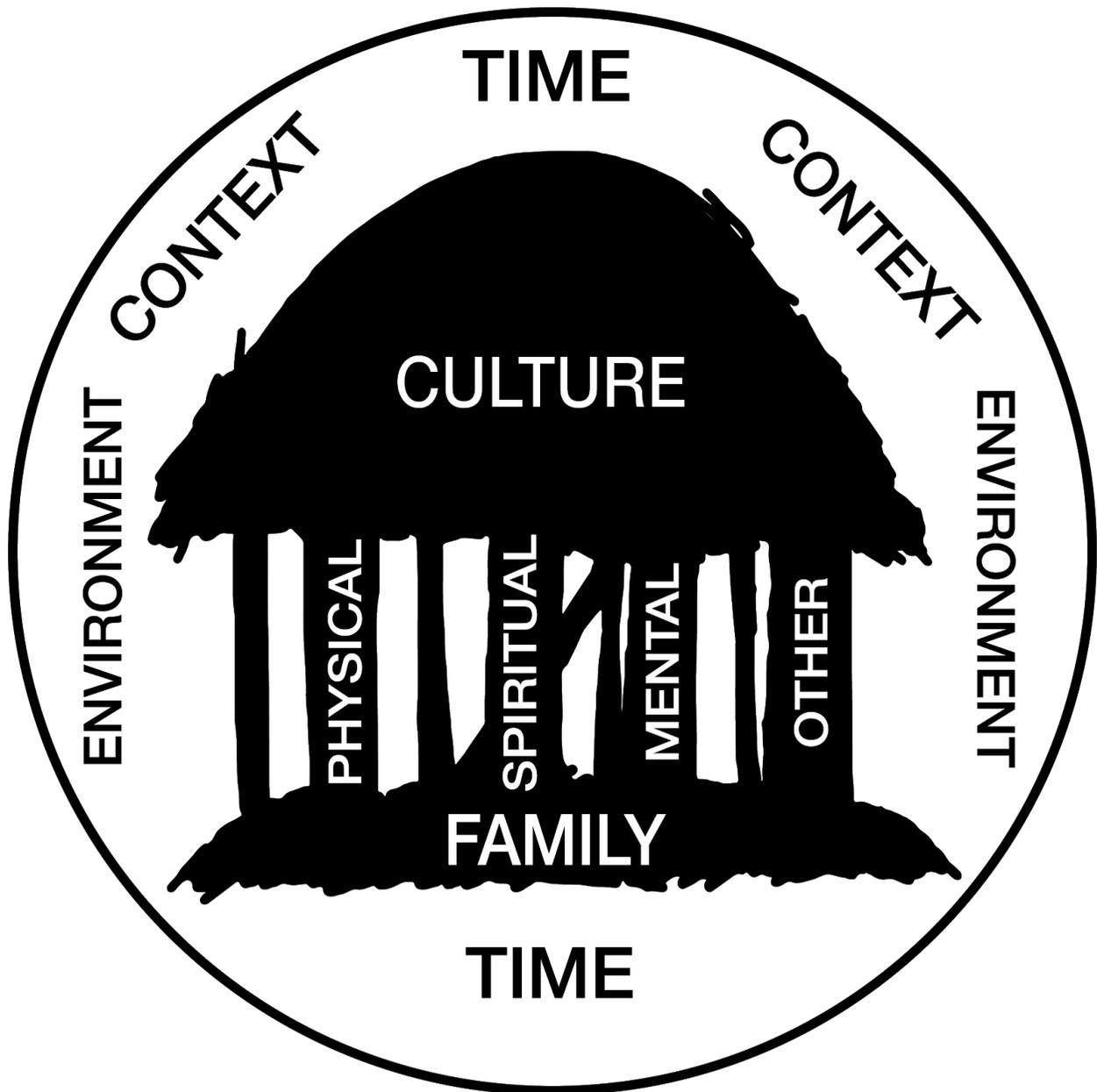
For example, learners who haven't eaten breakfast or lunch are less likely to be interested in your great teaching resources.

One question to ask yourself is this:

- Have you attended to all four domains from the perspective of your learners?

Using Te Whare Tapa Whā will help you create a learning environment that is culturally safe for Māori and other learners. This increases everyone's chances of success.

