

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Literacy Training Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 7 September 2010

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MoE Number: 9629  
NZQA Reference: C01936  
Date of EER visit: 13 July 2010

# Purpose of this Report

*The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.*

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Location:	Palmerston North
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1994
Number of students:	Domestic: 32.95 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) International: None
Number of staff:	Five full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Literacy Training Ltd (LTL) is accredited across a wide range of domains in communications, business administration, language, and work skills.
Sites:	The office is located in the city centre and most classes are conducted on clients' premises.
Distinctive characteristics:	LTL's mission is: "To provide targeted training to enhance skills". Learners acquire literacy and numeracy skills in the context of their work and in learning for their jobs.
Recent significant changes:	Until the end of June 2010, LTL was providing a Foundation Skills programme for the Corrections Department in 11 prisons from New Plymouth to Invercargill. The nationwide contract for this training was recently awarded to another provider. LTL found places for most of its 20 part-time tutors to work in prisons with the new provider.
Previous quality assurance history:	NZQA's previous quality assurance of LTL was by way of audit in 2006 and LTL met all relevant requirements at that time.

Other: LTL is one of 25 organisations funded to provide Workplace Literacy.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of Literacy Training Ltd (LTL) covered workplace training and the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy.

Workplace training is the core of LTL's business.

## 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/docs/eer-policy-conduct.pdf>*

The EER team comprised one lead evaluator and an external evaluator. The team spoke with the operations manager; corporate manager, two tutors; the administration staff, and two groups of learners during the two days in Palmerston North. The team also viewed a range of spreadsheets of attendance, literacy, numeracy progress, and a range of documents and reports including student files, student evaluations, and the quality management system.

Literacy Training Limited will have an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received will be fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Literacy Training Limited**.

Reasons for this include the following.

- LTL's learners achieve very good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Learners gave evidence of applying the skills they were acquiring through LTL directly in their workplace.
- Learner success through LTL training enables learners to take on wider job responsibilities, complete projects independently, communicate effectively, and become more confident as workers and learners.
- Learners are engaged with further study and foster a learning environment with their families and their communities.

LTL learners' improvement in foundation skills thus has the potential for very positive long-term outcomes.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Literacy Training Limited**.

Reasons for this include the following.

- LTL staff analyse the literacy and numeracy data and optimise the learners' progress.
- LTL's self-assessment is very focussed on outcomes as it seeks to expand its business.
- LTL matches the needs of the company with those of learners to further develop market opportunities which minimises barriers to learning.
- LTL continually assesses how well it is matching learners' needs with its capability to deliver effective, applicable, and timely training.
- LTL is responding very effectively to change.

LTL learns the practices and processes and absorbs the culture of the companies in which its workplace learners are employed. This management-driven striving for real context maximises the effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy training.

## TEO response

Literacy Training Ltd has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

### **Explanation**

LTL's learners achieve very good progress in literacy and numeracy. Supporting evidence was found in the records of progress that LTL keeps. LTL uses the Tertiary Education Commission's Adult Learning Progressions, and learners' perception of improvement in their ongoing skill development backed up this evidence of progress.

The learners acquire useful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities. Learners spoke of applying the skills they were acquiring through LTL directly to their work. They spoke with pride of being able to take on more responsibility by doing the calculations and reasoning required on the job themselves, rather than having to pass them to a supervisor. These included examples of self-management that would not have been possible without their improved skills.

The learners are motivated to engage with further study and contribute to their families and their local communities. Many learners spoke of their commitment to further study, fostering a learning environment within their own families and in their local communities. These potential longer term outcomes are real benefits to the individuals, their employers, and the wider community.

LTL staff (routinely) analyse the literacy and numeracy data they collect to optimise the learners' progress. Evidence was readily found of regular testing and analysis, and of staff reflecting on individuals' progress to ensure their teaching met individual needs. This learner support process is integral to LTL's self-assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

## 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

### **Explanation**

The outcomes of LTL's workplace literacy training have great value for the employers with which LTL is working. Two companies that LTL is currently working with reported the benefits to them from the increasing competency, communication skills, and confidence of their trainees. Helping their employees grow in this way is important for companies needing to address skill shortages. In this way, they position individuals to fill leadership positions from within their own work force and in the process build a positive learning and work culture.

Enabling learners to take on wider job responsibilities is also of great value to the client companies. Learners gave examples of work projects completed independently. They conducted measurements and calculations and wrote reports. They become competent to supervise projects and other staff, and this is of great value to their personal development. The learners also gave examples of improved communication and ability to manage themselves.

Other longer term outcomes are also of great value to the learners. They spoke of the benefits of the training enabling them to:

- expand their technical work knowledge and skills; and
- constantly build their confidence and a positive attitude to learning.

Many learners had left school early but were now eager to learn and were encouraging others to get back into study. Many spoke of now being able to help their children study and of encouraging them to make the most of their schooling. The LTL learners' improvement in foundation skills thus has the potential for very positive long-term outcomes for themselves, their employers, and others of importance to them personally, for example their families/whānau.

Self-assessment at LTL is highly focussed on outcomes as it seeks to expand its business. The staff are actively measuring the outcomes of their present work, and self-assessment is helping them identify areas where they could develop further training opportunities, for example in the community working with youth and families.

