# THE EXPRESSION, EXPERIENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE OF LOW SKILLS IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

## IN THEIR VOICE: ADULT LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES ON LITERACY AND NUMERACY, LEARNING AND WELLBEING

## ABOUT THIS RESEARCH PROGRAMME

This project is funded by a Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Endeavour Grant, spanning five years over October 2019-2024.

The overarching goal of this project is to provide policy recommendations to improve life-course trajectories and socio-economic outcomes of adults living with low literacy and/or numeracy (L+N) skills.

This research is aimed at shaping the ways in which we deal with literacy and numeracy issues in NZ with a focus on effective intervention. For further information about our programme and other outputs, see: www.workresearch.aut.ac.nz/low-skills

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## RESEARCH PARTNERS

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## DISCLAIMER

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# Glossary

Authors note regarding English descriptions of kupu Māori (Māori words): The descriptions are principally taken from the context they were provided by participants. Unless otherwise stated, relevant descriptions have been supplemented by Te Aka Māori – Māori dictionary online https://maoridictionary.co.nz

| Kupu Māori | English translation / description |
|---|---|
| Ahuatanga Māori | Natural features; Māori traditions (NZQA, n. d.) |
| Aotearoa | New Zealand |
| Ariki | Paramount chief, leader, aristocrat, high-ranking first-born |
| Atua | Deity, god, demon, supernatural being |
| Awa | River, stream, creek, gully |
| Awhi | To embrace, hug, cuddle, cherish |
| Hapū | Kinship group, clan, subtribe, whānau who share descent from a common ancestor |
| Hauora | Health, vigour |
| Iwi | Extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, large group of people descended from a common ancestor |
| Kai | Food, meal |
| Kanohi ki te kanohi | In person, in the flesh, presenting oneself face-to-face |
| Kaumātua | Elderly, elder male or female |
| Kaupapa | Topic, policy, plan, programme, theme, issue, initiative |
| Kaupapa Māori | Māori approach, purpose, agenda, proposal, ideology |
| Kete | Woven baskets (also a symbol of holding knowledge) |
| Kīngitanga | King Movement, sovereign, kingdom |
| Kōhanga Reo | Early childhood learning environment, Māori language preschool |
| Kōrero | Speech, narrative, story, conversation, discourse |
| Kotahitanga | Unity, togetherness, solidarity, collective action |
| Kuia | Female elder (singular or plural), elderly woman, grandmother |
| Kupu Māori | Māori words |
| Mahi | Work, employment |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mamae | Pain, hurt, injury, wound |
| Mana | Prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma |
| Mana āheinga | Decide on aspirations and realise them in the context of their own unique circumstances (The Treasury, n. d.) |
| Mana tuku iho | A strong sense of identity and belonging (The Treasury, n. d.) |
| Mana tautuutu | Contributing adults in the world (The Treasury, n. d.) |
| Mana whanake | The power to grow sustainable, intergenerational prosperity (The Treasury, n. d.) |
| Manaakitanga | Maintaining a focus on improved wellbeing and enhanced mana (The Treasury, n. d.) |
| Māori | Indigenous people of New Zealand |
| Māra kai | Garden, cultivation of food |
| Marae | Courtyard for formal ceremonies and discussions |
| Mātauranga Māori | Māori knowledge, creativity and cultural practices originating from Māori ancestors |
| Maunga | Mountain |
| Mokopuna | Grandchildren or young children |
| Moko | Shortened form of mokopuna |
| Oranga | Survival, food, livelihood, welfare, health, living |
| Pā | Fort, entire complex of marae and surrounding buildings |
| Pākehā | New Zealander of primarily European or British descent |
| Papatūānuku | Earth Mother |
| Poukai | Ceremonial gathering at various marae in demonstration of support for the Kīngitanga |
| Pūrākau | Myth, ancient legend, story |
| Pure | To cleanse oneself spiritually |
| Rangatiratanga | Chiefly authority, autonomy, self-determination |
| Ranginui | Sky Father |
| Rohe | Boundary, district, region, territory, area, border (of land) |
| Tangi | Funeral, to cry, grieve, bereavement |
| Te ao Māori | The Māori world |
| Teina | Younger person (formal reference to person of same gender) |
| Te ira tangata | Human element, mortals |
| Te reo Māori | The Māori language |
| Reo Māori | Māori language |
| Reo | Language |
| Te taiao | Environment, nature, the natural world; the wellbeing of which is inextricable from the wellbeing of people and carries with it obligations of care |
| Tikanga | Correct procedure, customary practice(s) |
| Tuakana-teina relationship | Reciprocal relationship between an older and younger person |
| Tohu | Qualification, certificate |
| Tuakana | Elder person (formal reference to person of same gender) |
| Tūpuna | Ancestor(s) singular or plural |

| | |
|---|---|
| Wairua | Soul, non-physical spirit of a person, spiritual wellbeing |
| Waiata | To sing, song(s) singular or plural |
| Waka | Canoe, vehicle; tribal affiliations to canoes on which their forebears journeyed to Aotearoa over 800 years ago (Furness et al., in publication) |
| Whakapapa | Genealogy; lineage; descent; process of layering one thing upon another (Mahuika, 2019); basis of Māori identity and for comprehending and interpreting the world (Furness et al., in publication) |
| Whānau | Immediate and extended family |
| Whanaungatanga | Connectedness; fostering strong relationships and networks through kinship and shared interests |
| Whangai | To feed, nourish, bring up, foster, adopt, raise, nurture, rear |
| Whare Wānanga | University, place of higher learning |
| Whenua | Land |

| Acronyms | Explanations |
|---|---|
| ACE | Adult and Community Education |
| CS2 | Case Study 2 |
| L+N | Literacy and numeracy |
| LSF | Living Standards Framework |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| MBIE | Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment |
| MPRU | Māori and Psychology Research Unit |
| PIAAC | Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies |
| TEC | Tertiary Education Commission |

# Executive Summary

*In their voice: Adult learners' perspectives on literacy and numeracy, learning and wellbeing* (2023) reports on a case study undertaken in collaboration with Literacy Aotearoa. It has been undertaken as part of a larger project, *The expression, experience and transcendence of low skill in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2019–2024), the aim of which is to provide policy recommendations to improve life-course trajectories and socio-economic outcomes for adults with low literacy and/or numeracy (L+N) skills in Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa). *In their voice: Adult learners' perspectives on literacy and numeracy, learning and wellbeing* examines adults' experiences as they navigate their lives and develop their L+N repertoire towards their aspirations for themselves and their families. Our focus is mainly on Māori (the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa) adults.

The study has taken place at a time when adult L+N policy is at a crossroads in three senses. Policy over the last 23 years has only marginally improved L+N on the measures government uses with adults, yet it is known that wide-ranging, holistic benefits accrue from L+N education that values and embodies Māori interests and ways of being. Second, the most recent iteration of L+N policy expired in 2017 and is yet to be replaced, opening an opportunity for reconceptualisation and transformation of adult L+N policy. Third, Māori educators have articulated and demonstrated over decades the content and approaches for L+N learning that are of interest and value to Māori adults and whānau (immediate and extended family) but these remain by-and-large systemically unsupported. Nevertheless, government expectation is that all policy in Aotearoa account for wellbeing outcomes as set out in the 'Living Standards Framework 'and 'He Ara Waiora' (The Treasury, 2021, n. d.).

The standpoint for this study is that the Eurocentric perspective of literacy that predominates in adult L+N policy in Aotearoa – reading and writing alphabetic text, usually in English, and primarily for economic purposes – is inadequate in our bicultural nation. This narrow view of literacy and its purposes severely limits the extent to which Māori expectations for adult L+N education and for Māori prosperity are realised, contrary to the word and the spirit of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi). Viewing literacy through sociocultural, sociomaterial, critical literacies and Indigenous lenses, the study makes a strong case for a much broader understanding of literacy and its purposes to decolonise adult L+N policy for the future. Supporting this aspiration, the study advances the notion of multiple meanings of literacy in which Māori perspectives are valued, upheld and promoted. Māori perspectives are understood as centring on whakapapa (genealogy) which provides the framework for connectedness of all things and is the basis for Māori identity and for comprehending and interpreting the world.

The research process was informed by Kaupapa Māori (a Māori agenda) to the extent possible. Māori researchers conducted all but one interview and contributed to the thematic analysis of participants' narratives. Two Pākehā researchers worked closely with the Māori team members and were guided by them. The specific approach for this case study was co-designed with Literacy Aotearoa to ensure participants' needs and aspirations in the research were met. Twenty adults (15 Māori, one Samoan and four Pākehā) graciously agreed to share their insights and were interviewed individually, in pairs or in a focus group according to their choice. They were aged from early 20s to late 60s and varied in their qualifications and learning challenges. The same number of men and women took part. The following questions directed the interviews and focus groups:

1. What has motivated people/whānau to make change in their lives?
2. What was the pathway that people/whānau have taken to make change in their lives?
3. What are people's experiences of their efforts to make change in their lives?
4. What have been supports or facilitators, barriers or challenges in their efforts?

The narrative transcripts were analysed from a critical sociocultural and strengths-based standpoint. Findings were described and discussed in relation to the following broad thematic categories:

1. What matters to people in their lives – views of wellbeing, values and aspirations
2. Learning and life pathways – experiences of learning, schooling and post school
3. What enables people to live the lives they choose
4. What makes it harder for people to live the lives they choose

The study shows the centrality of te ao Māori (Māori worldview) in the lives of Māori adults and whānau. It is fundamental to Māori identity and wellbeing and remains throughout their lives even when they have experienced periods of disconnection. Enacted valuing of te ao Māori within the programmes enabled participants to feel safe to be who they are, excited about their L+N learning, and looking forward to meaningful outcomes for themselves and their whānau despite the oft-present anxiety about returning to a classroom. Relatedly, prioritising the wellbeing of the learners through caring and respectful learning environments is crucial to coming to and staying in L+N learning opportunities which can then provide an opportunity to transcend hurtful past learning experiences and enable participants to see themselves as capable learners and contributing adults in the world. These characteristics of the participants' learning experiences in the study programmes reflected values and ways of being fundamental to being Māori which meant the dissonance often experienced in other learning settings was not present and participants could enjoy learning what and how was important to them.

The study notes that L+N in the Eurocentric meaning was addressed in the L+N programmes our participants attended (for example digital skills for work were taught) but the programmes simultaneously embodied broader meanings and purposes of literacy that are not typically foregrounded in L+N policy in Aotearoa. The study contends that the enactment in the programmes of Māori values and ways of being and doing allowed transformative learning to occur, not just for the Māori learners but for everyone. The study demonstrated that L+N learning valued by learners themselves is best defined as the acquisition of knowledge and skills that have meaning and are useful in their lives, can contribute to better lives for whānau, hapū and iwi and can be passed on to future generations. Defined from this viewpoint, valued L+N includes matauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Māori cultural practices, values and language; foundational skills and knowledge in English missed at school; and specific skills for changing times including work and everyday personal, family and community life that centres whānau (family and extended family) wellbeing.

The study calls for a change in the definition and rationalisation embedded in current (though expired) adult L+N policy from a narrow economy-focused approach to a broad and culturally inclusive definition and rationalisation. This requires detachment from a singular view of what literacy is to a view of literacy as a multiple construct; in other words, seeing literacy as having many meanings. Accompanying this embrace of literac*ies,* Māori perspectives of L+N must move from the margins of adult L+N policy to the centre, led by Māori.

# Introduction

Literacy and numeracy (L+N)[1] education for adults has been a focus of attention for decades. Part of the reason for this are the poor outcomes that have been identified for adults who are categorised on OECD measures as having low levels of L+N. Concerning outcomes include increased risk of unemployment and poverty, detrimental effects on physical and mental wellbeing, and decreased social attachment (Cochrane et al., 2020; Hanushek et al., 2015; Vorhaus, 2009). According to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) over 1.3 million adults in Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa) live with low literacy and/or numeracy skills, with Māori (see Glossary)[2] over-represented in this group (TEC, 2015).

The current adult L+N policy framework was first established in 2001 (Coben & McCartney, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2001). While adjustments have been made, the most recent in 2015, a refresh is well overdue and could provide an opportunity to enhance the relevance and usefulness of approaches to adult L+N for individuals, whānau, communities and the nation as a whole (Hedges et al., 2021; TEC, 2015). In particular, a new strategy could provide an opportunity to address concerns raised by Māori literacy educators over twenty years ago (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001). The concerns raised centred on the largely monocultural character of adult literacy policy. This situation has not yet been adequately rectified, despite the availability of evidence-based accounts of what works for Māori learners (e.g., Edwards, 2010; Literacy Aotearoa & Te Puni Kōkiri, 2013). As the survey findings mentioned above suggest, it is vital that adult L+N policy responds more vigorously to the desires and aspirations of Māori people.

This study is part of a programme of research which aims to shape the ways in which adult L+N is addressed in Aotearoa in the future[3]. Part of the research programme has involved exploring data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) survey (OECD, 2016) and the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) (which brings together health, justice, employment, and education data) (New Zealand Work Research Institute, n. d.) to understand adult life pathways numerically and at scale. The focus of the qualitative part of the research programme is understanding

[1] The adult education sector in Aotearoa tends to refer to literacy education through the lens of Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN) (van Lamoen, 2022). However, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes, which have their own policy framework, were not included in this study. The use of the term 'literacy and numeracy (L+N) in this report does not include ESOL.

[2] Descriptions of all Māori words in the body of the report appear in the Glossary on pp. vi–viii.

[3] A five-year Endeavour-funded project entitled "The expression, experience and transcendence of low skill in Aotearoa New Zealand". For more information see The expression, experience and transcendence of low skills in Aotearoa New Zealand- New Zealand Work Research Institute- AUT.

adults' lived experiences – as expressed directly by them – of enablers and obstacles to living the lives they wish for themselves and their whānau; and the value systems that are important to them in their lives and as they navigate towards their aspirations. This part of the study was undertaken by the Māori and Psychology Research Unit at the University of Waikato. It focused mainly, but not exclusively, on Māori adults and whānau. The overall research design was led by Associate Professor Bridgette Masters-Awatere (Te Rarawa, Ngai Te Rangi, Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau), a recognised expert in Kaupapa Māori Research. The qualitative research team includes both Māori and Pākehā researchers responsible for different parts of the fieldwork, analysis and presentation of the findings. The team includes Associate Professor Bridgette Masters-Awatere, Associate Professor Mohi Rua (Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Whakaue), Hineitimoana Greensill (Tainui, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Porou), Drs Jane Furness, Gemma Piercy-Cameron and Bill Cochrane, Dr Sharyn Heaton (Kai Tahu, Ngāti Apa ki te rā Tō, Ngati Kuia, Muāupoko, Rangitāne, Te Arawa Waikato/Tainui), Renae Dixon, and key members of staff from Literacy Aotearoa.

