

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Learning Innovations Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 25 February 2016

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	8
Recommendations	14
Appendix	15

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Final Report

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

Name of TEO:	Learning Innovations Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	21 November 2003
Location:	Ground Floor, Tower Building, 215 Railway Road, Hastings
Delivery sites:	Hastings Centre (Head Office) 28 Bledisloe Road, Maraenui Shopping Centre, Napier 85 Ruataniwha Street, Waipukurau
Courses currently delivered:	Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) Intensive Literacy and Numeracy English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Code of Practice signatory:	No, all domestic learners
Number of students:	ILN Literacy Hawkes Bay – 212 learners; ILN ESOL Hawkes Bay – 69 learners. These learners are split between the three regions – Hastings, Napier and Waipukurau. Asian - 5 per cent; European – 29 per cent; Māori – 51 per cent; Pasifika – 11 per cent; MELA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, African) – 4 per cent. Half of these learners are under 25 years of age.
Number of staff:	Two full-time directors and 10 part-time literacy

	tutors (contract workers).
Scope of active accreditation:	As above.
Distinctive characteristics:	Māori provider who specialises in ESOL, literacy, numeracy and foundation skills. Level 1 and 2 programmes provide training to improve educational and employment opportunities for the target learners – Māori, Pasifika, refugees and migrants. The organisation aligns with the tertiary education strategy by: delivering skills for industry, getting at-risk young people into a career, boosting achievement of Māori and Pasifika, and improving adult literacy and numeracy.
Recent significant changes:	The Future Direction Level 2 programme was approved in 2014. It is a five-week programme and includes the award of unit standard 504, <i>Produce a CV (curriculum vitae)</i> and unit standard 10781, <i>Produce a plan for own future directions</i> .
Other:	<p>Learning Innovations have been funded for adult literacy training since 2002. In 2010, there was Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) ILN funding for 160 places. In 2014/2015 TEC increased the places to 212. Each ILN learner is funded for 100 hours and each ILN ESOL learner is funded for 200 hours. The ILN ESOL programme started in 2014.</p> <p>Learning Innovations is affiliated with ITENZ (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand), The Quality Commission and Aotearoa Māori Providers of Training, Education, and Employment (AMPTEE).</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy and the ILN and ILN ESOL programmes. These programmes cover all the training offered at the organisation.

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 web document *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review* available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.*

The evaluation occurred over a two-day period, on-site at the Hastings Head Office. The evaluators interviewed the two directors, tutors from all three sites, learners from both programme focus areas and external stakeholders. The range of documentation the evaluation team sighted, included:

- the strategic plan
- TEC Literacy and numeracy fund update reports
- employment outcomes
- learner pathway plans
- learner goals and progression reports
- the 2014-2016 Training plan
- minutes of staff meetings.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Learning Innovations Limited**.

- Learning Innovations provides a welcoming non-judgemental whānau environment. Learners feel comfortable and valued and are encouraged to succeed.
- All learners have a comprehensive assessment interview and initial assessment with the TEC Adult Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions tool. The organisation develops a learning pathway plan from this interview and assessment. The plan contains academic and personal goals which are discussed and reviewed regularly by tutors and learners.
- Learner needs are well met by flexible one-to-one delivery of training (days and times are agreed between the tutor and the learner). Learners can access training at any of the three regional sites.
- There are a wide diversity of learner needs. Learners may be completing pre-entry requirements for a polytechnic, unit standards at the correspondence school, literacy and numeracy requirements to complete a trade qualification, entry to the army or police force or credits towards the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 1 or 2.
- Tutors are well qualified, highly committed and have extensive experience with foundation-level learners. Tutorial staff are collegial, well-resourced and encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities.
- Pastoral support is 'wrap around', highly effective and offered by all staff. It is part of a genuine learner/tutor partnership where learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and lives, with the support of the 'tutor mentor'.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Learning Innovations Limited**.

