

The Six Strategies | 4

Tertiary Education Strategy | 2002/07
Baseline Monitoring Report

Raise foundation skills so that all people can participate in our knowledge society

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Objectives

- Significantly improved adult foundation skill levels, achieved through increased access to foundation education in a range of learning contexts.
- Clearer accountability for quality and outcomes within foundation education, including a greater focus on assessment.
- A common understanding of the definition of foundation skills and of best practice teaching in this area.
- Improved linkages between secondary and tertiary education, and improved staircasing for learners within tertiary education.

What are foundation competencies and skills?

While this strategy refers to the need to *Raise Foundation Skills so that all People can Participate in our Knowledge Society*, it is not just **skills** that will be important, but rather **knowledge, skills and dispositions** that will be needed by people to be competent in a knowledge society. In this report, we use the term foundation competencies in recognition of this wider understanding of what is needed to participate in a knowledge society.

Foundation competencies are a set of skills, knowledge and dispositions in the areas of language, literacy and numeracy. These are essential to continued learning and active participation in society and family/whānau roles, as well as employment. Foundation competencies include cross-cutting skills, such as the ability to use technology. They should not be conceived of as a list of discreet and specific competencies, but rather as a bundle of commonly required, interrelated competencies. In the New Zealand context, language includes English and/or te reo Māori. Māori language is the gateway to te ao Māori and Māori culture and values. It needs not only to be preserved, but be a language of communication across communities and accessible to all New Zealanders.

Foundation competencies are developed within wider contexts linked to larger purposes. These contexts and purposes are likely to require competencies beyond language, literacy and numeracy.

The level, complexity and types of foundation competencies required are continually increasing, particularly with regard to the increased sophistication and use of technology and the greater cultural and social diversity of society. Foundation competencies are no longer just a set of knowledge and skills acquired at school as a prerequisite for entering tertiary education and/or employment. They need to be continually updated and improved throughout life, which means access to foundation education for all age groups will be increasingly important.

Higher levels of literacy are now required in most jobs. People require much more literacy to interact with their world in general. The economic development of the country is much more dependent on people having the ability to engage with information and knowledge in their work. Raising foundation competencies across the population is therefore critical to New Zealand's economic and social development.

The expected change – 2002 to 2007

The overall goal of this strategy is to ensure that foundation learning results in real gains for learners and, over time, results in significantly improved literacy, numeracy and language levels in the population. This requires moving foundation learning from a relatively marginal position within the tertiary education system to being a core activity, underpinned by informed professional practice and improved diagnostic and teaching tools, as well as improving access for those who are not currently participating.

The education system is responsible for ensuring that all New Zealanders acquire the foundation competencies that they need to function effectively in society. The compulsory education system needs to continue to have a strong emphasis on ensuring that all students attain the needed knowledge, skills, attitudes and values before leaving school. The tertiary education sector's responsibility is to provide foundation education for those who did not attain these competencies at school, for whatever reason, and for adults who need to update and further build on their competency levels.

A staged approach to change is being implemented. In the short term, there is a need for increased teaching capability in foundation learning, coupled with a greater focus on the quality of provision and the outcomes for learners. This needs to include developing a common language to describe foundation competencies across the tertiary education system.

There is a need to develop professional practice in foundation learning across the tertiary education system. A large amount of foundation learning is taught by volunteers. There is limited training and education available in teaching adults foundation competencies. There is little sense of identity of foundation learning as a coherent area of professional practice across programmes, provider types and modes of delivery.

Development of professional practice needs to include a stronger focus on diagnosis of learner needs, assessment of progress and reporting of attainment. It needs to be based on an understanding of how adults acquire competencies and how they can adapt competencies acquired through education to other life contexts.

It is expected that there will be improved connections and clearer pathways for learners between foundation learning and other types of education, including from school to tertiary education. This will require stronger connections between TEOs and schools, as well as between TEOs themselves.

There needs to be better understanding of how and why learners do and do not move from foundation learning to other learning. There needs to be more emphasis on ensuring that learners have support to move into other learning. This requires a greater focus on the needs of the individual learner and greater flexibility of programme provision and funding.

Over time, there will be an emphasis on increasing the availability of foundation learning to a greater number and range of learners. There is a need to address gaps between existing provision and to identify the learners who are currently not being well served. There is currently a mix of strategies in tertiary education that includes a foundation learning aspect and a focus on particular learners (such as Adult Literacy and ESOL) or types of provision (such as Adult and Community Education). These strategies are central to achieving progress on this Strategy. However, it is known that these do not cover all learners in need of foundation learning.