Fonofale Pasifika



Another aspect of our New Zealand Case Study is the Fonofale. The Fonofale is a holistic, Pasifika model of health and wellbeing. As with Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā it originates in the healthcare sector.

Where does it come from?

The Fonofale Pasifika model was created by Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemann (2009). Pulotu-Endemann is a Samoan-born, New Zealand-based academic and nursing professional.

What's it for?

As with Te Whare Tapa Whā it's designed to help you think about health, education or other aspects of life in a more holistic way.

It's a visual representation of Pasifika values and beliefs. The Samoan *fale* or house describes the important factors of healthy development.

Here are the parts:

- **The foundation.** This is the extended family - the foundation for all Pacific Island cultures.
- **The roof.** The stands for the cultural values and beliefs that are the family's shelter for life. This can include traditional as well as western ways of doing things.
- **The Pou (posts).** These connect the family to the culture. They also depend on each other. They are
 - **Spiritual.** This relates to the sense of wellbeing that comes from Christianity or traditional spirituality or a combination of both.
 - **Physical.** This relates to the wellbeing and physical health of the body.
 - **Mental.** This relates to the mind including thinking and emotional wellbeing as well as behaviours.
 - **Other.** This includes other things like gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, employment, and educational status.

The fale is surrounded by a protective layer. This includes:

- **Environment.** This relates to the relationships that Pasifika people have to their physical environment. This can be rural or urban.
- **Context.** This dimension relates to the “big picture’ for Pasifika including socio-economic or political situations.
- **Time.** This relates to the actual or specific time in history that impacts on Pasifika people.

How is it relevant?

It’s relevant because you can use your knowledge of the Fonofale to enhance your teaching. As with Te Whare Tapa Whā, this knowledge is not limited to just working with the people groups it represents.

This approach is also relevant because it will help create a learning environment that is culturally safe for Pasifika learners.

What does it mean for me?

If you identify as Pasifika, the Fonofale is a framework that allows you to talk about how you probably already work with your learners.

If you are not Pasifika, the framework allows you to see your learners, particularly your Pacific Island learners in a different way, perhaps closer to how they see themselves.

Here are some questions from the learner’s point of view to help you focus on each part of the Fonofale model:

- Do I have **support** from my family to do this course? (Family).
- Does this course connect with my Pacific **cultural** values and beliefs? (Culture).
- Do I have the **resources** to do this course? (Physical).
- Do I **believe** that I can do this course? (Spiritual).
- Can I **cope** with the workload? (Mental).
- Is there anything that’s going to get in the way of my **goals** here? (Others).

- Are my **surroundings**, including home and work, going to help me achieve? (Environment).
- Can I **afford** to do this at the **moment**? (Context and time).

It may not always be possible to always attend to all dimensions of the Fonofale for all of your Pasifika learners.

But one big implication is that if you have learners who are struggling, or who are not engaged, then the Fonofale may help you work out where the problem is and how to deal with it. And in doing so, you're on the path to success.

ESOL Starting Points

The Starting Points framework allows tutors to focus on learning that happens at or before koru/step 1 on the Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy. This is often in an ESOL context.

What's it for?

If you work with ESOL learners, the Starting Points framework allows you to focus on seven important areas that provide support for working out how to read and write words.

The Starting Points represent critical skills and knowledge that are essential for supporting adult literacy development.

Without these skills and knowledge, it is unlikely that learners will make much headway with more advanced reading and writing skills.

The Starting Points are not represented by a grid with strands and steps like the Learning Progressions. This is because the skills and knowledge are closely related and cross over.

Here are the seven knowledge areas you'll need to focus on with your ESOL learners:

1. **Listening vocabulary.** This includes the words a person recognises when they hear them in spoken language.
2. **Phonological awareness.** This refers to a learner's ability to hear, recognise, and use the sounds that make up spoken words.
3. **Sound-letter relationships.** This is the ability to make connections between sounds and the letters that represent them.
4. **Print and word concepts.** This refers to the rules that govern the use of the written language.
5. **Letter formation.** This relates to how well someone can form letters so they can write down words.