Two case studies were undertaken with mainly Māori participants in social service organisations that were supporting the participants' efforts to achieve their aspirations for themselves and their whānau. This report is on Case Study 2 (CS2) and presents the perspectives of participants in a range of programmes offered by Literacy Aotearoa, a large national adult literacy education provider that offers programmes in 34 locations throughout Aotearoa[4]. The introduction to the report draws on relevant literature to explain the background and context for this study. The next section sets out the methodology and the research procedures, followed by information about the participants. The findings are presented in the next four sections beginning with what matters to the participants in their lives followed by the participants' pathways through their learning and their lives. Enablers and obstacles to the participants living the lives they choose complete the findings sections. The overall findings are then discussed followed by our conclusions.

## Background and context – policy and theory

In Aotearoa, adult L+N policy discourse has tended to occur in relation to a need for more people to have more facility with L+N, and at higher levels, in order to increase the nation's productivity in a competitive global market (Cochrane et al., 2020). At the same time, some attention has also been given to the social value of literate and numerate engagement for the enjoyment and fulfilment of people's lives as individuals, as family and community members, and as participants in a democratic society

[4] Case Study 1 focused on perspectives of wāhine Māori (Masters-Awatere, Howard, & Heaton, 2023).

(Furness & Hunter, 2017). Underlying the efforts to support different purposes of L+N are varying views on what literacy is and, more generally, what forms of knowledge and ways of knowing should receive attention from policymakers. These dilemmas have constrained the enhancement of adult L+N policy such that it has not achieved the hoped-for equitable outcomes for different groups of people living in Aotearoa, based on measures used by the Government (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment [MBIE], 2016). The most recent policy expired in 2019 and has not yet been replaced (Hedges et al., 2021). The current research can contribute to fresh design for better, more equitable outcomes in the future.

It is well understood that there is a relationship between L+N skills, as measured through avenues such as the PIAAC, and economic and social wellbeing. For example, Scott (2018) found that people with higher skills and education have higher levels of self-reported health, volunteer more often, trust others more, and feel that they have more political voice. Conversely, low skills are associated with poorer health (DeWalt et al., 2004) and lower incomes (Satherley, 2017), along with social isolation, poverty, and unemployment which often worsen with age (Roman, 2004). It is also recognised that this is not a straightforward relationship; rather, it is rendered complex by people's past experiences, current circumstances, and sociocultural histories (Barton, 2009; Furness, 2012). Importantly, as these authors report, those seeking help with L+N have other highly developed skills and competencies. These characteristics of adult L+N learners imply that policy responses need to be varied, amenable and strengths based. However, theories of literacy that circulate in the Western milieu, briefly canvassed below, do not always foster the necessary breadth and inclusiveness.

While all L+N activities perform a function, the term 'functional literacy' is often associated with the literacy required for economic purposes. Within this framing, literacy is thought of as a particular set of cognitive and technical skills located within the individual. Adult L+N learners tend to be viewed from a deficit perspective as lacking and at fault for their situation (Yasukawa & Black, 2016*).* Furthermore, the skills tend to be treated as though they are autonomous, apolitical and transferable, and are often taught in decontextualised ways (Gee, 2008; Street, 1984). When the social value of literacy learning is acknowledged, it is couched in terms of enhancing people's ability to live independently of the State, as well as being economically productive (Rawiri, 2016).

In contrast, critical literacy researchers have noted that L+N learners are often living complex lives in which they may be dealing with multiple personal, family and community demands, some of which may be survival related (Rua et al., 2019). These kinds of challenges can mean that L+N learning is a low priority for them, even if it might be useful in navigating their lives. Learners may also be subjected to unsuitable pedagogical approaches in L+N delivery, given the traumatic schooling experiences many

have experienced and/or their preferred ways of being in the world and of learning (Benseman & Tobias, 2003). It is also important to note that the basis on which judgements are made about people's L+N abilities is often their performance on a small subset of the range of skills and practices that could be included in a definition of L+N. Furthermore, judgements are often made based on tests which are themselves narrowly prescribed (Furness et al., 2021). Thus, people may be considered as having low L+N when, in fact, they are highly capable in dimensions of literacy or other literacies that are not prioritised by the Government.

Another way of theorising literacy is as social practices. Grounded in socioculturalism, the use of skills and the context of their use is central to the meaning of literacy in a 'practice' view; it includes but goes beyond the skills themselves (Lynch & Prins, 2022; Whitton, 2018). It is also associated with a perspective of learning as a lifelong endeavour in which the value of literacy in people's everyday lives is articulated (Cochrane et al., 2020). There is some knowledge of this way of conceptualising literacy among Government officials in Aotearoa (Furness et al., in publication; Whitton, 2018), and it is well understood by literacy educators and applied in programmes (Potter et al., 2011).

The concepts of multiliteracies and multimodality, also associated with a sociocultural approach, are partially recognised by policymakers. These concepts broaden the view of what literacy is, to include many literac*ies* beyond that which predominates in the workplace, as well as many text forms such as graphics, sound, movement, and spatial relations (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). However, they are not incorporated into policy beyond the provision of digital and financial literacy programmes. Thus, in sum, economic and social reasons for raising adult literacy levels are often espoused in policy documents, context is recognised as important for learning, and support for culturally appropriate pedagogy is often articulated. However, Furness and Hunter's (2017) policy review found that the potential to embody broader conceptions of literacy, suggested by multiliteracies and multimodalities, is constrained by the dominance of the narrowly focused functional perspective.

Importantly, critical and sociocultural literacy theorists examine how power relationships are established and enacted, and the impact of those power relations in contexts which feature literacy activities (Perry, 2012). Such an approach questions how knowledge is constructed and used in text; for example, whose perspectives are represented and how readers are positioned (Blake, 2016; Hamilton, 2016; Yasukawa & Black, 2016). A critical approach has illuminated how Indigenous literacies are often denied legitimacy within major institutions, policies, and practices. Extending sociocultural theories of literacy further, sociomateriality (Hamilton, 2016; Pahl, 2014) focuses on the tools and technologies of literacy engagement and how they merge with literacy's social characteristics in literacy practices within

contexts. This approach highlights the agency of all things which parallels an Indigenous worldview presented next.

## Māori perspectives of literacy and numeracy

Māori understandings of L+N which, grounded in their epistemology, create narratives and ontological realities that differ in significant ways to those most powerfully evident in L+N policy in Aotearoa. This understanding is informed by mātauranga Māori which underpins Māori ways of being and knowing, and embodies cultural beliefs, practices, specificities, and objects (Marsden & Royal, 2003; Royal, 1998; Sadler, 2007) immersed in whakapapa.

Whakapapa is defined by Mahuika (2019) as the "process of layering one thing upon another" (p. 1). Two important dimensions of whakapapa are the cosmological framework it provides for tracing genealogy back to Papatūānuku and Ranginui and for viewing all animate and inanimate objects as descending from Papatūānuku. Through these dimensions, whakapapa provides the "skeletal structure of Māori epistemology" through which the interconnectedness of all things is apparent (Mahuika, 2019). Whakapapa also underpins Māori social structures of whānau, hapū, iwi and waka. All these connections are important to Māori, who generally have a holistic notion of self, seeing themselves in relation to other people and the environment (Robertson & Masters-Awatere, 2007; Rua et al., 2017). Whakapapa is thus the basis for Māori identity and for comprehending and interpreting the world.

As British settlers arrived in Aotearoa, Māori embraced written text in both English and te reo Māori alongside their established forms of meaning making. Indeed, they were more adept with Western practices than most settlers but, over time, assimilationist education policies almost extinguished Māori language and practices, and it has taken a mammoth Māori-led effort to rescue them from total loss. In the context of a whakapapa-based worldview and expectation of flourishing in both te ao Māori and Western worlds set out in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, literacy for Māori has been described as a "lifelong journey of building capacity to 'read' and shape Māori and other worlds" (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, p. 30). This description encapsulates a perspective of literacy as a multiple construct (as literac*ies*) and as social and material practice, and therefore as more than economy-focused functional skills alone. In this vein, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa includes functional literacy in its approach but as one of three 'literacy pillars', the others being cultural literacy and critical literacy (Edwards, 2010). This much broader notion of literacy has been articulated in key Māori-led policy documents such as 'Haea Te Pū Ata: A National Strategy for Māori Adult Literacy and Numeracy 2016-2020 (and beyond)' (Hutchins & Ikin,

2016) and in research of adult literacy programmes over the last 23 years[5] (see for example Literacy Aotearoa, 2013; Mlceck et al., 2009; Rawiri, 2016). Of similar importance is the view set out by the Māori Adult Literacy Working Party (2001) which described a Māori perspective of literacy as one of biliteracy, in which literacy in both te reo Māori and English are equally valued.

## The Living Standards Framework and He Ara Waiora

The recent refresh of the 'Living Standards Framework (LSF)' (The Treasury, 2021), especially the simultaneous publication of the Māori perspective of a living standards framework, 'He Ara Waiora' (The Treasury, n. d.), may offer timely guidance. The LSF work programme was established around the time the current tranche of adult literacy work began. In its long evolution, it has confronted similar challenges to its inherent monoculturalism, as has literacy policy, and has made significant strides in this regard. The LSF and He Ara Waiora are expected to shape the development and the evaluation of all policy in Aotearoa over time. In this role, therefore, they will provide an overarching framework for adult L+N policy that has the wellbeing of citizens as its core concern. Importantly, the notion of wellbeing at the centre of these policy 'umbrellas' is seen as determined by people themselves (Sen, 2003). The idea that people will vary in their definitions of wellbeing, and what is required for wellbeing to be present, is assumed in Sen's view, which the Treasury has adopted. Referring to Sen (2003), the Treasury (2018) asserts that "wellbeing should be considered in terms of the capability of people to live lives that they have reason to value" (p. 8).

He Ara Waiora sets out three policy outcomes 'domains' needed for wellbeing to be present for Māori, and the processes that need to be in place to achieve these outcomes. The descriptions presented here are summarised from The Treasury (n. d.). The domains are: wairua, encompassing Māori values, beliefs, and practices; te taiao, the wellbeing of which is inextricable from the wellbeing of people and carries with it obligations of care; and te ira tangata which includes the wellbeing of people as individuals and collectives. People and collectives will thrive when they:

> … have a strong sense of identity and belonging (mana tuku iho); participate and connect within their communities, including fulfilling their rights and obligations (mana tautuutu); … (can) decide on their aspirations and realise them in the context of their own unique circumstances (mana

[5] This period begins with the publication of the response to the Adult Literacy Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2001) by the Māori Adult Literacy Working Party (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001).

āheinga) and have the power to grow sustainable, intergenerational prosperity (mana whanake) (The Treasury, n. d., para. 7).

The approaches needed for these outcomes include kotahitanga, tikanga, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga (The Treasury, n. d.)[6].

Our interest in adult L+N extends beyond acquisition of skills for economic purposes, although these are included, to acquisition of ways of making sense of the world that are already used by people, are relevant and meaningful for them, and contribute to their aspirations for themselves and their whānau. This is a holistic approach which recognises the role of mātauranga Māori and other knowledge and ways of being that are important to people in living fulfilling lives. We, therefore, approached the research through sociocultural, sociomaterial and Indigenous lenses, viewing literacy as a multiple construct, and biliteracy as of foremost importance in Aotearoa.

## Aims of the current study

Agreeing with Sen (2003), we sought to understand people's experiences of their learning pathways as they strive to live the lives they choose for themselves and their whānau. In particular, we sought an in-depth understanding of the enablers and obstacles to accessing valuable and valued skills, knowledge and experiences that enrich the participants' lives in ways that are important to them, and the value systems that are attached to their participation in the kinds of learning opportunities that can contribute to achieving their aspirations. This information will assist in refining the provision of adult L+N education. Our starting points for this study included a broad view of what literacy is, a strengths-based view of people, and a belief in the rights of all people to experience a rich and full life.

# Methodology and methods

## Methodology

It was essential that a Kaupapa Māori research approach was taken in this study as most of the participants were Māori and our main focus was on Māori perspectives. The research team, based in the Māori and Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) comprised Māori and non-Māori researchers who

[6] Tiakitanga is included in the document, but not yet confirmed.

worked together to ensure adherence to appropriate protocols and processes, and to ensure a Māori presence whenever possible. It is acknowledged that it is not possible for non-Māori to undertake Kaupapa Māori research in a literal sense; thus, Māori researchers and Māori staff in Literacy Aotearoa undertook key roles and provided guidance throughout as signalled in the Introduction[7] to the report and described in the Narrative approach – collecting participants' pūrākau/stories and Analysis sections below. Within this understanding and limitations, the principles set out by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) illuminated our path. In particular, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and kanohi ki te kanohi were front of mind as we prioritised relationship building and established trust between all those involved.

The lead researcher for CS2 had a long-standing relationship with Literacy Aotearoa; the lead researcher and key organisational personnel were already well-known to each other. Conversations occurred between the lead researcher, the cluster manager and the research manager for over 12 months leading up to the beginning of the recruitment process. During this time we reached a shared understanding of the purposes of the research and collaborated on the site-specific research design. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the safety and comfort of participants, how the purposes and processes involved in the research could be clearly communicated to potential participants, and how Literacy Aotearoa's own research questions might be included. It was also important that the organisation was looked after. The co-design process involved regular meetings and resulted in Literacy Aotearoa staff undertaking a major role in recruiting participants and arranging interviews. Community organisations are already stretched in their resourcing; we ensured material and time costs were well covered.

Information about the project was next shared with programme tutors who were invited to contribute to the research design in relation to the recruitment processes and the interview questions as they were being developed. Tutors introduced the research to their students using slides and a script provided by the researcher, along with the information sheet and consent form, all of which had been co-designed. The learners knew and trusted their tutors who were, therefore, best placed to ensure the learners understood the purposes, requirements, and safeguards in the research before making their decision. Learners interested in participating could choose between individual, pair, group, whole class, or whānau conversations.

The project received ethical approval from the Division of Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Sciences Research Committee (Ref: FS2020-44).

[7] Where cross-references are made to other sections of the report the heading (or subheading) of the section referred to appears in red font.

## Narrative approach – collecting participants' pūrākau/stories

Narrative data was gathered from 15 Māori, one Samoan and four Pākehā adults who were participants in four different L+N programmes provided by Literacy Aotearoa. The narratives were gathered through individual interviews, a pair interview and focus group interviews, all undertaken in 2022. The interviews were undertaken where the programmes were offered.