The baseline picture in 2002

The 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey shows that a significant proportion of adult New Zealanders would face challenges in coping with the range of material found in everyday life and work in a knowledge economy and society. This is largely consistent with results from Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. It reflects the legacy of education systems that had undue focus on differentiating learners between academic and vocational and an industrial system that did not require particularly high levels of literacy in the workforce.

The 2001 Health of the Māori Language Survey confirmed that te reo Māori remains in a precarious position. While 25 percent of the Māori population can speak some Māori, only 15 percent can make use of it to a reasonable degree. The knowledge of te reo Māori in the non-Māori population remains low with less than one percent able to speak it to any degree.



In the period to 2002, there was a fairly stable pattern of nearly one in five school leavers each year leaving school without any qualifications. These proportions were higher for Māori and Pasifika school leavers. These people are much more likely to have low foundation competencies and find it much more difficult to move into tertiary education later in life.

At the same time, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of school leavers moving directly into tertiary education. This has been assisted by programmes such as STAR and Gateway, as well as local level connections between schools and tertiary providers. Youth Training provides an option for students who have disengaged from school to gain entry to further education.

Programmes such as adult literacy and training opportunities were important providers of foundation education, particularly for people who have been disadvantaged in education and employment. However, there has also been a significant growth in provision of foundation education courses through TEOs in 2002. This has partly been driven by Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's Mahi Ora programme. However, provision through polytechnics has also increased.

There has been a similar growth in the provision of te reo Māori courses, through both wānanga and polytechnics. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's Te Ara Reo course significantly increased the availability of te reo learning throughout the country, particularly in more isolated areas.

A new policy framework for foundation learning will be implemented progressively over the next three years. The initial focus is on improving quality and raising expectations. An early start has been made with the adult literacy achievement framework. A broadening of access and expansion of provision will take effect from 2006.

Further development of monitoring

Future monitoring will have a greater focus on completion of foundation learning courses and progression to other learning. It will also look at how TEOs are determining their specific contributions to foundation learning provision, including actions taken to improve the integration of foundation learning to core provision and provide support for progression to other learning. Foundation learning within industry training is a specific area that needs further attention within monitoring.

As the new policy framework for foundation learning is implemented, monitoring will have a greater focus on the quality of provision. Information should be able to be gathered from the application of achievement frameworks and assessment tools to look at learner achievement and progression through different programmes and pathways. The emphasis on professional practice in TEOs will also be monitored.

As quality provision is broadened, access to foundation education by groups who were previously not well represented will need to be measured. This will require improved information on what happens to people who leave school without qualifications and the extent to which they enter foundation education later in life.

The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (to be conducted in 2004/05) will provide updated information on literacy levels in the adult population. It is also likely to provide broader measures, giving a more accurate picture of foundation competencies.

The 2006 Census will provide an update on the extent to which Māori is spoken in the population. While there are no plans currently to repeat the Health of the Māori Language Survey in the form it was undertaken in 2001, Statistics New Zealand is considering how the key questions from the survey can be incorporated into an ongoing programme of social surveys.

Foundation competencies in the New Zealand population

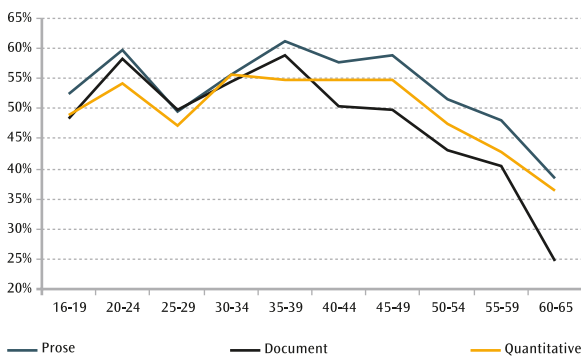
Half of the adult population have low functional literacy and numeracy

In 1996, New Zealand participated in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). This survey assessed functional literacy (prose and document) and numeracy in English across the adult population. Functional literacy and numeracy assess the application of literacy and numeracy skills to real life situations. It involves more than just an assessment of the ability to read and manipulate numbers. It assesses the ability to get useful meaning from words and numbers to solve problems. However, this survey measures only some dimensions of foundation competencies and is narrower than the concept being addressed by this strategy.