6. **Environmental print.** This refers to the words and images found out and about. This can include billboards, advertising, signs and labels.
7. **High-interest words.** These are words that are personally important that learners might recognise on sight. An example would be someone's own name or a brand like McDonalds.

How is it relevant?

The ESOL Starting Points will not be relevant for everyone. For example, if you are teaching a higher level vocational training programme it's unlikely that you will need to use the Starting Points.

However, if you are teaching a programme that involves new migrants, refugees, or other pre-literate learners then the Starting Points could be relevant and useful.

What does it mean for me?

If you do have low-level ESOL learners, you will probably need to use some kind of ESOL assessment. In New Zealand, workplace tutors often use the Starting Points reading assessment. This is part of the LNAAT.

Thinking about the five frameworks

As with the definitions, it's a good idea to pause here and think about what you've read so far.

If you're serious about creating and sustaining learner success in your vocational programme, you should reflect on each of these frameworks and think about how they apply to you as a teacher or trainer.

Think about your own situation and how you would answer these questions in your own words:

1. What's the framework for?
2. How is it relevant to your own teaching situation?
3. What are the implications for you?
4. Is there something you need to do?

3. Why do we have low adult literacy and numeracy?

It's difficult to say with precision what is causing the problem of low adult literacy and numeracy in developed Western countries.

What we can say though is that low adult literacy and numeracy skills are associated with certain kinds of things.

Just because two things happen together doesn't always mean that one causes the other. This is an easy mistake to make.

In technical terms: "Correlation does not imply causation."

So the point is to be cautious when we're talking about what we think is causing the problem.

That said, here's a list of things that often crop up in discussions about what's causing low skills in the adult population in literacy and numeracy:

- The impact of colonisation.
- Socio-economic factors
- Cycles of poverty
- Poor teaching
- Technology

We'll have a look at each of these next.

The impact of colonisation

Colonisation refers to the loss of sovereignty by one group to another group. The impact of colonisation, in terms of its enduring legacy and effects on the colonised, is associated with low levels of literacy and numeracy.

The historical phenomenon of colonisation stretches around the globe and across time. In our New Zealand Case Study this refers to the colonisation of Māori by the British Crown and European settlers.

You can make your own parallels depending on where you are in the world, but let's dig into the New Zealand story.

In the 1800s colonisation directly impacted Māori life expectancy. Sometimes this was from warfare, but often it was from illness and introduced diseases.

Māori had no immunity to illnesses brought by settlers that were common in Europe. This included measles, mumps, and whooping cough. All of these took a terrible toll among Māori.

In the European population, these diseases often affected children. But among Māori, these affected both adults and children.

In the 19th century too, introduced respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and tuberculosis also killed large numbers of Māori.

Loss of Māori land following the 1860s wars, Crown purchase and the Native Land Court led to the displacement of large numbers of Māori. Losing their land reduced many tribes to poverty and living conditions that were overcrowded and unhygienic.

Loss of land also meant they lost access to traditional food sources. Poor diet helped disease take hold and spread.

Māori life expectancy began to increase in the late 1890s and the population began to recover as Māori gained immunity to European diseases.

Despite improvements in the first half of the 20th century, Māori were also still severely disadvantaged socially and economically. This meant poorer housing and nutrition than Pākehā, or non-Māori New Zealanders.

In 1979, just 139 years after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), Māori academics believed that the loss of the Māori language, Te Reo, was so great that it would suffer language death.

The main cause of this was colonisation and a state policy of assimilation. In some cases, there are specific pieces of legislation regarding education that we can link to this loss.

Since the 1970s, though we have seen many gains in including:

- The development of special character Māori-language immersion kindergartens (kōhanga reo), schools (Kura Kaupapa), and tertiary institutions (whare wānanga).
- The recognition of Māori as an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand in 1987.
- Māori broadcasting since 1989 and Māori television since 2004.

The impact of colonisation on Māori is far reaching. It extends into politics, spirituality, economics, society and psychology.

For Māori, colonisation means dealing with the impacts of devastating loss including the loss of:

- Land
- Power
- Identity
- Status
- Language

- Culture

The impact has been intergenerational. And this is not a comprehensive list, but enduring impacts include:

- Low levels of participation and achievement in positive indicators such as education and economic well-being.
- Over-representation in negative indicators such as drug and alcohol abuse and imprisonment rates.