All but one of the interviews were undertaken by Māori interviewers. An experienced Māori researcher undertook most of them. Two Māori tutors were also trained in how to conduct interviews, pairing with an experienced researcher as research assistants to conduct some interviews with learners from programmes other than their own. Upskilling tutors was a way the research team could give back to the organisation. With the participant's permission, a second follow-up interview of one Māori participant was undertaken by a Pākehā researcher who had been present for this participant's first interview.

Participants were given either the transcripts of their interview or a summary of their focus group conversation to check, and they were able to make any changes they wished before analysis began.

## Research questions

Our overarching aim was to understand how people or whānau make change in their lives in ways that are relevant to them, and/or their whānau, towards living their lives in ways that are important to them. Our broad questions were:

1. What has motivated people/whānau to make change in their lives?
2. What was the pathway that people/whānau have taken to make change in their lives?
3. What are people's experiences of their efforts to make change in their lives?
4. What have been supports or facilitators, barriers or challenges in their efforts?

To do this, we explored what wellbeing meant to the participants; their learning journeys and experiences of making change in their lives; what helped and what made it harder for them to make positive change in their lives; their L+N learning experiences and their impacts; the helpfulness of other services or supports they have accessed; and their view of the future. We approached exploring these areas from a strength-based perspective: one in which we understand that people have many abilities and are also often navigating complex lives. The specific questions asked in the interviews, along with the guidelines and prompts available to the interviewers, can be found in Appendix A.

As well as the co-developed questions, Literacy Aotearoa was also interested in understanding the tutor and organisational qualities that were valued by learners, and how the hardest-to-reach learners might be engaged. Working with learners already participating in programmes somewhat limited the likelihood that they were the very hardest to reach. However, information about their preferred tutor and organisational qualities was likely to be helpful in providing insights in relation to both these questions.

## Analysis

Initial analysis of CS2 was undertaken in 2022 by the core research team of Māori and Pākehā researchers. The purpose of the initial analysis was to test out potential coding categories for both case studies and identify initial findings for discussion with the larger project advisory group and other stakeholders. In this discussion, we hoped to obtain feedback on the value stakeholders saw in the data we were gathering and any perceived gaps. The categories were created from the topics explored in the interviews and focus groups and themes evident in our first readings of the interview transcripts. They included wellbeing, literacy / sensemaking, connections / disconnections, value systems, pathways, pedagogy, aspirations, transformation, and barriers / enablers.

Each member of the core research team independently analysed three or four of the 17 transcripts from the 20 CS2 participants. We then discussed our experiences of coding and shared examples of coded text for comparison. While we found the categories often overlapped, coding decision-making appeared sufficiently consistent across the team to be reliable.

Initial findings from interviews with six Māori CS2 participants were collated related to barriers / enablers, connections / disconnections, literacy / sense-making, and wellbeing. The selected transcripts, which reflected a range of participant backgrounds and experiences, were revisited and analysed in greater depth in this process. These findings were initially presented in data summary tables (which allowed connections between categories to be seen) which were later developed into a presentation and shared at a stakeholder workshop. Relevant quotations from Case Study 1 (CS1) were also included. Trialling the deeper analysis and discussing our initial findings with the stakeholders allowed confidence that our data and analysis processes could achieve the research aims.

Full analysis of the CS2 data was then completed by the CS2 researchers. The partially analysed transcripts were further explored against the remaining categories, and the transcripts for the remaining

participants were analysed against the entire set. Themes, sub-themes, and their relationships were identified by the researchers working together. The two Pākehā researchers who co-authored this CS2 report worked alongside the Māori team members in the development of the themes and sub-themes, the discussion, and the conclusions as the full analyses were completed.

Initial findings were discussed with the Literacy Aotearoa staff, who also provided feedback on the report before it was finalised, an important step in the co-designed process.

## Who are the participants?

Our participants are very diverse. They come from different places. They are different ages and identify with different genders and sexualities. Four are Pākehā, one Samoan, with the rest identifying as Māori. While they are all either currently engaged in, or have participated in, Literacy Aotearoa L+N programmes, they do so from a range of different learning backgrounds. Some are tertiary qualified, some have completed up to the equivalent of NCEA Level 2; however, many left school without any qualifications. Despite this diversity, these participants do have some connections through common experiences; we report on these findings in What matters to people in their lives, Learning Pathways, What enables people to live the lives they choose and What makes it hard for people to live the lives they choose.

Most participants are involved in either an Intensive L+N (ILN) programme or a Work-Based L+N (WBL) programme. Those in the ILN programme were all women aged between 21 and 48 years. The WBL programme comprised Māori men aged from 38 to 67 years who were employed as maintenance crew by their iwi. The remaining Māori participants were either in driver licence, te reo Māori, or a digital literacy programme funded through Adult and Community Education (ACE). Two of the reo Māori learners were women. Table 1 shows the number of participants in each kind of programme.

Table 1. Funding Streams of the Participants' Programmes

| Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) | Work-based Literacy and Numeracy (WBL) – Digital | Adult and Community Education (ACE) – Digital | Driver Licence – Learner – Class 2 | Te Reo Māori | Total (n=20) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 20 |

Table 2 shows the fairly even spread of participant ages from early 20s to late 60s.

Table 2. Age of Participants

| 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | Total (n=20) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 19* |

*The age of one participant is unknown.

Just under two thirds of the participants had some formal credentialing of their school and post-school learning, and about a third had no school qualifications (see Table 3). It is also noteworthy, as will be seen in the findings sections, that even though they did not have formal trades qualifications, at least two participants had licences for machinery or tools which they acquired post school.

Table 3. Secondary and Tertiary Education of Participants

| No school qualifications | 12 or more credits across any level | NCEA Level 1 or School Certificate | NCEA Level 2 or 6th Form Certificate | Trade Certificate | National Certificate | Degree | Total (n=20) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 20 |

Over half of the participants experienced some physical, mental health or learning challenges (Table 4). Note: we consider the mental health and learning challenges are likely to be under-reported.

Table 4. Learning Challenges of Participants

| Physical disability or injury | Mental health | Global Developmental Delay | Dyslexia | Hearing | Total (n=20) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 (+ 1 temporary) | 6 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 15* |

* Some participants had more than one learning challenge.

# What matters to people in their lives

This section reports on aspects of what matters to people in their lives. It includes the participants' perspectives on what wellbeing means to them, and what is needed for it to be present. It also includes the values they hold and what they value, their preferred ways of being and doing, and their aspirations.

## What wellbeing means to people, and what is needed for it to be present

Wellbeing was a tangible concept in the lives of most participants. They were aware of their own practices, and often whānau practices, that enhanced wellbeing and those which were detrimental. It was common for participants to refer to physical or mental health as aspects of wellbeing but, most commonly, wellbeing was located within the whānau, and often also their marae or whenua. The interconnection between personal wellbeing, whānau wellbeing, and the wellbeing of the land characterised what the term meant for many participants. As well, the interconnectedness itself constituted wellbeing's meaning and, thus, whakapapa – from atua, tūpuna through to mokopuna – lay at the heart of being in a healthy state. The quality of relationships between people was also central to wellbeing, such that good relationships within whānau were essential for the wellbeing of the individual. More broadly, the wellbeing of whānau was an important aspect of their own wellbeing. The broad terms 'hauora' and 'oranga' were used by some participants in their conversations with us about wellbeing. While the Pākehā participants did not include land or ancestral ties beyond grandparents as connected to their wellbeing, the nature of their relationships with more immediate family members and friendships with others who were not related to them played an important role in the quality of their lives.

## Physical health and wellbeing

Physical health was mentioned as part of wellbeing by several participants. These participants were aware of what was necessary to maintain physical health, such as staying active and eating healthy food. Many built health-enhancing practices into their lives; for example, Tuhoro rode a bike to work. He liked to stay active and appreciated that taking his children to the marae was a way that they could be active too, by "running around" with their cousins, which he saw as "good for them". Some other participants attended the gym or walked regularly. Those who struggled with some aspect of their physical health, or an injury, understood their issue and strived to keep themselves as well as possible, although this was sometimes difficult.

## Mental health and psychological wellbeing

Mental health was specifically mentioned as part of wellbeing by some participants. Thus, like physical health, many people readily incorporated mental wellbeing into their purview of what wellbeing means. Some participants described taking active steps to look after their mental wellbeing. For example, Anahera enjoys mindfulness "to calm the wairua". Moana finds painting and yoga helpful when she needs a distraction from being "in her head", and Lulu visits her maunga and awa which uplifts her. More often though, broad ideas of happiness, positivity and connectedness were mentioned. For example, the men in the maintenance crew all expressed their enjoyment or satisfaction with working for their iwi and with people they knew and were like them. Several people commented that being positive was a conscious practice, believing that staying positive was important for wellbeing and actively focused on being this way. Mental health issues experienced by some participants included anorexia, bulimia, anxiety, and depression, with anxiety being the most common.

## Whānau wellbeing

Wellbeing of whānau was an important aspect of the broad concept of wellbeing important to participants. Māori participants indicated in various ways that the wellbeing of the whānau was part of their own wellbeing. Referring to his whānau, Rangi noted that, "seeing that they're happy makes me happy". Lulu, whose parents had died, had picked up her mother's promise that she would "be there" for her six nieces and nephews until they were 21. She was very aware she needed to look after her own wellbeing as a priority, but also had a strong desire to support the wider family, noting that "... my wellbeing is to look after myself first, and to watch them grow … it's the role model that I'm going to be". Matiu explained that it was "just the way we were brought up. We help each other. Making sure that

whether it's your family or not they're alright, just as any Māori would". For Matiu, who had moved away from his secure childhood environment when his parents died to a town where he did not know anyone except his aunt and brother, and later into social welfare care, whānau wellbeing included "making sure the moko[s] are alright – that their parents are looking after them better than what I was brought up". Older participants with children and grandchildren were especially focused on supporting the wellbeing of their mokopuna.

## Connectedness

Being connected to whānau was also important for personal wellbeing. Many participants had regular connections with whānau through living close to or with extended family, seeing one another regularly at whānau, hapū or iwi gatherings, or working with one another for the iwi. Anahera described connecting with her whānau as "feel(ing) like an obligation but it's one that fills my kete and my heart". Teina's kōrero similarly demonstrates whānau connectedness as intertwined with spirit and heart:

> Wellbeing? It's just a collectedness you will have, and you can feel it when you move in, but then you've got the wairua. And you have your immediate whānau are here … its being there and seeing that they're happy, I'm happy, Mum's happy. We're all happy. And when we get back with whānau back home and we all come together and then other whānau we have here on my mum's side – wellbeing, yeah. And it's just being happy within here too [pointing to his heart].

What wellbeing meant to people was also described as coming from what had been learned or passed down from parents, grandparents and tūpuna who had gone before, another way in which connectedness was interrelated with wellbeing.

Another way a sense of connectedness occurred was through place, including the home marae and where the person grew up. The home marae was mentioned as a place important to go back to. Several participants spent a lot of time at their marae as children and/or continue to do so as adults, taking their own children with them. A number grew up in small towns where everyone knew each other and were often related. The physical space of the home marae also provided a connection that was important for many. Ihaka observed that "at the marae you feel at home, and you feel you have a purpose there. You've got to do things to better yourself, to better the place and better the people around you". Tuhoro observed that involvement with the marae contributed to his own and his whānau wellbeing:

> I think selling the kaupapa we keep around, because I'm a Pā creature. You need kaupapa up there – tangi, coronation, regatta – we're always doing mahi up there. And I encourage that to

> my kids too, especially holidays or if there's a hui around, "Hey dishes, mate. They need some dishwashers. They need some table setters, man". But yeah, anytime I'm at the Pā I always like to drag my kids up. Get them up for a bit of exercise, and just hang around with their cousins, and yeah. It's been really good.

For those working on iwi lands, contributing to its maintenance and seeing and contributing to development were connected to their wellbeing. Speaking of his role in the iwi maintenance crew, Tuhoro expressed the positive impact working for his iwi, on iwi land, has had on him:

> I have a lot that I have gained from this place. Just even working around our lands, where all our poukai[s] are, our roots … All our costs, all our setup, and us, as a team, how we make it happen. I've been really encouraged by that. Personally, it's made me feel way better. I think my hauora has sort of picked up a bit more.

In these ways, people and place came together in understandings of wellbeing.

## Nature and quality of relationships

The quality of relationships was also seen as part of wellbeing; that is, how whānau members and others got on with each other. For instance, Ihaka noted that "it's how you treat your whānau, how you get on with your whanau … How you get on with other people and how they see you". It was important for many participants that their family relationships were strong and good. Indeed, Anahera was working hard to encourage more communication within her family, notably from her brothers. She believed this was essential for the family to support each other with challenges that came along. This was how the family had been able to support a niece with brain damage. That the quality of relationships was important for wellbeing was evident in the perspectives of those who had found, or were finding, aspects of their adult lives difficult. Sometimes they linked back to their earlier family or school experiences, or current experiences of unhealthy or unhelpful relationships that they had, or were working hard to manage or extract themselves from.

## The values people hold and what they value

Participants valued, and understood the value of, the various aspects of wellbeing described above: physical and mental health; psychological wellbeing; whānau, hapū and iwi wellbeing; connectedness to whānau, iwi and the land; and good relationships. Being 'well' was important to them and they recognised that it was important to their whānau. Other dimensions of life and ways of being that mattered to people – that they valued – included knowledge itself, and opportunities to learn and to pass on knowledge to others, particularly the next generations. Teaching and learning in tuakana-teina relationships were appreciated and enjoyed by all the participants. Learning with others that were like them was also appreciated and made learning easier and more enjoyable. Many of the participants appreciated the opportunities for practical, applied learning that was of use to them in their everyday lives including in their work. Such learning was meaningful and purposeful because it meant they could better support their whānau, hapū, and iwi which they greatly valued.

## Knowledge and learning

Having knowledge and being able to continue to learn throughout life were valued by all participants. This was especially evident among many of the Māori participants. Many were aware that there was always something to be learned and welcomed opportunities to do so, irrespective of their age. Knowledge that was relevant to them and useful to others was valued. Some participants began with learning te reo Māori, then found they wanted more tikanga knowledge. Learning te reo Māori was important to several of the adults who could understand what they heard, but wanted to participate in conversations with their whānau. Working for the iwi had exposed several of the maintenance crew to opportunities to learn more of their own stories, which they loved. Ancestral knowledge was highly valued, as was demonstrated in this love of stories and the oft-expressed viewpoint that knowledge about how to live well came from the tūpuna. Others, who had thought they could not read and discovered they could, were reading for their own enjoyment, or to their mokopuna for the first time in their lives.