IALS showed that around 20 percent of adult New Zealanders had very poor functional literacy skills and could be expected to experience considerable difficulties in using many of the printed materials that may be encountered in everyday life. About 30 percent more of the population would be able to use some printed material, but this would generally be relatively simple. Only half of the population had the ability to cope with a varied range of material found in everyday life and at work.

In aggregate, New Zealand's results were consistent with results from Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. However, there were differences in age bands. New Zealanders aged 16 to 19 years were about twice as likely to be in the lowest level of literacy compared with the same age group in Australia and Canada.

Figure 33: Percentage of each age group with adequate⁸ functional literacy, 1996



Source: International Adult Literacy Survey, 1996

⁸ Adequate is defined as level 3 or above on the scales used in the survey.

The survey found that Māori and Pasifika peoples were more likely to have low levels of functional literacy. While it found that 60 percent of Pākehā had adequate levels of functional literacy, only around 30 percent of Māori and Pasifika peoples had adequate levels of functional literacy in English. For Pasifika peoples this reflects, in part, the numbers for whom English is a second language.

The survey found a strong relationship between literacy and educational attainment. It showed that completion of secondary schooling was a significant positive influence on the level of literacy and having a tertiary education was related to higher levels of literacy. However, it also found that 20 percent of those with a tertiary education qualification had inadequate functional literacy in English. Within this group, around one-third did not have English as a first language. Of those that did have English as a first language, three-quarters had tertiary qualifications below degree level.

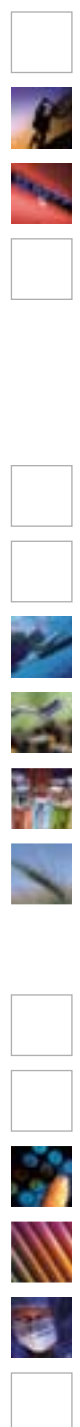
Te reo Māori continues to struggle for survival

The TES recognises that foundation competencies include literacy in te reo Māori. There are currently major efforts to revitalise te reo Māori and increase the number of people who use it and the situations in which it is used. Te reo Māori education through the tertiary sector plays an important role in language revitalisation, as well as maintaining and developing the variety within the language in its use in different situations.

The 2001 Census found that there were around 130,000 Māori and 30,000 non-Māori who reported they could speak some Māori. These numbers represent 25 percent and one percent of the populations respectively.

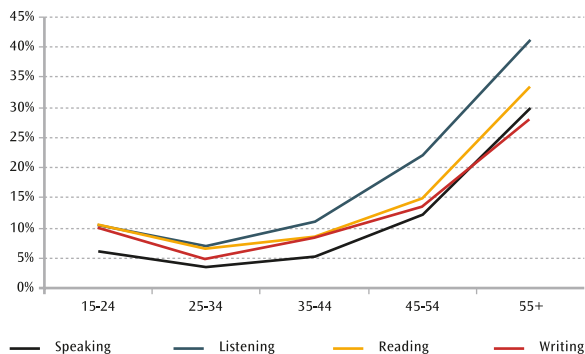
Following the Census a survey was undertaken of the Māori population aged 15 years and over, looking at the health of the Māori language. This survey included self-assessment of language proficiency in terms of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The Survey on the Health of the Māori Language found that 15 percent of the Māori population were proficient in at least one or more of these four areas to a level where they could understand or say many things in the language (ie they could speak, write, read or listen 'well' or 'very well'). The proportion of people with higher proficiency increased with age. However, higher proficiency



was more common in the 15 to 24 year age group than in the 25 to 34 year age group. This points to a level of success in improving language proficiency in younger speakers.

Figure 34: Percentage of Māori population proficient⁹ in te reo Māori by age, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Survey on the Health of the Māori Language, 2001

Moving from school to tertiary education

Each year, one in five school leavers leaves with no qualifications

The qualifications that a student gains at school play a significant role in the extent and ease with which they gain further education through the tertiary sector. Those who leave school without qualifications will generally require further foundation education before they can progress into higher levels of study in tertiary education. Those who do gain qualifications have a much wider choice of tertiary study that they can gain entry to.

In 2002, 18 percent of all school leavers left school without any qualifications. Thirty-five percent of Māori school leavers and 26 percent of Pasifika school leavers left school in 2002 without any qualifications¹⁰.