Questions

Here's a good place to stop and think about the impact of colonisation on your own learners.

1. What do you know about colonisation?
2. What do you see as the enduring effects of colonisation in education, and in particular, on learner success?
3. What do you do in your teaching or training to value other languages or cultures?
4. What more could you do to strengthen the overall well-being of learners in your care who may be living with the legacy effects of colonisation?

Socio-economic factors

There are a number of socio-economic factors associated with low levels of adult literacy and numeracy.

This includes issues in relation to education, income and occupation that have a negative influence on someone's position in relation to others in society.

Sometimes this relates to the kind of home environment that a person grew up in. For example, the following kinds of home life are sometimes associated with low levels of literacy and numeracy.

A home environment:

- That is chronically stressful. For example, if parents are distressed
- Where there are few books or reading is not valued
- Where parents may be unable to afford resources such as books, computers, or extra tuition needed to create positive literacy and numeracy experiences
- Where parents have less time available to read to their children at younger ages, or provide academic support as they get older

The kind of school environment someone grew up in has an impact too. For example,

- Schooling that doesn't meet the needs of learners who struggle for various reasons.
- Poorly trained or inexperienced teachers

In terms of income and occupation, these factors below are often associated with low levels of adult literacy and numeracy.

- Poverty or low incomes
- Unemployment or underemployment

This is not an exhaustive list, but other factor sometimes mentioned may include:

- Poor physical or mental health
- Discrimination because of culture, religious or other reasons.

Questions

Again, it's good to stop and think about the impact of these on your own learners.

1. Can you identify the socio-economic factors affecting your own learners and community?
2. Which factors can you positively influence?
3. Which factors are outside of your control?

Cycles of poverty

Poverty is one of the socio-economic factors mentioned earlier. A cycle of poverty is what happens when poor families become impoverished for at least three or more generations.

What this often means is that enough time passes so the family includes no surviving ancestors who possess and transmit the intellectual, social, and cultural capital necessary to change their impoverished condition.

This is the kind of poverty trap that many low-income families find themselves in. They often don't have the resources to get out of poverty, such as education, savings, or connections.

Learners from families who are trapped in this kind of vicious cycle are more likely to struggle with literacy and numeracy as adults.

Often, people trapped in a cycle of poverty need some kind of outside intervention to help break out of it.

Early childhood intervention is a key strategy in breaking the poverty trap. Adult education focused on foundation learning skills including literacy and numeracy is another strategy.

Questions

Let's pause again and think about your learners.

1. Do you have learners who seem trapped by cycles of poverty?
2. Is there a framework or approach that you could use that would allow you to work with your learners from a more holistic perspective?
3. What other support services, either inside or outside your organisation, could you promote to your learners?

Poor teaching

Poor teaching is another factor that we often associate with low levels of adult literacy and numeracy. This applies to teaching in schools as well as in the tertiary sector with adults.

Poor teaching reinforces adult learners' negative beliefs about literacy and numeracy. For example, if an adult student thinks that she "can't do maths", this is reinforced when a tutor fails to notice her needs or skips over an important explanation of what happens in a calculation.

These beliefs are hard enough to change without making things worse for learners.

Also, beware...! What looks like great classroom behaviour doesn't always mean that there's been great teaching.

Just because students have their heads down doesn't always mean that they understand what you've taught them.

On the flip side, a chaotic noisy classroom doesn't always mean students are distracted and not engaged.

In the tertiary sector, many vocational education tutors are recruited from industry. This is as it should be.

But it also means that while these tutors might have the right kinds of skills and qualifications, they often need professional development opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

And this includes embedding literacy and numeracy into their teaching.

Whether this is well supported or not often depends on the organisation or incentives provided by funding bodies or government.

For example, in New Zealand some funded training now requires that vocational tutors hold specific adult teaching qualifications which include knowledge about how to teach literacy and numeracy skills.

Questions

Time for a cup of coffee and some more things to think about:

1. If you're reading this book, you're already likely part of the solution. But what about your organisation... are they supportive of professional development opportunities?
2. What about your colleagues? Are they ready to make changes to the way they teach?
3. What about your learners? How do you really know whether they understand or not?