## Passing on knowledge to next generations

Several participants were actively engaged in passing on mātauranga Māori and other useful skills and knowledge to those younger than themselves, seeing this as an important role and one they had benefited from themselves as their kaumatua had passed on knowledge and skills to them. This passing on of skills and knowledge by participants occurred in various ways. For example, some participants were supporting younger members of their maintenance crew by passing on trade skills. Matiu had taught his children to put down a hāngī and used Māori words he knew with his mokopuna.

## Tuakana-teina

Tuakana-teina was also evident as, conversely, younger ones with more advanced digital skills helped and encouraged the older members in their class and, regardless of their ages, an ethos of helping each other prevailed. This practice of supporting each other was valued in other classes where participants were mainly Pākehā. Within the whānau, participants found their children would offer to help them with new ways of using their smartphones. However, they were often impatient, explaining too quickly or in ways that were unclear, thus learning within the class was often more enjoyable. Another way the valuing of tuakana-teina was evident was in the pleasure participants found in being able to teach others something they had learned.

## Supporting whānau, hapū and iwi

Numerous examples of helping whānau, hapū and iwi were given by Māori participants. One participant mentioned helping renovate his daughter's home using his carpentry skills and being the whānau "Mr Fixit". Having had whānau members in mental health care, and not wanting more young people to go down this track, some participants were meeting as a men's mental health group to support young men in their rugby league club. Those in the maintenance crews were pleased they could help with day-to-day maintenance of iwi resources, setting up for poukai and big iwi events, and working on iwi development projects. For example, the iwi work gave Rangi a sense of purpose, seeing that he was, "here to sort things out for the next generation, rebuilding things and teaching the young ones".

## Aspirations

Most participants described aspirations they held, expressed a sense of purpose, or described what was important to them in the way they wished to live their lives. Aspirations included living a simple life, "paddling the waka" to help the whānau, leading by or being a good example to whānau, increasing knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori, passing on knowledge to the next generation, and gaining a tohu or a job. Participation in a L+N programme was contributing to at least one and often more of these goals.

One participant who had already made significant change in his life was satisfied with how his life was tracking, commenting that, "I just look after my kids, make sure the family's okay, come to mahi, pay all my bills, make sure living is good and keep those fellows happy too". Nikau and Euera also sought a "normal life", as Nikau explains:

> Just do it simple, just get a good job and keep that job, save up money to be able to provide, to put food on the table and find the right spouse and be able to look after her as well. And yeah, just go to Church and go to work and all that kind of stuff. Just live a normal life.

Along with Matiu, these aspirations were related to a desire to change their lives dramatically and, in doing so, be able to enjoy more purposeful lives. For example, upon realising through the programme that he could read, Matiu practiced by reading to his mokopuna for the first time in his life.

Aspirations related to their identity as Māori were common among the Māori participants and included a desire to speak te reo Māori more, to know more tikanga and to know the iwi stories. Huia was happy that she was now learning te reo Māori and working at a Kōhanga Reo[8]. Kaea, Rangi, and Anahera wanted to improve their ability to speak te reo Māori so that they could participate in conversations with friends and whānau or talk to their mokopuna. Anahera described this as "an intergenerational thing that will be passed down through my whakapapa to my mokopuna". Thus, this hope was also an expression of the importance to many of the Māori participants of passing on mātauranga Māori to next generations. Relatedly, the maintenance crew spoke repeatedly of the importance of their work for the long-term benefit of their iwi; this was a driver for them signing up to and staying in this work. For Kaea, his ambition to enhance his reo Māori led him to further study at whare wānanga[9] and university,

[8] Kōhanga Reo is a form of Māori early childhood education focused on te reo Māori and tikanga.

[9] A whare wānanga is the Māori cultural equivalent of a university, polytechnic or college of education and "is characterised by teaching and research that maintains, advances, and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding ahuatanga Māori (Māori tradition) according to tikanga Māori (Māori custom)" (New Zealand Qualifications Authority [NZQA], n. d. para. 1).

increasing his reo and tikanga Māori and gaining specific knowledge of māra kai whilst building his political acuity and critical thinking skills.

Among the unemployed participants, finding a job was usually a stated aim, but often the intermediary step of gaining needed skills was, understandably, the immediate focus. Although Paora was employed and did not have difficulty getting work, obtaining a Bachelor of Business Studies was an important goal he was simultaneously pursuing. He wanted to have evidence of his skills and knowledge to help him get the kind of job he desired, to "make things easier for me and my family". He also saw his return to formal learning as an adult, in order to achieve his aspirations, as a lesson for his children to make the most of their schooling while they are there.

For most participants, personal aspirations were so intertwined with their aspirations for whānau, hapū and iwi that they could not really be separated. However, for one of the Pākehā women, their desire for "freedom" from their family was an important motivator to enhance their skills and knowledge through the L+N programme.

# Learning pathways

This section explores the connections and common experiences in the different learning pathways and personal histories that led participants to engage with Literacy Aotearoa. The section is organised chronologically, presenting collections of memories about their experiences of learning and employment.

## Experiences and recollections of learning

### Learning through experience

One of the youngest participants, Moana, and one of the oldest, Ihaka, shared their earliest experiences in relation to learning from and within the family. Moana explained: "Most of my life learning has come from Mum, and growing up, when she was going through her own thing, I just learned and watched off her."

Ihaka recalled:

> I suppose, it goes right back to, because I was brought up at my grandparents and they taught me a lot. Well, my grandfather. Yeah. Taught me a lot about life. Yeah. growing up, coming through school, working out on the farm.

Others made a similar connection, but in relation to experiences later in their lives. Anahera observed: "I think, you experience things then hopefully you learn something from that." Kaea echoed this point, sharing: "So in a way everything's really been a teacher for me." And when Atawhai was asked about the most useful skills he had gained, he explained: "Just life skills really".

Others shared how their inclusion within iwi- or hapū-based spaces helped them understand the importance of learning by observation, being present and being included, particularly in the marae environment. Taika comments on the passing on of knowledge that occurred for him in the iwi maintenance context:

> The skills that I've picked up is picked up from learning from one person ... Him handing down some of his knowledge down to me, so some of his mahi knowledge and that. … teaching us the knowledge of welding and stuff.

Rangi encourages his children to come to marae events because he sees it is good for him and good for them (see also Connectedness). In the context of his maintenance work, he notes how he will continue the pattern of passing on knowledge to next generations through the marae environment:

> I think what I'm here for at the moment is to sort it all out for the next generation ... We've got a lot of rebuilding … hopefully I can bring in young ones and teach them. There's always got to be someone here. … got a couple of young fellas from here that I know will step up.

Anahera also sees the marae as an important site of learning and adds how visitors to the marae also increase the opportunities for learning:

> If I think about learning … We've had so many wonderful international guests come and we are able to host them. So, yeah, it's an ongoing learning. I still don't know a lot, but I know that it's important to me.

For Nikau, membership of the Mormon Church provided important opportunities for learning. He explained that the Church, "teaches you, the purpose of life and where we came from, why we're here and where we're going … but helps you too ... They teach you self-reliance and all that kind of stuff too."

These meaningful learning opportunities are bound up in the tapestry of their lives connected to their home environment as well as the geographical space in which they are located within whānau, hapū and iwi. Overall, these quotes demonstrate how learning for Māori is lifelong, embedded in multigenerational social practices and connected to home and places of cultural significance.

## School experiences: Challenges and resilience

When discussing their learning pathways some participants, both Māori and Pākehā, also reflected on schooling as a starting point. For some, school was a place to seek out belonging or was presented with neutrality or as a place to escape. Trauma was present in these accounts expressed with both resigned acceptance and frustrated anger about the presence of bullying from peers and teachers. The stories of bullying were gendered, present in many of the female participants' narratives, both Pākehā and Māori, young and old.

Euera remembered his school years fondly: "I've been to five primary schools. … because my parents always kept moving around, … I actually enjoyed it because when I went to intermediate, I ended up knowing everyone". However, he added that in "High school ... I don't think I did that good at all. … With English and social studies, I did pretty well, and also PE. But all the rest like math, science, I think those were the ones where I was struggling." Sharon also changed schools many times, but in her case constant moving was due to her family needing to flee domestic violence.

As well as a reflection of specific family realities, changing schools was also sometimes a strategic decision. For example, Anahera's parents encouraged her to go to an urban city school, which she enjoyed but left because she wanted to be closer to home and her culture. Tia's father tried hard to make sure she could access a school that would help her with her learning disability. However, aside from making one friend, the experience was not completely positive, and the school fees were too high to be sustainable for the family, so she returned to the local school.

Bullying was also an experience the participants had to navigate. Sharon explained that:

> I didn't ever have a chance to learn nothing. And when I got into my teens, I went to [intermediate school]. And that was the only school I loved, and I passed it. It was the only school. And then I went to [high school], and I was bullied right through high school.

Molly shared multiple stories of being picked on by boys, particularly in her NCEA Horticulture class where one boy, who consistently victimised her, threw a potato at her. Memories of wounds imposed by teachers' and allied staff as bullies were also shared. Moana, dismissing the impact of peers in contrast to teachers, shared:

> … in school, it was mainly teachers. Like, students, they're normal bullies, whatever, that's nothing. But it was mainly the adults in the school that messed up ... because if you're not doing good, they tend to just not pay attention to you, or if you don't understand. Or if you're just quiet, ... they tend to not pay attention and only pay attention to the ones that are faster at learning. [At college] they just pushed me to the side as well because I was too scared to say anything.

However, being paid attention was also problematic. Molly shared her memories of getting assistance with literacy. The deficit framing meant that the intervention was not experienced as support or assistance:

> I got put into like a little small little class for reading and writing. The tutor that was helping was not much of a helping person to help me read and spell. She would just like, "Oh you can do it. You can do it. You haven't done any work. You have to do it." I was like, "Well, I don't understand any of the work you're giving me." And she treated... Well, because all the kids in the class were the bad ones. They put them in the basket, like they're the bad kids, they always get in trouble, consequences. They don't care about schooling. So we'll put them in this class to make them feel dumb and not important.

Anahera shared a memory from the 1990s that showed how teacher expectations can be much lower for Māori students: "when we were in high school …, some of the teachers … Their perception of us was that we weren't going to go to university, because we were Māori ..." Instead of giving in to the perceptions held by the teacher, however, Anahera repositioned the memory as a story of resistance:

> My friends and I, we all just sat in there, we were like, right, we're going to apply and we're just going to do it. It wasn't a nice thing to have someone say to us that you're probably not going to... Not amount to anything, … So we all just sat in our wharenui at our high school and the applications were given out and we filled them out.

This experience could have switched Anahera and her friends off school, preventing expectations and hopes of going to university. Instead, Anahera and her friends chose to resist the messaging and headed

off to study and succeeded, in spite of the teacher's statements. These stories illustrated how education can be experienced as an unsafe and hostile place.

The stories of bullying also illustrate the struggles to fit in and to belong at school. Two young female participants with learning difficulties shared their passionate drive to remain in school to Year 13, despite bullying from their peers and the recommendations of parents and teachers. Molly explained that despite feeling deeply alienated at school, she stayed till the end of Year 13 because she "had to do something". Georgie shared how a teacher told her, "'You know, Year 13 is only for the people that go [to] university.' I said, 'That's not true. Anyone can stay till Year 13.' And so I proved them wrong. But yeah, school was very difficult."

The desire of Georgie and Kaea to stay at school despite pressures to leave illustrates how bullying is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it can cause trauma and damage that echoes throughout a person's lifetime and on the other, for some, it is a point of resistance. Agentic behaviour follows through the choice to resist the emotions of being positioned as less than others. As Lulu noted, "Because I've been bullied. My reading ... People think I was stupid because my writing is not good. But I pulled my head up and just go with it."

Even though these stories of resistance and resilience illustrate the ability to overcome bullying long-term, trauma is also part of these stories. Participants shared how their experiences left them feeling belittled, "dumb", with their confidence stripped away from them. These stories illustrate the different ways, and the different reasons, the participants chose to leave formal education or, at least, to view education in a negative light. Overall, what these experiences demonstrate is the significant amount of courage required to return to learning in formal settings as an adult.

## Leaving school and ending formal learning

Tuhoro explained that he started mahi when he was about 17 or 18 when he knew he could get money, which made him happy at the time; Tuhoro was pulled away from school by the prospect of employment. In contrast, some participants shared a moment of having "had enough" – a moment of exhaustion or frustration where they wanted to be anywhere else other than in the education system. At this point, they left school early to pursue work and adult life without qualifications, or admitted to needing a rest from studying. This occurred at the tertiary level too: Anahera told us that after she finished her tertiary qualification, "I went and worked in an ice cream cone factory because I just didn't want to think anymore."

Huia shared that she left school at 15 because:

> I'd had it. I'd had enough. … I just felt like, wasn't a lot of support back then. ... You'd get the odd teacher that you'd have a good rapport with, but not really. To be honest, they were in their sixties, white males. I didn't really relate to them.

Leaving school without qualifications presented challenges for the participants that they dealt with in different ways. Atawhai explained that he was always employed but not in highly skilled jobs, having gone straight onto the farm after leaving school. He was very clear that he reflected on that decision with regret: "Education, never got much of a chance for an education. Left school early just to go to work. It's always that case, if I'd have known then what I know now, I would have changed all of it." This kind of sentiment was also echoed in the comments of others who focused on making sure their mokopuna valued education and stayed in school (see Whānau wellbeing and Foundational learning for everyday life and work).

Sharon's employment history was characterised by low-entry and low-skilled jobs, some of which she enjoyed and some of which left her feeling unappreciated. Most of Huia's work history was also in low-skilled jobs. For example, when she moved to Australia, she could only get employment in retail or hospitality. She was clear that this was due to not having qualifications. Like Atawhai, Huia regretted her absence of credentials: "I wish I did have something. ... I'm actually not qualified at anything, but I have experience with a few things." Nevertheless, she felt leaving school was the right decision for her at that time.

Huia's awareness that leaving school was right for her at the time reflected her disconnection from the school system but, more importantly, it illustrated that although she left the idealised path of pursuing further qualifications, she still chose that path agentically; a path that allowed her to achieve her goals at the time. Tuhoro also left school early and did not pursue further education. For him, it was because he had started a family and chose to focus on parenting. Again, this could be seen as a disrupted path, but for Tuhoro being a good parent and supportive family member was, and remains, the most important goal for his life. For example, he shared: "I had kids when I was young. I've got six of them. … That was sort of a big thing for me, bringing up my kids …". He later outlined how: "For the last six years I was looking after my father. … I enjoyed it. It made me spend more time with him."