- Learning Innovations staff are embedded in their communities. This allows them to be pro-active and highly responsive to local needs and initiatives.
- The staff's reflective culture has a range of formal ways to review progress. These include individual learner progress reports, regular staff meetings, and annual reviews of programmes and strategic plans.
- Over the last three years, Learning Innovations has met all TEC contract requirements. They are often asked to participate in TEC trials, which is an indication that they are viewed as innovative and responsive.
- TEC ILN and ILN ESOL funding is for specific hours: tutors report on learner hours each week and three times a year to TEC. However, Learning Innovations continues to work with learners until they reach their agreed goals, sometimes well beyond the funded hours.
- This unfunded contribution is an indication of the strong learner-centric philosophy that motivates management and staff. It shows deep understanding of the learners, is appreciated by all stakeholders and enables Learning Innovations to transform lives for the better.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

There are a wide diversity of learner needs. Learners may be completing pre-entry requirements for a polytechnic, unit standards at the correspondence school, literacy and numeracy requirements to complete a trade qualification, entry to the army or police force or credits towards the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 1 or 2.

ILN learners are assessed using the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT) at the beginning, six weeks into training and when they complete the programme. ILN ESOL learners are assessed using the Targeted ESOL Expected Outcomes Framework. Where relevant, unit and achievement standards are used to enhance learning and show learner progress. Learners develop the ability to communicate more effectively in English, use basic computer skills, access support services, write a curriculum vitae and gain qualifications.

The goals that learners identify are Learning Innovation's primary way to measure learner achievement and success. Learners continue to attend training beyond the funded hours, if required, until they meet their goals. This indicates great commitment to learner needs. A spreadsheet (accessible to tutors, management and administration staff) tracks all aspects of a learner's progress and is updated regularly.

Learning Innovations gauges success by tracking progress with unit or achievement standards and by meeting contracted learner numbers and hours. The organisation reports to TEC three times a year. Learning Innovations has consistently met TEC targets and TEC will provide funding for 2016, with ten extra ILN places confirmed. This increase will bring Learning Innovations to the maximum they have determined they are able to accept while ensuring the PTE can continue to meet the needs of learners.

¹ 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 **Good**.

Learning Innovations staff are embedded in their communities. This allows them to be pro-active and highly responsive to local needs and initiatives. Examples of this include:

- providing the literacy skills and NCEA credits required by Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) students to enter their chosen programme of study
- joining the Youth Futures Trust, which is an initiative for Māori and Pasifika people in the region, aged 18-34, with funding for 200 places, over the next three years. Learning Innovations contributes the foundational literacy and numeracy components of this training
- providing the venue and resources for community programmes, such as the two-week driver licence programme for Pasifika people.

Employment outcomes are formally tracked by the PTE. This information is added to when learners make on-site visits to tutors. Staff also engage in community events where they get updates on learner progress. Learning Innovations also gets feedback from the original referring agencies, who in some cases are required to monitor learner outcomes.

There is clear evidence of the short and long term benefits to Learning Innovations graduates. Learning Innovations is often the first place a learner has felt understood and valued. This free second-chance education is life changing and of great benefit to the individual, their family and the community. The learner gains the opportunity and motivation to make a positive contribution.

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**.

Programmes and activities are learner-centric. This includes flexible learning days and times that are arranged between the tutor and the learner to fit with learners' obligations (such as child care). This one-to-one approach allows learners to progress at their own rate in their subject/learning areas and ensures that the content and activities are highly relevant and designed for the individual learner and their academic and learning needs. This personalised training allows learners to follow their own interests, in contrast to previous group learning environments

where these individuals were often left behind and compared unfavourably with other learners.