Technology

The impact of technology and accelerating technological change is one of the themes that often comes up in discussion about why we face literacy and numeracy problems in the 21st century.

The relentless march of technology and appearance of increasing technological complexity mean that the demands of work and life have changed significantly in recent years compared to previous generations.

Adult learners today face literacy and numeracy demands today that simply did not exist before. Or at least they did not exist in the same way due to the increasing integration of computers, mobile devices, and the internet in our daily lives and work.

This change is highly visible and means that we may need to develop new "literacies" including digital literacy in order to keep learning and address gaps that could emerge between the "technologically" rich and poor.

Your learners are likely to be at a disadvantage if they can't access online resources and services for work or daily life.

This access, though, is a double-edged sword for many as with access to resources and services often comes access to new ways of being unproductive via social media, online gaming and new forms of addiction.

Questions

Let's pause again for a few moments. Think about your answers to the following:

- What impact has technology had on your industry or vocational area?
- What about the impact of technology on how you teach or assess your learners?
- What do you do, or can you do, to help encourage digital literacy?

What's the problem? Thinking deeper

By now you should have had some time to think about what's causing the problem of low adult literacy and numeracy? Or at least, you've had some time to think about the factors that we associate with low literacy and numeracy levels.

Here's what we've covered:

- The impact of colonisation
- Socio-economic factors
- Cycles of poverty
- Poor teaching
- Technology

After this you should have a look at some of the approaches we use in adult teaching. Check out my guides on these:

- [What is Learner-Centred? 12 Concepts from Te Ao Māori You Should Embrace to Create Learning Success](#)
- [Three Simple Approaches You Need for Learner Centred Teaching](#)

Before that, though, you should have a think about your answers to the questions below.

Talking about what you think with someone, and then writing down your responses will help you engage with your work more deeply.

- What do you think about what we've discussed so far?
- Are there any aspects that you really like?
- Is there anything here that you can use or absorb into your own teaching and training?
- What value can you see in the Māori and Pasifika frameworks?
- Do you think you'll need to refer to the ESOL Starting Points framework?
- What factors cause the biggest impact on your learners?

Who Is Graeme Smith?

I'm a writer, teacher and maker. And I'm available for inspiration, innovation, creation and education-related consulting, advisory and other work in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

Writing

I love writing and [on my blog](#) I've written over a thousand articles on a multitude of topics.

This includes craft and craftsmanship, leatherwork, writing, entrepreneurship, service design, design thinking, capability building, professional development, adult education, vocational education, instructional design, adult literacy & numeracy, education technology, export education, cultural competency and ESOL.

In addition to what you'll find [on my blog](#), I've written courses, technical documents, how-to guides, compliance documentation, funding applications, reviews, research, fiction and more.

Teaching

My education work encompasses professional development with vocational teachers and foundation educators, consulting with government departments and tertiary education organisations on capability building with a focus on literacy, numeracy and cultural capability.

More recently, the scope of my work has included the development of a professional standards framework with Ako Aotearoa, through to micro-credentials, digital badging, education technology and teaching leatherwork, craftsmanship and writing.

If you enjoyed reading this or you found something useful, you might also like to get these two which are in the same series and extend some of the concepts we've started discussing here:

- [What is learner centred? 12 concepts from Te Ao Māori you should embrace to create learning success.](#)
- [Three simple approaches you need for learner-centred teaching.](#)

Making

As well as making courses and resources and delivering training in my education work I also write and record music and love to make cool stuff out of leather, wood and other materials.

You can find my music by searching for [THISISGRAEME](#) on all music media platforms including [Spotify](#) and [Youtube](#).

Or check out my leatherwork and other fun projects on the [Smith Bros Supply Co Instagram](#) page or [here on my blog](#).

Find Out More Or Get In Touch

Where to find me

If you want to know more about my work, you can:

- [Read my blog](#)
- [Follow me on Twitter](#)
- [Connect with me on LinkedIn](#)
- [Follow Smith Bros on Instagram](#)
- [Listen to my music on Spotify or Youtube](#)

Work with me

If you want to work with me, talk about any of the concepts in this book, or discuss anything else that I do, you can:

- Email graeme@thisisgraeme.me
- [Contact me via my blog](#) or any of the social channels listed above