Furthermore, because of the more expansive vision of learning shared in Learning through experience for both Huia and Tuhoro, their learning never stopped, instead their decision to reconnect specifically

with te reo and tikanga learning was merely delayed until they were in the right time, place, and space (see also Support from others in participants' pathways).

# Employment, unemployment, and learning

## Post-school learning: Qualifications, workplace learning and getting stuck

Some participants left school to pursue further education in different fields, including qualifications at varying levels such as degrees, diplomas and national certificates. For example, Rangi completed an apprenticeship through the Ministry of Public Works but encountered challenges in his workplace learning which deterred him from working in the industry. Instead, he went into the freezing works, leaving behind his trade training until he started working in mining in Australia where he found the knowledge useful. Teina also completed a trade certificate through the Māori Trades Training scheme[10].

Tuhoro pursued further education after leaving school, completing automotive Unit Standards at Levels 1 and 2 of the National Qualifications Framework, but did not complete a qualification or go on to an apprenticeship. As a result, his self-perception is that he is "just a worker". However, like Rangi the skills and interest in engineering he picked up from school and polytechnic are an important part of how he approaches his mahi and provides value to his employer and wider whānau, despite not having a full trade qualification.

Like Rangi and Teina, Ihaka also started an apprenticeship in the 1980s when he left school, but his ambition was thwarted as he was unable to complete his apprenticeship. He explains:

> When I finished school, I left the farm. I went into … Māori Trade Training. … I started off as an electrician apprentice. Yeah. Then I did two years on that before I had my accident … A car ran off the road and ... it collected me, and well, that put an end to my apprenticeship days.

Ihaka went on to share how the firm his apprenticeship was with kept him on in a more menial role, but he eventually left because the Māori Trade Training scheme had sent him away for his training and he

[10] The Māori Trades Training scheme was established by the Ministry of Māori Affairs in 1959 and grew from ten apprentices in carpentry to over 1000 by 1970, in plumbing, electrical wiring, mechanics, painting, panel beating, plastering, welding, engineering, boiler making, fitting and more Te Puni Kōkiri, 2009). The scheme included hostel accommodation that ensured the apprentices received support from the hostel supervisor and other apprentices and ended in the 1980s.

missed home. When he came home in the late 1980s, social services placed him into training through the MACCESS[11] scheme for 12 months, after which he secured employment at an iwi-based organisation where he remains to this day.

Euera shared how, after he recovered from mental health problems, he was referred to a short car mechanical course by his case manager. He really enjoyed this very applied course, but noted that it did not contribute to any kind of qualification such as NCEA, and the subsequent job he took on was factory work.

These participants' stories are of being siloed into low-paid work and routinised tasks, and of at times experiencing unemployment. For some participants who were fully engaged in short course learning when unemployed, shared stories of getting stuck completing low-level qualifications rather than moving on to continuous employment.

Sharon, Euera and Nikau's learning pathways are typical of this kind of marginalisation, where movement in and out of the labour market is framed by extensive time periods completing short courses. Georgie also reflects this kind of path where she has completed several Level 1 and 2 National Certificates at a Private Training Establishment over several years; in her case, however, the courses have all been part of working out how to access the labour market. Having tried out several different occupations, she is now happy with what she has studied and has found suitable part-time work in youth social services.

## Using social services

Some participants were not able to maintain continuous employment; instead, they relied on benefits for income and on other social services at times. When asked about social services, most of the participants' references to income support and other social services were made in passing, as though it was an unimportant background factor in their lives. For example, Huia told us: "I worked most of my life, I worked a fair bit of it, but there was a time where I was not working and I would stay home and watch Oprah". Taika was dismissive: "Well, I haven't had any for what? Ages". Clearly, while accessing

[11] ACCESS was a regional programme for the unemployed that ran from 1987 to 1993 and included three types of courses in life skills, vocational skills and work-based training. The MACCESS scheme, which ran alongside the ACCESS programme, was for Māori trainees and was run by Māori authorities. Fifty percent of the ACCESS participants were also Māori (Colmore-King, 2018; Gordon, 1989).

income support was part of their past, it was not an important feature and did not define who they are now.

When participants did mention these services more specifically, accessing them was a means to deal with specific circumstances in life and health. For example, Nikau shared how social services was helping him access training programmes that he hoped would lead to employment.

The young women we talked to also presented different stories. For example, on the one hand, Georgie reported feeling grateful for being able to access a range of social services when they were needed, but on the other, she felt a loss of independence when she accessed mental health and other services. Moana too shared how she needed income assistance but the accompanying pressure to find employment was a significant source of pressure and distress for her: "I'm on the Job Seekers benefit, it's a bit harder because that's where that forcing you to get a job really comes from. Like, they try to really force it on you that you have to get a job."

Moana also emphasised how the training she was sent on, purportedly to lift her employability, had not helped at all. She observed that the case managers:

> … just send me to another course, and it's mainly always a course to help you get a job. Yeah. But those are stink because it's the same stuff, like more book work than anything. I've gone to a lot of job courses and I still don't learn nothing because it's the same stuff. I have to sit there in the classroom and write all this stuff down, when I'm like, still don't know how to get a job. You know? … Still don't know how to go to an interview, or how to properly do an interview. Yeah. So yeah, that's not really helpful at all.

As outlined in Post-school learning: Qualifications, workplace and employment, the training accessed through social services is often irrelevant to the lives of the participants, and may be disconnected from the employment opportunities they eventually take up. As discussed later in this report, Matiu's engagement with Literacy Aotearoa halted this pattern for him as his course was bespoke, ensuring that it was relevant and connected to his needs and aspirations.

Some referrals between different service organisations were helpful, being appropriate stepping stones or adjuncts in their life and learning journeys. Following his injury, Matiu was referred from ACC to an organisation that helped him address other challenges he faced. He was able to access help from a nutritionist to lose weight and was referred to Literacy Aotearoa for help with reading. Nikau and Euera were referred from another L+N education provider to Literacy Aotearoa because it offered a more suitable learning environment with learners closer to their age. Their reintegration support worker

brought them along as part of helping them to prepare for the next phase of their lives. These opportunities, and/or the organisations or individuals who provided them, may be considered 'enablers', which are discussed further in What enables people to live the lives they choose.

## Australia

While it was not a strong pattern, the movement between labour markets in Australia and Aotearoa was relevant to the learning pathways of a few participants. For some, it was where many family members were located, so there was a pull between wanting to remain connected to whakapapa and the desire of whānau to have them present. For example, one participant had most of his adult family move to Australia and was asked to move over as well so they can look after him; however, he has chosen to stay where he "belongs", on the land he has lived on his entire life. Sharon spent her childhood in Australia but left when her mother fled a domestic violence situation. The shift was a traumatic one for Sharon as she found the changes in school systems difficult to navigate.

There were also participants who sought economic opportunities in Australia. As outlined earlier, this choice did not always lead to better opportunities. For the participants who had qualifications, however, the move was a positive choice that allowed them to exercise current skills and develop new ones. Rangi told us that, "when I went to Australia, … I used what I learned. … I went underground for 10 years and through tunnels and learned … how to operate machinery. … I did that for my family." Anahera shared how she enjoyed working in Australia, learning how to work with different cultures while also using te ao Māori values like manaakitanga. She was also challenged by the move. She recalled a confrontation with a drug user that was a significant memory for her:

> I had a real massive confrontation, and I could tell that she had been on drugs. Because just the way she was. And I can see it in my head, she came up and walked right up to my face. And in that moment I remember thinking, okay, I thought of my grandmother, … because I was away from home, it was just me and my partner. And I thought of my tūpuna. … it was quite a traumatic experience … to have someone really drugged out and in front of everyone. … it … just blew me right up. But … I was just very calm. I thought okay, I can't do anything. I'm just going to let her do what she needs to do.

Significantly for both Rangi and Anahera, their positive learning experiences and motivations were grounded in te ao Māori values. However, the choice to live and work in Australia was not permanent; the call home was too strong with the longest stay in Australia being about ten years.

## Support from others in participants' pathways

The last section on the participants' learning pathways is focussed on the key steps that took them towards positive employment opportunities and/or Literacy Aotearoa. The stories shared here exemplify how key people and key moments played a transformative role in the participants' lives, linking or supporting them into new opportunities that constituted steps towards living the lives they wished. These findings also reinforce the points made in Tuakana-teina on the importance of these kinds of relationships.

When Anahera began her tertiary studies and later went into the labour market, family members played a key role in each of her steps. She referenced her sister: "I wanted to do the same thing [as my sister]. She got a great job and I was like, I want a great job too. But also I wanted to help people out." Later, she shared how she got her factory job with her sister-in-law. Cousins then played key roles in accessing teaching jobs and in feeling comfortable with the workplace leadership. For example, when she was in Australia, Anahera told us, "my cousin actually got me the job, because she'd moved over there and she was leaving, so she contacted me, and I took over her place. … it was one of the greatest learning experiences I'd had."

Friends were also important in supporting participants into important roles. Huia shared with us that her "favourite job ever" had been working as a radio DJ, noting that this opportunity was transformational: "It was another friend that got me my job at the radio station. … That literally got me off the couch and onto a seat with a mic on." The friend clearly wanted to help a loved one who was at home with children and struggling with her sense of place and enabled Huia to access an employment opportunity far better than anything she had experienced before. Huia's reflections also highlighted that the role was a turning point for her in terms of understanding herself and her journey with te reo Māori:

> My grandmother was fluent. My father was fluent, but I never... listened and wanted to learn, but now I do. ... It's been a while actually … At least coming up 20 years when I think about it. I worked for an iwi radio station … I wasn't fluent … Listening to the waiata and listening to the kōrero, it's like, "Wow. I don't understand it. I understand little bits, but I don't understand it and I can't speak it." I'm very grateful to have that opportunity because it was a lot of fun. You do a lot of stuff in the community and its heaps of fun and you interview famous New Zealand people.

Learning te reo Māori is important to Huia for many reasons. Right now, it is important because she left her role in care work to be more connected to her culture and language. Significantly, starting the programme was also key in obtaining a position at a Kōhanga Reo: "I just asked at the community centre, 'Are there any courses?' and this is how I came about this. Then my job … she recommended me because I did tell her I would love to work in a Kōhanga Reo".

Rangi expressed a similar desire to connect through te reo Māori. He admitted he sometimes lacked confidence with it, but family helped him out and inspired him.

> My brother-in-law, he's the same, he's older than me but he was thinking of chucking in a big job to go back and be a teacher's aide at a Kura Kaupapa. Just to start thinking about the reo. And I said, "You'll do it bro. You'll do it." And we awhi each other. And yeah, he had the mana.

As these stories illustrate, having the support of family and friends to access specific employment opportunities helps build confidence The maintenance crew all had similar stories about how they had got their jobs or how the culture in the workplace was shaped: iwi members (often older ones) would shoulder tap people and bring them into the organisation – the new employees would start at the bottom, often on a part-time basis, and transition to full-time work. Tuhoro, who eventually became full-time, shared his story of coming to work for the crew:

> … one of the cousins up at the college, there at Jubilee, he was looking for a worker, so he asked me if I wanted to come to work, just for part-time hours. … "Yeah. I'm really keen." And he goes, "Oh, well, what do you do now?" I said, "Oh, I'm just staying in with the old man. I'm just looking after him." And he goes, "Oh, do you want to come for work for a couple of hours a day?" I said, "Yeah, yeah."

Some of the participants had worked for the organisation a very long time because of the place it had in their lives as an iwi-based organisation, and also because if any of them thought of leaving, then they would be supported by the team leaders to stay through social, cultural or learning-based rewards. For example, right from the start Teina kept trying to leave:

> I did most of the work within the three-month period and he turns up over here, he pulls in, he says, "In the boot." "What's in the boot?" "Well, have a look." There's a crate of bloody beer, pull it out and we end up drinking the bloody crate. "What are you going to do after Christmas? You might as well come back and work for me again." It just started from there. Every time I wanted to bloody move or move on, it was never going to happen. This was going to be it

> because so much needed to be done here and so much needed to be done out there. Within our bloody rohe. And we're still ongoing, we're still doing.

Teina also explained how the process of shoulder tapping and encouraging new people into the workplace had been transformational for the rest of the team:

> Also having a bloody workforce then that were, a lot of them, they just left school by the time they're 15, they ... no qualifications. They just didn't want to; they just didn't stay at school. They were the ones that were going to find jobs at the freezing works when the works opened up. But they were given jobs here working with us, and then they slowly moved on, just the core jokers stayed behind.

Part of the reason that they stayed was because they were given opportunities to learn a range of skills, both informally and through formal learning on courses and completing licence requirements. Taika told us the story of getting recruited:

> I was working at the freezing works … I was in the pub on a Sunday having a few beers and well, we was laid off … just waiting for a phone call to start back to go back to work at the freezing works. And he had asked me, what am I doing with myself at the moment? … And I was like, "Oh, just been laid off at the moment. Just signed up for the unemployment benefit again." Yeah. And he said to me, "Do you know how to put up marquees and stuff?" And I said, "Oh, yeah. Sort of." And he goes, "Oh, would you be interested in coming here?"… "Oh, yeah. I'd be keen to come here and work here and stuff.'

Since being employed here, he had accessed carpentry, carving, landscaping, and farming courses.

For Tuhoro, the invitation to learn was part of being supported into the job. His uncle had said, "Yeah, come down here, boy. Come down here and learn the ropes. Learn all the kaupapa for poukai and that. Especially put up our tents". That this became a reality was evident in Tuhoro's explanation of the learning opportunities and the encouragement to learn that continued:

> [I am] learning a lot of things like that, especially out there at the college, maintenance, keeping the place tidy ... I've got a lot of things to learn from this mahi. I already have my forklift license. I actually got my full license when I came here. … I have a lot that I've gained from this place. Just even working around our iwi lands, where all our poukai[s] are, our roots, they get there. All our costs, all our setup, and us, as a team, how we make it happen. I've been really encouraged by that.

> … they're really encouraging on what sort of skills you do here. … Uncle's just scored a new welder, for maintenance and for the maunga. … I've played with an arc welder but not a big welder. And I ended up getting it going, so I've been playing with it, and doing a few projects, which is good. And [name] straight away he goes, "Ah, hey, I think you need a course mate." "Yes, bro. How about a night course after work?" He goes, "Oh, suss it out." Yeah, and he goes, "Oh, I'll come too." I said, "Yeah. You come because you are my ride in there".