In terms of successfully gaining a moderate level of qualifications at school, 63 percent of all school leavers in 2002 had attained Sixth Form Certificate in at least one subject, or higher. However, only 39 percent of Māori school leavers and 54 percent of Pasifika school leavers attained at least this level of qualification.

These proportions have been fairly stable for all groups, with and without qualifications, over the previous four years.

More school leavers are going straight on to tertiary study

The proportion of school leavers progressing directly to tertiary education increased between 1999 and 2002. Nearly half of the students who left school in 2001 went directly on to tertiary study in 2002. However, the proportions were lower for Māori and Pasifika leavers (37 percent and 35 percent respectively).

The large majority of those school leavers who proceeded directly to tertiary education enrolled in full-time study, and around half chose to study for a degree. However, the growth in immediate post-school enrolment in tertiary institutions has come mainly from students choosing to study at a lower level, for a certificate qualification. Māori and Pasifika school leavers were more likely to enter tertiary study at this level¹¹.

Initiatives to support the transition to tertiary study

Building connections between TEOs and schools

The connections between tertiary providers and schools are significant to encouraging students on to tertiary education. These connections need to be not just with Year 12 and 13 students, but right through from Year 8, when students start to make decisions about their subject selection, potential careers and tertiary options. In some areas, schools and tertiary providers are working at the local level to improve pathways and access to tertiary education. These initiatives involve aligning school curricula with tertiary programmes and building relationships between tertiary providers and local schools.

Improved career education

The implementation of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), the growth of vocational education and training in schools, expanding tertiary pathways, and a dynamic labour market are presenting young people with increasingly complex choices. Ongoing access to quality individualised careers information, advice and guidance is vital to enable individuals to make informed educational, training and occupational choices and plan their transition from school to career throughout their lives.

Career education in schools lays the foundation for successful transitions to tertiary education.

⁹ Proficient is defined as able to speak, write, read or listen well or very well.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education, *New Zealand Schools: Ngā Kura o Aotearoa 2002*.

¹¹ Ministry of Education, *New Zealand Schools: Ngā Kura o Aotearoa 2002*.

Career Services provides a range of services to both students and influencers from Year 7 to Year 13. In 2002, Career Services launched the Informed Tertiary Education Decision Making initiative, which aims to enhance the ability of potential tertiary students to make appropriate tertiary education related decisions.

Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) scheme

The STAR scheme has been available to secondary schools since 1996, enabling them to purchase tertiary courses not conventionally available from schools. It is intended to help schools provide a smooth transition from school to employment and study, as well as improve retention in senior secondary schooling.

Over 130,000 students participated in STAR programmes in 2002. A review of the STAR funding in 2002¹² found that:

- there was some tension between the two aims of the programme – facilitating transition from school to employment or further study and improving retention at school
- schools were offering a range of courses, including industry-related, generic skills and courses to meet academic needs of students. The mix of course types varied between schools
- there were high levels of participation by Year 11 to 13 students in STAR-funded courses.

Gateway

The Gateway programme was launched in January 2001 to broaden educational options for senior secondary school students by offering them workplace learning opportunities integrated into general educational provision. It is available to decile one to five schools only.

In 2002, 1,162 students participated in Gateway and were placed across 50 industries. The six most popular industries were hospitality, automotive, retail, tourism, engineering and building. Students on the programme not only made greater educational gains, but also had improved attitude, behaviour and career development outcomes and were more likely to stay on at school. It provided them with opportunities to explore industry and careers interests, as well as gain qualifications. Twenty-two percent of 2002 participants moved on to full-time employment, including Modern Apprenticeships, and 65 percent carried on to further education and training. The latter figure

is considerably higher than the overall proportion of school leavers going directly on to further education and training (48 percent of students who left school in 2001)¹³.

One of the positive effects of Gateway has been the development of stronger relationships between schools and employers. Employers have benefited from exposure to potential employees and have also developed skills in training. Schools have benefited from greater interaction with employers and the workplace¹⁴.

Youth training

Youth Training provides an option for young people to the age of 18, who have disengaged from school, to gain the foundation competencies required for further education and employment. Training includes a focus on literacy and numeracy, as well as work-related skills.

A total of 12,530 individuals participated in Youth Training during 2002. This was similar to the previous year. Forty-five percent of participants were Māori and 10 percent Pasifika. In 2002, 47 percent of participants moved into employment within two months of completing the programme and 24 percent into further education or training outside the programme.

General provision of foundation education

The majority of foundation education is provided through the general provision of TEOs and largely funded as part of general student funding.