### 1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

#### **Explanation**

LTL is focussed completely on matching its programmes with the needs of firms where the workplace learning takes place. Abundant evidence was available of communication and collaboration with firms to establish relevant contexts for the workplace literacy and numeracy learning, as well as to establish suitable timetables and locations which makes it easy for staff to attend with minimum disruption to their work. LTL matches the needs of learners with the capability of the company to deliver and this minimises barriers to learning.

The programmes and activities provided match the needs of the learners. All learners complete initial screening tests to establish their skill levels and strengths and weaknesses. Learners' files showed that LTL staff members discuss the results from these tests individually with learners and work closely with individuals to develop learning plans with clear targets and milestones.

With the encouragement and support of LTL, one firm has formed a peer support group for its workplace learners. This requires and involves student representatives and managers continually assessing how the training is going and together with LTL suggesting and implementing improvements. LTL continually assesses how well its teaching matches and meets the needs of learners.

### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

#### **Explanation**

The LTL tutors and their workplace learners relate well to one another. The tutors are well qualified, experienced, and well matched to groups with which they work. Clear evidence exists that the learners valued and respected the tutors and were actively engaged in their learning. Positive relationships between the learners and tutors, and among the learners, sustain a strong learning culture.

The activities and resources provided engage the learners effectively. The tutors meet the learners' need for a balance between variety and continuity in classroom activities. Learners gave examples of "brain warm-ups", formative tests, classroom teaching, and individual coaching being used as required to advance their learning. Tutors adapt and tailor resources from LTL's extensive library, assembled over nearly 20 years of literacy and numeracy training. Learners find the material presented interesting and relevant.

Assessment of learners' knowledge and skills is valid and fair. The learners were happy with the regularity, quality, and accuracy of the assessments used. The tutors are using the learning progression material from the Tertiary Education Commission. Learners appreciated receiving regular feedback, setting new goals for their learning and developing habits of self-assessment.

The tutors structure the learning environment to benefit the learners. All the learners spoke of how much more effective their present learning experience is than their secondary school experience. The tutors foster a cooperative, collaborative, and supportive culture of learning and mutual support. Learners appreciated that LTL teaching coaches them to achieve mastery and they contrasted this with their previous experience of being rushed through a (school) curriculum.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

### **Explanation**

LTL has very good, systematic processes for providing learners with study information and advice. Learners were very positive about the communications they had received and the guidance they were receiving about possible further training. Learners were developing positive perceptions of their potential and indentifying pathways for reaching their goals.

LTL constantly and effectively monitors learners' progress and assists them to maintain progress. Staff showed the evaluation team how they used their student management system to keep a close eye on progress. The "flags" from this system were quickly translated into communication with tutors and learners to establish whether there was a problem and to set new goals and timeframes.

Tutors are very responsive to learners' questions and concerns and have the experience to address them effectively. Although the companies' human resources staff maintain much of the normal support that learners require, LTL reinforces this support as an everyday aspect of the LTL *modus operandi*. LTL staff members have weekly contact with the companies to which they are contracted, and provide them with comprehensive information including attendance records; in effect, they operate as partners with a common purpose. The very good communication that LTL maintains with its client companies means that problems are detected early and quickly remedied. The learners saw the partnership arrangement as contributing to, and as providing evidence of, a growing learning culture in their companies.

The peer support group mentioned earlier has a strong role in supporting learners.

## 1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

### **Explanation**

The governance and management teams at LTL are committed strongly to supporting educational achievement. They are committed particularly to supporting learners who are at the bottom of the achievement ladder and they give them guidance and supervision of the highest order. All of this provides clear evidence of the LTL mission in action, “to provide targeted training to enhance skills”; this goal pervades the whole organisation and guides all staff constantly.

The organisation is responding very effectively to change. The unsuccessful tendering for the renewal of the Corrections Department contract has given an even sharper focus to strategic thinking, with the latter clearly evident in LTL’s analysis of, and reflection on, a wide range of options the organisation is now seeking to take. LTL is confident that many areas and opportunities exist where it can successfully apply particular skills in targeted literacy and numeracy training to improve family life and lift local economic performance, as well as to identify new and different education and training markets in which to grow the business.

LTL has a comprehensive, effective, and up-to-date document in its quality management system. An excellent synergy exists between management practice and the student management system and all staff members share the information it contains. This enables all to reflect on the data and initiate ideas for improvement.

LTL has effective systems for the recruitment of staff and values its entire staff highly. The evaluation team saw many examples of staff members “going the extra mile” during the present period of rapid change for LTL. LTL management’s observation of tutors’ teaching takes place unannounced and the teaching staff accept this as normal, which says a great deal about their competence, confidence, and about the positive culture at LTL.

LTL learns the practices and processes and absorbs the culture of its client companies. LTL routinely gathers the information it needs to develop and select processes and templates useful to tailor a programme for each company, successfully using the company’s language. This management-driven striving for real context maximises the effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy training that LTL provides.

## Focus Areas

*This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.*

### 2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

### 2.2 Focus area: Workplace training

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

# Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

# Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.*

*In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.*

*This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.*

*The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.*

*External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.*

*External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website ([www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)).*

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>*

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