Having support from key and trusted people was also important for the participants when accessing the programmes. Lulu shared with us how, if it wasn't for the support of family, she would not have started at Literacy Aotearoa: "my sister-in-law actually heard about this place and she was like, "Oh, we can go in and do a go in together and introduce you". Tia reported a similar experience in which a friend supported her, recommending the programme as a way to cope with the loss of both parents. This support was transformational for Tia who did not feel supported at home: "The only way to get through this tough year is do something [other] than stay home with the person that thinks you're dumb."

Kate's caregivers motivated her to come to learn, telling her that it was an important step to getting on the courses she wanted to do to get a job she wants. Anahera revealed that having a family member complete the same course was part of her decision-making to enrol: "I got onto this course, because I think it was through social media. And I knew it was in [town] here which was a bonus. And also, I knew one of the whānau here, he was doing it and I had a little chat to him". Being encouraged to go to a place of learning or employment by others created a sense of safety and/or confidence for our participants. Safety that was enhanced even further when a person chose to walk beside them to help participants overcome their fears of learning or trying new things.

## What enables people to live the lives they choose

This section reports on participants' perspectives on what or who has helped, or is helping, them to live the life they choose as they look towards the future. This includes what and who has facilitated their engagement in learning that has been important to them, but it is broader than this. The findings presented here span lifetimes, covering examples of experiences before and alongside their participation in the programmes which have been or are enablers. We present findings about the kinds of knowledge that were valued, the ways in which participants preferred to learn, specific organisations and people that helped them and, more broadly, the role of whakapapa and connectedness as enablers.

## Relevant, meaningful, and useful knowledge

As a broad concept, education as *opportunities for coming to know* – learning – was highly valued by the participants. They recognised that acquisition of certain bodies of knowledge was or would be helpful to them in their lives by enabling them to understand aspects of their world and to take actions to enhance their lives, or the lives of others who were important to them.

Participants had a variety of reasons for valuing particular kete of knowledge they had already acquired in their lives and for wanting new or more in-depth knowledge or skills. This valuing of knowledge, and desire for more, was sometimes related to their own needs or interests. At other times it was related to reasons beyond themselves such as enabling them to support their mokopuna, set an example for whānau, or participate more fully with others in culturally significant activities. Very often the reasons were multiple and entwined. However, there was always a purpose for the learner, and often the learning would serve a number of purposes beyond the primary one.

## Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori

As described in Learning through experience, several participants had opportunities to acquire mātauranga Māori through involvement in te ao Māori from a young age. Many of the Māori participants could understand spoken reo Māori and used some Māori words when speaking, as was evident in the interspersing of kupu Māori in their interviews, and Matiu's expressed enjoyment of using reo Māori with his mokopuna. Teina valued his knowledge of gathering kai which enabled him to provide kai which he liked to do. That this knowledge was important to people was also evidenced by their interest in delving into deeper learning of te reo and tikanga in the L+N programmes and other learning opportunities that followed.

Anahera was excited about the opportunity to learn to speak te reo Māori (beyond only a few words), made possible because the reo Māori programme ran locally and in the evening; as she worked as a teacher during the day, she was able to attend evening programmes. Many of the maintenance crew were also rejuvenated by the opportunity to work across all the iwi marae; this meant they were able to listen to the stories being told in between the setting up and the support work they did for each poukai. As noted in Support from others in participants' pathways, Rangi had restarted his reo learning journey and he and his brother-in-law awhi each other on this pathway. In Aspirations we saw that, following Literacy Aotearoa's reo Māori programme, Kaea went on to more advanced reo study and

study of tikanga and māra kai at whare wānanga and university. This building up of mātauranga Māori was very important for the Māori learners, linked to feeling good, being happy, experiencing a sense of belonging, and being immersed in their whakapapa through acquiring knowledge passed down to them from their tūpuna, which they could then pass on to their mokopuna.

## Foundational knowledge for everyday life and work

The desire of many of the participants to gain knowledge not acquired at school suggests that school knowledge is valued, even when being and/or learning at school was traumatic, as described in School experiences: Challenges and resilience. Participants wanted the foundational knowledge taught in schools, such as reading, writing and mathematics, and were pleased when they found they could do these things better than they had believed, and/or were supported to improve from their programme entry level. Others showed their valuing of school knowledge in their encouragement of their mokopuna to make the most of school. For example, Paora tells them, “Don’t just go to eat your lunch”.

Most participants were not specific about their challenges with L+N beyond identifying that they struggled in school and/or with reading, writing and maths. For example, Tia observed that she “learned to read in school but struggled with everything else” and was “not very confident in my writing”. Tia, and other participants with similar stories, were clear that these skills had greatly improved through their participation in the L+N programme and they highly valued these improvements. As well as being of practical use in their everyday lives, enhanced reading, writing (and maths) opened up both social and work-related possibilities for them, and the possibility of accessing higher level, more specific knowledge. Moana and Matiu are both reading more than they used to, and Matiu is reading to his mokopuna for the first time. As he reads and writes more (building up these foundational skills), he is getting more of the Heavy Truck licence questions correct. Most importantly, the participants’ confidence and hopes for the future grew enormously, which lifted the quality of their lives.

Foundational verbal communication skills that schools aim to develop, such as offering opinions, asking questions, and speaking up in a group, were also a struggle for many of the participants as, for many of them, their confidence to enact these skills had been severely knocked. Developing these abilities and the confidence to use them through the L+N programmes was very important to the participants, leading to a substantial upswing in their overall confidence and view of their future.

## Specific knowledge for everyday life and work (post school)

On leaving school, both Teina and Rangi had acquired trade qualifications through Māori Trade Training. For Teina, this had seemed a better option than working on the roads or in forestry – the two options that stood out to him in his home area. These trade skills enabled them to work on large projects around the country or add to their skills base in Australia. Again, these skills were useful for their own work purposes but also for the whānau (Teina completed home renovations for his daughter; Rangi was known as 'Mr Fixit' in his whānau), and for hapū and iwi (using and sharing them as part of the maintenance crew). One participant acquired strategies that helped him achieve his Trade Certificate, including staying for the entire exam time, continuing to add to his answers and repeating a failed exam. Interestingly, Teina was initially seen as overqualified for iwi work. In contrast, Paora has enrolled in a university degree because he has found employers want credentials, not just experience. Qualifications that some participants already had, or were in the process of acquiring, included teaching, business studies, te reo Māori, and tikanga Māori through polytechnic, whare wānanga and university.

Participants also spoke of how they valued the learning that they gained from their enrolled programmes; for example, driver licencing (Learner and Heavy Truck); digital skills; reading, writing and numeracy in English; and te reo Māori. Like other learning described above, the specific sets of knowledge gained through programme participation were important because of their relevance to their lives and work. They represent examples of a much broader range of what adult learners appreciate coming to know when the opportunities are available to them.

*Digital technologies and devices. O*ne valued body of knowledge that participants described related to the use of digital devices. This learning was undertaken primarily for work purposes. The participants learned skills such as how to reply to emails, how to attach photos and documents, how to charge their phones quickly, and how to clear space in their phone data storage systems. This knowledge enabled them to do their maintenance work as a team more effectively and efficiently and, therefore, was helpful to the iwi. The value of this was clear in Tuhoro's story of using the phone to help solve a problem at work:

> … there's a house out [location] there that we do, the tribe owns, and it's all locked away and everything. Me and my cousin were up there mowing. He was mowing, I was just walking around the house, just looking at things. And there's a big shed down the back there, which is always locked. And I went up there, and I opened up the door, and it was unlocked. And I thought, this is not right. This is not right. Someone's come in here or tried to break in, so I told

my cousin, I said, “Ah, we’ve got to do something here”. And he goes, “Oh, take a photo.” I said, “Oh, cool,” so I took the photo, and then I emailed Uncle straight away.

Tuhoro, Taika and Paora all recognised that “the cyber way” was the way of the future and that it was beneficial to themselves and to the iwi to get on board with these advances. As Paora observed, “its where the tribe wants us to head to for the next generations.” At the personal level, Taika observed that: “I’m going to learn it because that’s the way it is … got to do banking online, all our stuff”. Rangi noted that “we have to pick up because our mokopuna are living in this era, so we [need to] catch up with them”. Some participants spoke of whānau instructing them on the use of their phone with a mix of impatience and encouragement as sometimes helpful and sometimes not. Taika, however, noted that he was also able to show his whānau his new knowledge, saying, “This is what you can do to your phone. This is what you don’t need on your phone … because at the moment we’re going through what apps we need on our phone. What apps we need versus what apps we want”.

*Driver licences and machinery certifications.* The opportunity to gain various driver licences and/or machinery ‘tickets’ was highly valued by the participants who engaged in this learning. For some, it meant becoming a legal driver; for others, it enabled them to be of more help to the iwi; for Matiu, who was currently unemployed, it opened up a new potential area of work that was otherwise closed to him; and for the maintenance crew, new licences and tickets led to pay increases.

## Positive and welcoming learning environments

Many attributes of the programme environments were valued by the participants. As a whole, they found the programmes and the organisation to be positive and welcoming spaces and that dispelled their fears about entering a learning space again after unhappy school experiences, or the programme being of little value to them. Consequently, as well as gaining new skills and knowledge, they gained confidence in both their existing abilities and their capacity to learn, and became hopeful for their futures. A love of learning was nurtured. Attributes which helped participants to stay in their programme, enjoy learning and increase their confidence included: staff showing participants they had ‘seen’ them and helping them to see themselves in different and more positive ways; bringing people together who had a good deal in common in a place where they were respected and felt safe as learners and as people; and providing real learning opportunities from skilled and knowledgeable tutors around content that was useful or meaningful to them.

## Being seen and seeing themselves

That Literacy Aotearoa is special and significant for learners came through in the conversations with almost all the participants. As Georgie explains: “I came here, hoping for someone to be more understanding. Like the tutors and everything. And I’ve really enjoyed it so far.”

When Molly first came to Literacy Aotearoa, she was very apprehensive and assumed it would be like other courses she had been sent to. She observed that:

> … when I first came here, I didn’t think I would get a choice in what to say. Because I thought we’d just sit down and learn what the teachers just planned. And if we want to learn something else, don’t ask the teacher, we’ll get told to shut up or something. And I thought it’s just going to be like one of those days. I was like, “Oh great.”

However, she then explained that it was nothing like that and instead she was given lots of choice. This sentiment was echoed by many others including Lulu, who noted that, “I loved how they made you pick … stuff you want to learn because, like I said, when you are in school, you don’t really get to choose what you want to learn”.

Other staff actions included paying careful attention to the participants in getting to know them and working out what would be helpful to them. Tia, for example, had one-on-one time with a tutor before joining in with the whole class so that the tutor knew more about her L+N challenges. The one-on-one time also helped her build confidence to join the group. Matiu and Euera believed they could not read but with guidance from their tutor found they could read, positively changing their self-perception. Being reminded by their tutor that they were learning, and that making mistakes was part of learning, helped encourage participants to attempt tasks they did not think they could do; to attempt answering questions when they were unsure of the answers; and to ask questions. For many of them, this was a marked contrast to the belittling and fear they had experienced in their schooling and associated with classrooms. This very different and positive experience also contributed to building confidence in their existing knowledge and capacity to learn.

## Being with others like themselves

All participants indicated that they valued being in a learning environment in which they could be themselves or were with others like themselves. This sense of ‘being the same as others’ was mentioned

in the context of their childhood years of growing up, schooling and post-school education. In the case of growing up, examples of the importance of being with others like themselves could be seen in Matiu's story of a secure childhood in a small community where everyone knew everyone, "everyone just did the same thing", and "you didn't have to worry about anything". He contrasted this with the difficult experience of coming to a new and bigger town where "everyone's different" and where he did not continue previously shared activities such as horse riding.

This was also an important aspect of the L+N programmes. Several learners mentioned that they felt more comfortable about learning when they saw that others in their class were like them in various ways. For example, they were at the same knowledge or skill level, were of a similar age, found learning as difficult as they did, or thought in similar ways. Molly, who came with a fear of being compared to others, was able to dispel her fear in the context of the L+N programme; she explains:

> … because when I came to here [to Literacy Aotearoa], I was just like, what's everyone's level like? Because when I do math, I don't want to feel like I'm dumb or anything. And then I realise like, oh everyone's at the same level.

## Being in a safe learning space

The qualities of Literacy Aotearoa that created a feeling for participants of being in a safe space included having small numbers of learners per class and the general milieu of positivity that prevailed. Participants noted, for example, that "nobody was laughing at you" and "it was easier to get along with everyone" compared to their school experience; another noted that there were "not a lot of people talking over each other" which they found helpful for learning. Having choice in what they learned added to the sense of safety. Rangi in the maintenance crew, whose classes took place at their work site, noted that it "feels more comfortable because it's at our place" and they were with others they already knew. It was also common for participants in group programmes to comment on how they all helped each other. Lulu mentioned that staff made them feel comfortable in who they are.

Characteristics of the tutor and the pedagogical processes which made the experience positive were also described. These characteristics included having a knowledgeable tutor who enjoyed the work, was fun, and who used approaches that suited the learners such as drawing diagrams and explaining them (visual and aural learning) and teaching at a pace that was manageable for the participants. For example, Huia explains:

> She takes her time … she makes it an environment where you are able to ask questions. Also just varies how we learn as well … we're at a point now where we are asking questions in Māori and answering them how we would answer them in Māori. That is good. It gets the grey matter going and not … I mean we are learning so don't be afraid if it's wrong.

The regularity of classes was appreciated by Matiu, who found coming each week helped his confidence; now he feels better about himself and more confident about tackling the mahi and sees himself as upskilled, feeling positive about getting back into work.

### Being challenged but not pressured

The participants appreciated that they were learning things they had chosen to learn and, as their confidence grew, they were invited to take on more challenging courses and content. For example, Lulu explained that her tutor: "makes us work hard ... She fries our brains. … But still putting us out there". Huia, in her quote above (in Being in a safe learning space), acknowledges the way in which her tutor creates a safe place to ask questions and make mistakes. Nikau felt that the programme had quickly made a difference for him: "... this place I've actually, even though I've been here for two days or two weeks, I've learned more here than I have at [another literacy provider] ... because at the other courses they are doing too much talking and not enough showing us stuff". This suggests that the approach provides enough challenge to uphold his interest. The knowledge and skills of their tutors that enabled real learning to take place were appreciated.

## Connectedness, belonging, whakapapa

In Connectedness, we presented some examples of how connectedness played a role for participants in their wellbeing. Here, we present findings on how connectedness, a sense of belonging, and awareness of whakapapa more broadly enabled adults and whānau to move towards living the lives they wished.