Significant increase in foundation learning courses

While it is difficult to specify and identify exactly which courses cover foundation education, there is a group of courses focused on foundation competencies. These courses are categorised as ‘mixed-field programmes’ and cover general education, social skills and employment skills programmes. The following analysis uses data on these courses as an indicator for provision of foundation competency courses at all levels of tertiary education.

It should be noted that this analysis focuses on courses specifically designed to teach foundation competencies and doesn’t cover teaching of foundation competencies within subject-based courses. Therefore, it only captures part of the provision of foundation learning within tertiary education.



¹² Vaughn, K and Kenneally, N (March 2003) *A Constellation of Prospects, a review of STAR, Report to the Ministry of Education*, New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

¹³ Ministry of Education, *New Zealand Schools Ngā Kura o Aotearoa 2002*.

¹⁴ Tertiary Education Commission, *Evaluation of the Gateway Pilot, Final Report*, March 2003.

Between 2000 and 2002, the provision of mixed-field courses has increased substantially. In 2002, there were 81,000 people enrolled in one or more of these courses. This is a 230 percent increase over the 24,500 students studying in 2000¹⁵.

In 2002, the majority of these students (88 percent) were enrolled as either domestic or international fee-paying students. Five percent were funded through Training Opportunities, Youth Training or Industry Training and four percent through Prison Education. These proportions were fairly similar in previous years.

Within mixed-field courses, the areas that have grown the most from 2000 to 2002 have been general courses, particularly literacy and numeracy, and social skills courses. Just under half of the overall growth in mixed-field courses has been through the wānanga, with the rest of the growth spread across PTEs, polytechnics and universities.

Figure 35: Enrolments in mixed-field courses by qualification level, 2000–2002



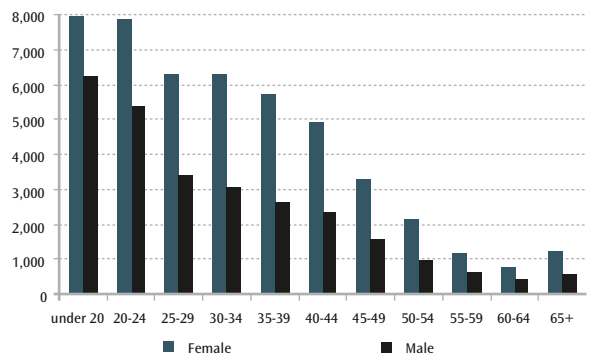
Note: Includes formal and non-formal students enrolled at any time during the year.

In 2002, 97 percent of all people taking mixed-field courses were enrolled in qualifications below degree level. The largest sub-sector providing these courses in 2002 was the wānanga (35 percent of enrolled students), followed by polytechnics (29 percent of students). Seventy-one percent of total enrolled students took formal courses (ie assessed for credit to a qualification). Most of the rest were enrolled in informal courses, either through community education or as unassessed components of Training Opportunities and Youth Training programmes.

People studying for qualifications below degree level in 2002 were most likely to take courses in general education and social skills. There were somewhat lower numbers in employment skills courses. People studying for degrees and postgraduate qualifications were most likely to take courses categorised as learning skills.

Forty-two percent of all students enrolled in mixed-field courses were Māori, 35 percent were Pākehā and six percent were Pasifika. The majority (64 percent) were women. The overall gender distribution is influenced by the high numbers of Māori women enrolled in these types of courses through the wānanga. Half of all students were aged under 30 years. However, 17 percent were aged 45 years and over.

Figure 36: Enrolments in mixed-field courses by age and gender, 2002



Note: Includes formal and non-formal students enrolled at any time during the year.

The largest single programme of study in this area was Te Wānanga o Aotearoa’s Mahi Ora programme. This is a 12-month distance education programme, which leads to the National Certificate in Employment Skills. It covers many aspects of life and work, including educational choices, health, finance, housing and business development within a Māori context. Over 14,000 students were enrolled in 2002. Half of these were undertaking tertiary education for the first time.

¹⁵ Some of the increase between 2000 and 2001 may be due to improved subject coding of courses. From 2001 on virtually all courses were subject coded.