Individual learning plans are specific, goal-oriented, agreed between the learner and the tutor, and regularly tracked. Tutor-learner interactions are flexible but firm, and absences are followed up promptly. External stakeholders reported that Learning Innovations worked effectively with learners, often at a pre-foundation level. These learners were often turned away by other providers because they were considered too difficult to teach. The effective teaching was attributed to understanding the learners and their circumstances and the passion that the staff have for 'making a difference' to learners' lives by increasing their future personal, educational and work options.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Teaching is highly effective and targeted to individual needs, interests and circumstances. It uses a range of paper and on-line resources, including shared resources that are regularly added to and available on the Learning Innovations intra-net.

Internal pre-assessment moderation occurs each month, directly after the regular monthly meeting for tutors. When materials submitted for external NZQA moderation did not meet the standard, the organisation made changes to the teaching materials before offering the standard again.

All tutors have a National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education at level 5 or are currently studying to complete this qualification. However, the most significant factor in teaching effectiveness is the passion and commitment of the staff, who work with the learner to identify barriers to learning and discuss past learning experiences. Tutors gain learners' confidence by a combination of careful listening and reflection and by convincing the learner that they will continue to support them for 'as long as it takes to reach their goals'. Learners reciprocate by agreeing to attend lessons and work with the tutor to meet these mutually agreed goals. Learners the evaluation team interviewed talked about: "not wanting to let the tutor down", "she really believes in me", and "I always thought I was dumb until I came here".

While the TEC literacy and numeracy tools are used when a learner enters the organisation and to gauge ongoing progress, reporting to TEC involves meeting a target of funded hours, rather than literacy and numeracy gains for the learner. Therefore, progress with goals, changed attitudes to learning, increased confidence, improved social interactions and community engagement are the most accurate

indicators of learner success and teaching effectiveness. These factors are recorded, monitored and reviewed in the individual learner pathway plans.

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**.

Guidance and support is fundamental to learner success at Learning Innovations. It begins when the learner first walks in the door, and meets the administration staff. It includes the friendly welcoming environment, the time taken to enrol and induct each individual and seeing the potential of each learner. This 'wrap around' care is the responsibility of all staff. There were many examples of staff being very generous with the time they spend with learners, both academically and personally.

This support includes assisting with out-of-class issues such as housing, food, understanding letters from the bank and immigration. These are all used as learning opportunities and allow learners to practice and gain real-life skills and knowledge.

Other areas of support include:

- providing homework if a learner is unable to attend a lesson
- allowing a learner from a different organisation to use Learning Innovation premises (e.g. a quiet place away from domestic responsibilities)
- learners taking time out and returning when their circumstances have changed sufficiently for them to concentrate on study.

Learning Innovation maintains all pathway plans and destination data, allowing learner progress to be accurately tracked and discussed by a range of staff, at any given time.

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

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

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

Governance and management are motivated by genuine concern and regard for learners. One of the governance team has academic responsibility for tutors and is a tutor herself, while the other director is responsible for all the organisation's processes, such as compliance and reporting to TEC and NZQA. This allows the governance team to maximise their skill sets and cover the essential tasks and responsibilities involved in running the PTE.

Final Report

The governance team also has external input from and affiliations with a range of relevant groups, including Adult Literacy Practitioners Association (ALPA), the refugee and migrant forum, Ako Aotearoa (where one of the managers was the AMPTEE representative on the National Tertiary Teaching in Excellence Awards Panel) and the EIT Pacific reference group. Active participation in the range of local and national groups ensures Learning Innovations' directors are well informed about regional and national needs and is well positioned to anticipate and respond to changes in the sector.

Most staff are long-term experienced employees who are able to work independently without day-to-day direction. They are highly collegial, covering each other's jobs when needed, and share resources willingly. They are also well supported by management: for example, management are generous with leave for tutors, and with providing professional development opportunities.

However, the growth of the PTE has led to long work hours for management and staff. While this extra effort supports educational achievement in the short term, Learning Innovations realises that it may not be sustainable in the long term. Learning Innovations has started strategic planning involving all staff to address this identified issue.

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 **Good**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Intensive Literacy and Numeracy

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Intensive Literacy and Numeracy English for Speakers of Other Languages

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

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

Recommendations

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

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

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).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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