Being connected with people and places of importance in their lives was valued by participants, and particularly the Māori participants for whom connectedness is integral to their identity as Māori. It was clear that for the Māori participants, people and place were intertwined in the meaning of connectedness, just as connectedness was intertwined with wellbeing, as we saw in "Connectedness". Connectedness that was experienced with a marae, for example, was inseparable from connectedness

with tūpuna. Teina, who worked on iwi land preparing it for development, shares an account which demonstrates the presence of whakapapa links and their importance to him:

> And we're sitting over here one day and he [team-mate] says, "Have you seen them boy?" And I looked at him, "Well I know they're here." He said, "People are trying to make me see if I can get them to go away." I said "You'll never make them go. You can make them not sell themselves but you can never tell them to leave. This is where they are, we've just got to live with it". Because they're here all the time, Anzac Day, I always go over there and lay poppies …
>
> After we had finished [the preparation work] I kept going back there and on the night before the turning of the soil we took our tents up there and myself and one of the older guys … him and I took our fire, a load of firewood, a crate of beer, and a couch, and we set up right there … and we slept there. We just drank, had our fire blazing and he slept east-west, I slept north-south. Just lay on the ground … till this morning. And it was cold. And we still have the photo over here of all of us standing round our fire, one photo taken. And most of the … Kaumatua and kuia. they've all passed. Man. And just to see that place as it is now, come from what it was, and it's only going to get better.

Anahera also articulated how her connectedness was enmeshed in her being:

> My whānau have been part of the Kīngitanga, Te Puea, Ariki, my history, who I am and what I am is all about who've come before me. Most important to me. So that's just part of my being, my values, my beliefs, yeah, thank goodness.

Anahera's description reflects how important the lifelong opportunities to be immersed in tikanga and te reo Māori, instigated by her whānau, have been to her. 'Being there' enabled the acquisition of ancient knowledge and values that she cherishes today. Other examples of how knowledge is acquired through being present and through observation can be found in Learning through experience.

For Lulu, her maunga and awa were places she went to "get out of her mamae". She says she has learned from her positive tūpuna who have passed, sharing that, "When I have my bad issues I go in the river and pure[12] … and wash the negative out. And I know I'll take the experience with me …". Here we see, in a direct way, how important the whakapapa links are in relation to valued wellness. Similarly, Anahera experienced calm when she thought of her grandmother in the precarious, confronting situation she described in Australia. Most participants, when asked where their understanding of wellbeing came

[12] See Glossary for the meaning of this Māori word.

from, spoke of stories handed down: “generations before me have laid the path” (see What wellbeing means to people).

Several of the Māori participants spoke of ‘coming home’ in ways that suggested its importance to them. For Anahera, home was a small town where her family were deeply enmeshed with te ao Māori. She went to high school in a nearby city but came back for the 6th and 7th forms (years 12 and 13), because she “needed to come back to who I was, and I needed to come home”. Several of the maintenance crew spoke about coming back home after living and working in other places in their earlier working lives. It was evident that they found joy in being home and working for their iwi and on iwi land – a strong sense of connection was expressed. Several participants mentioned how growing up in a small town where everyone knew each other created a sense of belonging which was missed when they moved away.

## Particular people and organisations

Another way in which connectedness was part of participants’ experiences was in the support provided or opportunities that arose through people they knew or organisations they engaged with. These supports operated in layered ways, often one helpful action leading to another.

For many of the participants, specific people were important in their lives because they helped them to take positive steps towards their aspirations for themselves and their whānau. Three ways in which individual people acted as enablers were through individual actions that were directly supportive in particular situations, through being generally supportive of them in their pursuit of their aspirations, or through inspiring them in some way. The enabling person was usually a close family member and, occasionally, a friend or support worker.

Examples of instances when situation-specific help was available from people in their lives included Tia’s sister-in-law finding out about the programme and going with her at first, providing reassurance that she could leave if she did not feel comfortable. Similarly, a friend of Lulu’s took her along and introduced her to the other class members. These actions helped Tia and Lulu to join the programme. Tuhoro shared an example of being given a bike by a colleague so that he could ride to work which helped him in a practical way to maintain his fitness, which was important to him. Anahera spoke of having a good mentor and two cousins also teaching at the school where she first taught which contributed to her feeling it was a supportive environment. A cousin alerted her to a position she was vacating, which Anahera then secured in Australia.

More general support for Nikau came from his mother who he described as, “good at helping me … encouraging me to find a job and to stick to it and make good progress … because I usually go from one job to another because I get bored pretty quick”. This support, combined with practical help from his support worker, such as finding the WBL programme (part of his journey towards his aim of a career in cyber security) and personally teaching him cooking skills, aided his de-institutionalisation and was helping him adhere to his goals for a “better life” and a “good career”.

Several participants were brought up by parents, whangai parents or grandparents who were a big influence on them in a general sense. Others recalled learning specific bodies of knowledge from their parents which remained important to them, and which they were passing on to their children. Stretching back further in the whakapapa, as noted earlier tūpuna were often referred to when talking about where important knowledge came from. Knowledge acquired this way included what wellbeing is and what is needed for it to be present, and practical skills such as how to gather particular kai, as we noted in What enables people to live the lives they choose. Tūpuna were also a source of guidance and inspiration in contexts where wellbeing was under siege (Anahera, Lulu).

Often, having children and/or grandchildren were the motivation for participants to make positive changes in their lives. Paora appreciated his wife’s help in reminding him that he needed to think of the future now that he had children and a mokopuna, which led him to thinking about “working smarter not harder”. This thinking, along with realising that he had a lot of experience to bring to the workplace but no tohu, which employers were starting to want, led him to enrolling in a Bachelor of Business Studies. His mokopuna and his wife were thus instrumental in changing his direction to a more family-focused, less self-oriented way. Others mentioned a father, mother, grandparent or sister who inspired them to make particular decisions for themselves, such as to go to university or to maintain health and fitness. Most participants mentioned whānau in the collective sense as being *a* or *the* driver for their ongoing learning.

As the narratives unfurled, it was clear that all participants found Literacy Aotearoa enabling; evidence of this is given throughout this report. A few other organisations were also mentioned, for example, Work and Income New Zealand was appreciated as a source of income support in times of need. The re-integrating learners clearly found the Māori organisation supporting them to be important as they redirected their lives. ACC referred Matiu to Habit Rehabilitation which in turn referred him to a nutritionist who helped him lose weight. Habit Rehabilitation also referred him to Literacy Aotearoa to support his reading and acquire his Heavy Truck licence, aiding him to seek a new kind of employment. These were all important steps for him as he moved his life in a new direction. For Nikau, the Church he attends has been helpful in offering pathways to qualifications. These examples demonstrate the

layering of support and the flow from step to step that characterised learners' pathways towards the lives they wished to lead. They also demonstrate how a range of other organisations are sometimes involved.

# What makes it hard for people to live the lives they choose

This section presents in general what participants said about what or who has hindered them to live the life they wish to live and, specifically, to engage in desired learning. Health challenges, trauma, racism and bullying, low confidence and fear, and low skills or absence of qualifications were obstacles in their pathways towards the lives they seek. As in the previous section about 'enablers', the findings presented here span participants' lifetimes, covering examples of experiences before and alongside their participation in the L+N programmes.

## Health challenges

At least one participant had physical health challenges but was accessing helpful services such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy through his GP, hospital clinics and Māori health services, although access was slow. For example, he noted that an appointment with a GP was often not available when needed. Staying as healthy as possible "within my medications" was important to him. He took care of his physical health as best he could but was concerned that his health may prevent him achieving all he wanted. Lack of physical health also disrupted learning pathways demonstrated by Ihaka's story of being unable to complete his apprenticeship after being involved in a car accident (see Post-school learning: Qualifications, workplace and employment).

Two participants had left their jobs due to physical injuries and another had left a job he enjoyed due to the pain caused by a congenital condition. Following his injury, Matiu needed to rethink his work options, which led him to working towards a Heavy Truck licence in his literacy programme. Sharon lost her job and was angry that her family still expected her to do the usual domestic chores despite her arm injury making this difficult.

No participants named mental health as a barrier to them living the lives they wished. However, three participants recognised they needed to actively take care of their mental health and took steps to do so. Three others mentioned help they had received, suggesting that their mental health sometimes, or to some extent, caused a disruption in their lives.

## Trauma

Some participants experienced lasting trauma in their lives. After both his parents died, Matiu spent his later childhood years in social welfare care, where he missed a father/mother figure in his life. Lulu had also lost both her parents and the recent loss of her father deeply impacted on the family. She found herself in a "negative" family environment where she felt uncared for; as a result Lulu was only able to enter into the adult learning environment with the support of a friend willing to walk by her side.

Domestic violence was another trauma several participants needed to negotiate. Sharon's stories illustrated disruption to both her learning pathways and employment opportunities due to the need to flee violent parents or partners (see School experiences, challenges and resilience and Australia).

In addition to disrupted learning pathways the findings concerning specific school experiences, described in "School experiences, challenges and resilience", also showed that traumatic experiences had long lasting impacts.

## Racism and bullying

As outlined in School experiences, challenges and resilience bullying and racist behaviour were encountered in school through interactions with teachers and students. Participants also made connections between the experiences of bullying, a loss of confidence and negative feelings towards the education system. For some, bullying acted as a barrier to learning, both at the time it was experienced and later when they had to push past their fears to attend courses. Anahera's story of her pathway to university illustrated that some of this bullying behaviour by teachers was connected to harmful stereotypes of Māori, the expression of which could be construed as racist behaviour.

Rangi also shared his thoughts on "that sort of crap" revealing that when he did his apprenticeship:

> … there was another learning experience, too, for say [a] Māori young fulla. In the Pākehā world, we always got sort of, what we were told was, if you get over the first year or so, you'll make it through. Because they sort of treated us a bit hard, like Māori/Pākehā thing. We were told to dig trenches, dig holes, concrete work. Not do the flash inside finishings and all that. … I still had to go back to the course and do that Polytech. Which is good, because that's where I had to learn my other stuff. So, in some ways it was good and bad.

The "good" was having the opportunity to learn off-the-job in the 1980s, but the "bad" was the discrimination experienced in not being given access to the more skilful work available in the on-job-learning opportunities. Significantly, like Anahera, this anecdote was shared as a matter of fact and is an experience that Rangi clearly chose to rise against rather than internalise.

## Low confidence and fear

A significant obstacle for a few of the participants was fear, shyness, and a lack of confidence when at school and, for some, in later life as well. For example, Moana was clear that she felt her shyness meant that she was invisible at school and consequently ignored by teachers. Moana felt very strongly that this was a problem within the education system and that teachers needed to change because, in her view, many Māori are shy or lacking in confidence. The validity of her statement is reflected by the story of an older participant, Atawhai, who also shared his vulnerability, revealing that fear was the reason he did not pursue post-school qualifications: "I never thought of that when I was younger, get a trade or do something. Too frightened to try and do something. My parents said, 'Get out there' [into the labour market]. You get told what to do. [I led a] (p)retty sheltered life."

Lulu and Tia remained fearful even once they had started their L+N programme. Their fears coloured their views of the future, which were full of apprehension rather than aspiration. Similar apprehension was an important part of others' stories too. Despite these fears, however, Tia still voiced ambitions to work in hospitality and to pursue a specific qualification to do so. This ambition was a product of the work she had completed with her tutors. She was able to articulate a much wider vision of life than when she first came to the programme. Overall, participants' fears reduced and their ambitions grew as they continued in their programmes.

Kaea, reflecting deeply on his struggle with confidence, revealed that his biggest barrier was himself: “It’s my own doubt. It’s my own self-doubt.” In knowing this about himself, he was now clear that self-doubt could be overcome and that it would not, in the end, prevent him from achieving his goals.

Other participants expressed feelings of doubt and apprehension about the WLN programme they were completing, doubts that were put aside when the value of the programme became clear (see Specific knowledge for everyday life and work).

## Low foundational skills and absence of qualifications

While many participants were happy to leave school and did not report this decision as a barrier to living the life they wanted, some participants did regret having no formal qualifications. Huia, for instance, was acutely aware that leaving school without qualifications had meant she was stuck in low-skilled jobs when she was working in Australia. This predicament is likely to have continued had she not been able to access more rewarding work in iwi-based environments found through social networks.

Because he was unable to complete his apprenticeship after his car accident, Ihaka’s employment opportunities became limited and his path changed. For Ihaka, his accident created a disconnection in his learning pathway; the unrecoverable break meant he was siloed into menial work that did not involve continuing to learn. His current role, however, has once again provided opportunities for skill- and knowledge-building.

More as a part of their chronological histories than as conscious barriers, some participants reflected on the trend of being marginalised into low-skill manual work – such as in factories – and periods of unemployment. For example, both Taika and Rangi had worked in the freezing works prior to taking up work they found to be more meaningful. Clearly, some of the participants understood that having no qualifications was a barrier to obtaining interesting employment where there would be opportunities for further learning. In relation to his team, Teina made explicit the link between leaving school early and working at the freezing works. Teina was consciously trying to break this pattern by bringing these men into his team and encouraging them to take up the opportunities on offer to expand their knowledge and skills, and restore their belief in their capacity to learn in a classroom.

# Discussion

This section discusses key aspects of the findings in relation to literature presented in the introduction and other relevant theory and research. We first revisit valued ways of learning experienced by our participants within their whānau, hapū and iwi and in their L+N programmes and discuss these in relation to literacy theories. Second, we consider participants' values, what they value and their aspirations for their lives, and how these align with Māori perspectives of literacy, the Living Standards Framework (LSF) and He Ara Waiora. Third, the experiences of the maintenance crew are discussed as exemplifying aspects of an expansive learning environment (Fuller et al., 2007). This discussion highlights the impactful role played by L+N programmes when they are part of broad, holistic workforce development aspirations for benefitting whole communities. Finally, we highlight the ongoing impact of early trauma and hurt, and ways in which barriers arising from past hurtful events, may be overcome through the enabling actions of others, such as those experienced by the participants across the four programmes in the study.

## Literacy as social practices in te ao Māori

As outlined at the beginning of the report, we are taking a social practices perspective on L+N informed by sociocultural and sociomaterial theory. Our findings demonstrate the relevance of a social practices approach to our participants' perceptions of learning. Our findings also reflect the importance of viewing literacy as having multiple forms and modalities. The participants' values and stories illustrate the wide range of knowledge that is appreciated by whānau and the different ways this knowledge is shared. As such, it is worth reiterating the forms of learning – the ways of coming to know – that were discussed by the participants.

The first form of learning that reflects a social practices perspective of literacy is learning by observation. Moana went into a great deal of depth, and some of the other participants mentioned the importance of learning first and foremost by watching an important person in your life do something. For Moana, this was the most important way to learn, and one consistent with her cultural beliefs and values; one that she thought would have a great deal of meaning for others as well.