Significant increase in te reo Māori courses

Te reo Māori courses are provided through both formal tertiary study and community education. Nearly all of the students in 2002 were enrolled as either domestic or international fee-paying students. In 2002, the majority of tertiary provision of te reo Māori courses was through the wānanga (65 percent of course enrolments). The polytechnics also played a significant role. Nearly all the provision was below degree level. Nearly a quarter of the people enrolled for these courses were non-Māori. Secondary school community education also provided some te reo Māori courses for adults. The majority of students in these courses are non-Māori.

The significant development behind these figures has been Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's te reo Māori programmes. This wānanga enrolled nearly 11,000 of the 23,000 students engaged in te reo Māori courses in 2002. Their Te Ara Reo Māori courses provided entry-level accelerated learning in te reo Māori, using a range of language learning techniques. The courses were provided around the country and could be easily delivered in remote locations. The courses lead into Te Tohu Mātauranga i Te Reo Māori, which provides more in-depth learning about language and tikanga.

More coherent approach to bridging education

Bridging programmes provide support for students who are under-prepared to meet the entry standards required of a course of study and to develop the competencies necessary for success in tertiary education. Most TEIs offer bridging programmes, as do many PTEs.

Since 2000 there has been a concerted effort to develop cohesion and identity across bridging programmes through the New Zealand Association of Bridging Educators. The impact of bridging education has been the focus of small-scale outcome studies and while this work identifies the success bridging education has had in making tertiary study accessible, there is also much work to be done to reduce the cost to students¹⁶. A survey of bridging programmes in six tertiary providers found a high representation of Māori and Pasifika students (18 percent and 27 percent respectively)¹⁷.

Specific programmes in foundation education

There are a number of programmes specifically funded to provide foundation education. The two major ones are described here.

Adult literacy in English

The Adult Literacy Innovation Pool was set up in 2002 to support provision of adult literacy education by TEIs, PTEs and communities working in partnership with adult literacy providers. It created new opportunities for family literacy projects for Māori and Pasifika peoples and refugee communities. Thirty-six programmes in 10 regions have been funded, reaching over a thousand new learners.

A number of successful workplace literacy pilots and programmes were run in 2002 through Workbase, the National Centre for Literacy and Learning. Workplace literacy programmes were delivered to more than 40 businesses. The TEC worked with five ITOs on workplace literacy projects. Funding was also made available for specific workplace literacy programmes for Māori and Pasifika learners.

Literacy education was also provided to over 7,000 learners through Literacy Aotearoa's 51 member organisations in 2002. A further 7,400 learners received ESOL tuition and resettlement support through migrant literacy programmes.

Training opportunities

Training Opportunities is a key government programme for people who are significantly disadvantaged in employment and education to assist them to move into employment or further education and training. Places are targeted to Ministry of Social Development and Workbridge clients. Training is full time and fully funded and covers generic and life skills, as well as pre-employment skills.

A total of 19,198 people participated in 2002. This was down on previous years, due to funding and purchasing decisions made by the Ministry of Social Development. Forty-two percent of the participants were Māori and 10 percent Pasifika. In 2002, 51 percent of participants moved into employment within two months of completing the programme and 15 percent into further education or training outside the programme.



¹⁶ Stephenson, M, Anderson, H, Millward, P and Rio, N (2002) *The Voices from the Manukau Project, Report to NZARE Conference, Palmerston North*. Coltman, D (2001–2002) MIT Foundation Education Programme's Annual Destination Studies.

¹⁷ The New Zealand Association of Bridging Educators Research Group (2003).

Implementation of new policy arrangements

New policy framework for foundation learning

Work is underway to implement an improved policy framework for foundation learning. Foundation education has, to a large degree, been fragmented and marginalised and lacks consistent support.

The first stage of the new policy framework will be to focus on quality and information. It will include measures to improve the quality of provision, including improvements to the quality assurance of foundation education programmes, new qualifications and professional development resources. The information aspect will focus on developing a common language about foundation learning through measures such as new descriptive standards for achievement and information on how adults progress. One of the aims of this first stage is to get a greater focus on foundation education, and its quality, across all of tertiary education at the certificate and introductory level, and move it from a marginalised position to a core activity.

The second stage will look at broadening access and expanding provision. The second stage will begin to take effect from 2006.

Development of an achievement framework for adult literacy

In 2002, the Ministry of Education started to develop a framework of six achievement profiles to enable tracking of literacy gains for adult learners in reading and writing. The framework provides a common language around literacy gains for learners, tutors and providers and forms the basis for significant professional development for tutors. Trials and associated professional development are currently taking place.

This work leads the way for similar activities in other aspects of foundation learning.