Another way of learning, as discussed by Teina and Tuhoro, was learning by being part of a group. Being shoulder tapped and brought into a new environment and having changes modelled meant that participants could also start to see and make changes in their lives and the lives of their whānau. For

example, Tuhoro talked about inviting his children to events at the marae because he wanted them, like he had, to learn just from being present, mucking in with jobs that need to be done, and soaking up the additional knowledge that was there to be gleaned.

In contrast to Moana's stories of being invisible at school, both of these ways of learning are informed by the process of being included, of being seen and of being valued. These forms of learning are visceral, embodied, and learned in the place they are practiced. The relevance of these forms of learning is that they illustrate how the power of learning is being harnessed at all times by all ages particularly, but not only, in the marae environment. These forms of learning are also consistent with the policy discourse on lifelong learning.

It was clear to us that among the Māori participants, there was a great deal of awareness of the ways they had learned within their whanau, which they also practiced to ensure valued knowledge was passed on to the next generations. These ways of learning were practiced with mātauranga Māori and with other knowledge of interest to them, such as how to make better use of their smartphones for work and daily living and how to cope with challenges in life. The knowledge that was valued by the participants included skills and practices circulating around English language-based text – the literacy at the centre of adult L+N policy in Aotearoa – but was not limited to this. It included many other texts and practices, such as marae protocols that were essential to making sense of and living in te ao Māori. It was evident that participants were engaging with multiple literacies and multiple modes of literacy as they 'read' and shaped their worlds (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001) and that these contributed to them living lives they valued. Indeed, the multimodality of literacy was evident among all our participants irrespective of ethnicity as digital devices in the form of smart phones and computers featured frequently and sat alongside tūpuna, awa and maunga as materials of meaning-making and communication. The number of Māori participants who were excited about the opportunities to expand their reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori as well as other knowledge of relevance to them, such as digital literacies and reading and writing in English, suggests that both a biliteracy and a multiliteracies approach to L+N policy in Aotearoa would best match adult learners' aspirations.

## Values and wellbeing

Whakapapa is at the heart of te ao Māori. It is the basis of Māori identity and wellbeing, and the basis on which most Māori comprehend and interpret the world (Mahuika, 2019, Robertson & Masters-Awatere, 2007; Rua et al., 2017). Whakapapa, therefore, threads through a Māori definition of what

literacy is and what it is for, as articulated by Māori scholars and educators (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001; Rawiri, 2016). This is not to say that the meaning and purpose of literacy is the same for all Māori, just as embeddedness in te ao Māori varies. However, all our Māori participants showed that Māori values, beliefs, knowledge and ways of being were important to them and intrinsic to who they are. This was very clear in the centrality of whānau, hapū and often iwi in their lives. For many of the participants this was also evident in the joy they found in their connectedness to their ancestral lands and those who have gone before them, their concern for the wellbeing of future generations and sense of obligation to play their part, and the way in which they turned to their tūpuna as the source of wisdom in how to live well as Māori. A marked contrast with earlier learning experiences – both schooling and other tertiary education – was evident in their descriptions of their participation in the L+N programmes; this learning environment fully embraced who they are, which enabled them to become comfortable in their learning and to move towards the lives they wish to live.

It is useful, therefore, to consider how the participants' enabling experiences in their L+N programmes demonstrated the expectations set out in He Ara Waiora. Central to how the experiences were enabling was the alignment of values the participants held with those exhibited in the programmes. For example, we saw that participants valued knowledge and learning that was useful and meaningful to them in the context of their lives. Access to such knowledge was made possible through the availability of programme content that was directly relevant (e.g., Heavy Truck licence to increase work opportunities, digital skills for iwi-based work, te reo Māori for enhancing participation in te ao Māori and passing on to next generations, skills to rebuild an independent and interdependent life), combined with the appropriateness of pedagogies (e.g., learning with others like themselves, learning at a manageable pace, having fun while learning). Most importantly, staff enacted the valuing of people and relationships that are fundamental to Māori ways of being through the warm, welcoming and positive ethos staff displayed and their obvious belief in the participants' capacities. Together these approaches helped participants feel safe and empowered as learners, and emboldened as contributors to their families and communities. The programmes therefore helped individuals enhance their sense of identity, belonging and connection with others important to them, as well as their ability to be contributing adults in the world (mana tuku oho, mana tautuutu). They also helped enhance individual and collective (e.g., whānau and iwi) power to decide their futures (mana aheinga) and achieve the intergenerational wellbeing and prosperity (mana whanake) to which He Ara Waiora aspires (The Treasury, n. d.).

## Expansive learning environments

There are models of workplace learning that consider the criteria for 'expansive and restrictive workforce development' (Fuller et al., 2007). The criteria provide a way to assess the extent to which workplace learning is facilitated (or not) in terms of workplace organisation and management strategies. Essentially, these authors argue that the workplace context produces different kinds of learning environments, which in turn can contribute to learning opportunities or, due to the way in which power can be exercised in the workplace, reduce these opportunities. The participants engaged in a work-based digital L+N programme shared insights with us about their work team and wider work environment that demonstrated practices consistent with expansive workplace learning. As such, it is useful to review Fuller et al.'s (2007) workforce development model to more deeply appreciate just how much their workplace embraces the principles of lifelong learning.

The first quality of an expansive approach to workforce development is an approach that allows employees to engage in "multiple communities of practice in and outside the workplace" (Fuller et al., 2007, p. 745). As the findings indicate, there were several important intersecting communities of practice, including the social club, that crossed between private and work spheres of practice and multiple ongoing opportunities to gain licences or tickets for machinery or techniques. The commitment to gaining licences indicated a willingness to help the workers gain qualifications, a quality also associated with expansive workforce development.

The stories of awhi as a path to employment illustrated the leadership of the team's awareness of the need for "gradual transition into full rounded participation" (Fuller et al., 2007, p. 745). Awhi also illustrated the ways that the participants were given access to a breadth of learning across the team's responsibilities as well as in relation to cultural expertise, such as carving. This breadth was deepened through the centrality of marae to their work environment, which meant that cultural knowledge was being passed on from kaumatua and senior members of the team to the younger generation. This passing on of knowledge is linked to another factor in expansive learning environments, that of having a shared memory or "cultural inheritance of workforce development" (Fuller & Unwin, 2004, cited in Fuller et al., 2007, p.745). The younger participants acknowledged their role not just in receiving information but also in making sure it was passed on to new team members, and to their children. By doing so, the team ensured those skills are distributed across the workforce illustrating not just an expansive workforce development idea, but a learning belief embedded in Māori cultural practices of thinking intergenerationally.

While a vision for a career was not obviously present, the long duration of membership in the team illustrated a willingness to support their employees to stay and grow for as long as they needed, letting the younger ones go off to other things when they needed to. Planned time off for learning and reflection was also not clearly discussed, but reflection was evident in the nature of the participants' stories. That the organisation supported individual improvement in life to achieve organisational capability was very clear from the decision to send them on a course to lift their smart phone skills, a course that clearly benefitted the participants at work and in their family life.

The managers clearly facilitated the team's acquisition of new skills supporting them in their aspirations, but they also valued the knowledge team members brought with them into the workplace and valued the knowledge that the workers wanted to acquire, such as the licences to operate heavy machinery like a large welding machine. These stories also indicated support for another expansive criteria of "multi-dimensional views of expertise" (Fuller et al., 2007, p. 745). Workplaces in Aotearoa struggle to consistently embrace the tenets of lifelong learning and commit to workplace training (Piercy & Cochrane, 2015); however, the workplace discussed in the participants' stories, an iwi-based organisation, exemplifies to a high degree almost all of the qualities associated with expansive workforce development. In all these ways, this digital L+N programme was part of broad, holistic, workforce aspirations for benefitting whole communities linked by ancestral ties. The reasons for this commitment seemed to us to be grounded in manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and rangatiratanga.

## Respect and care for all people

While Anahera's and Moana's experiences in the education system were a generation apart, what they held in common was that their teacher expectations had an impact on their performance as learners, a situation observed often in literature (see, for example, Blank et al., 2016). Therefore, while Anahera's story of the high school teacher who did not think she and her friend would want to, or should, go to university was truly sad and troubling, it was not surprising. Education researchers call this the "Pygmalion Effect". The Pygmalion effect "describes how teachers' expectations determine, to a large part, students' educational outcomes" (Blank et al., 2016, p. 4). Blank, et al. (2016, p. 4) argue that "if Māori children are to achieve, teachers must lift their expectations of students and treat all students as having the same potential for achievement."

The impact of societal (and teacher) expectations and beliefs are internalised from a very young age. For instance, Blank et al.'s (2016) research on five- and six-year-olds illustrates the point that "Māori

children became acutely aware at a young age of the negative social implications of being Māori. The awareness that Māori children internalise negative stereotypes held 'against' them is, we believe, crucial to understanding Māori educational outcomes" (p. 28). Bishop et al. (2009, p. 3) argue that "when Māori students have good relationships with their teachers, they are able to thrive at school"; therefore, relationships, being culturally aware, positive attitudes, and collaboration are key to success. Current policymakers are aware of these problems and the policy framework of Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2023) represents an important response to these problems. Our findings illustrate that the need to deal with the legacy of negative school experiences and internalised oppression is just as, if not more, important for the context of adult L+N education.

In the introduction to this report, we noted the work that has been carried out by Māori educators in relation to adult L+N over the last 23 years includes policy responses and research that clearly outline Māori preferences for L+N (Hutchins & Ikin, 2016; Literacy Aotearoa, 2013; Mlceck et al., 2009; Rawiri, 2016) (see Māori perspectives of literacy and numeracy). The overarching theme emerging from these documents is the need for, and the right of, Māori to have their perspectives of literacy and learning powerfully and meaningfully embedded in L+N policy. Relatedly, the approaches proposed and identified as successful in these reports embody and anticipate respect of differing worldviews across cultural spaces, and care for all people of Aotearoa. In our research, participants showed that they felt respected and cared for, which seemed to follow from Literacy Aotearoa's strengths-based approach.

A strengths-based approach was apparent in several ways. New or enhanced knowledge and skills available to the learners through the programmes were seen as additions to what they already knew, rather than as fixing perceived deficiencies. Such an approach can help mitigate the negative self-view that adult L+N learners often have, arising from their schooling and, sometimes, from their home experiences growing up. The learning activities could shine a light on reality: "Yes, you can read, you just need to slow down"; in other instances, they could counter the negative beliefs learners had about themselves from "I can't" to "I can". Mitigating the fear that has arisen from past experiences through warm, positive relationships and tutor and organisational belief in learner capability and capacity, created secure spaces in which the adults could learn. Furthermore, the approach allowed for learner strengths to shine, and they were able to help each other. All participants brought existing knowledge, skills, and insights to their learning that became visible in this caring and respectful adult environment.

The strengths-based approach was also evident in the ready assumptions of the interconnectedness of the learners to others and to their environment, understanding that these connections were important for them. This meant for Māori learners, their ways of being and preferred ways of learning were embedded in programme practices, and what mattered to them and their whānau was accommodated

in programme content. There was much that was different from school learning and, in some cases, childhood family experiences. Here, the learners were viewed as agentic adults and treated as such, whilst also being supported in making change in their lives.

# Conclusions

We set out to understand about the enablers and obstacles that adults face while striving for the lives they want for themselves and their whānau, and the value systems important to them, as expressed by the participants themselves. Amidst this, we sought to understand the meaning of L+N for adult learners. Bringing these dimensions together we hoped to provide perspectives on L+N, learning and wellbeing that will assist in refining provision of adult L+N education.

We undertook this task from the viewpoint that there are many theories of L+N and its purposes, and relatedly, that there are many forms of knowledge and ways of knowing. From a human rights perspective, as intended in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and based on viewpoints on L+N repeatedly expressed by Māori, it was clear to us that a holistic wellbeing-focused lens needs to predominate in how L+N education for adults is construed. This aligns with the intent of the LSF and, in particular for Māori, He Ara Waiora. This intention is two-fold, that policy should support the wellbeing of all people in Aotearoa and, therefore, a wellbeing lens should be at the forefront of all policy development and evaluation. Notably, He Ara Waiora emphasises the relevance of wellbeing for both the individual and the collective in living rich and fulfilling lives.

The stories we gathered reflected the centrality of a Māori worldview in the lives of the Māori adults and their whānau. It was fundamental to their identity and remained throughout their lives even when they had experienced periods of disconnection from te ao Māori. The cosmological whakapapa-based foundations of Māori identity flowed through the narratives of people's efforts to flourish in the world and were foundational to how they made sense of the world and navigated through it. Where this reality was understood and the adults were emersed in it, as they were in the programmes in this study, they were comfortable and excited about learning, and saw positive outcomes for themselves and their whānau resulting from it. The love of learning and a wish to be participating in the world shone through, even when it had been severely tested through early life and school experiences.

The importance of whānau, iwi, land and other connections – relationships with people and place – cannot be understated, for this is the basis of belonging, purpose, support, fun and contribution necessary for human beings to experience their best state of wellbeing, although explanatory

frameworks and priorities may differ across cultures. These dimensions were inculcated in programme content and pedagogy and were clearly meaningful drivers for initial participation and for staying in programmes. Relatedly, the creation of respectful, caring learning environments by programme staff was crucial yet contrasted sharply to many adult learners' experiences, as the narratives showed. Prioritising the wellbeing of the learners meant that those carrying mamae from the past had the opportunity, perhaps the first time, to see themselves as capable learners and contributing adults. The power of these environments to heal past hurts, enhance wellness and facilitate progress towards their own aspirations was profound. Its importance for individuals, whānau and future generations cannot be underestimated.

There is no doubt that L+N, in the traditional understanding of the terms, were addressed in these programmes. All participants spoke of particular technical skills and knowledge they gained that were relevant for job-seeking, the workplace and their everyday family and community lives, thus the economic and social purposes of L+N were addressed. Crucially, however, the programmes simultaneously embodied a broader view of literacy that is not typically foregrounded in existing L+N policy. This was evident in the obvious appreciation of multiple literacies, both western knowledge and mātauranga Māori, and of different ways of coming to know. As discussed, the iwi development-focused programme provided a model of applying this broader approach that embodied a social practice and kaupapa Māori view of what literacy is, and what it is for. Acquiring knowledge and skills was very important to the learners, but the location of this knowledge and skills in meaningful, purposeful contexts was also central to their interest in them. The highly contextualised learning reflected the valuing of what mattered to the learners. The role of the material intermingling with the social aspects surrounding the literacy learning is evident; for example, the digital device and its uses in work and life. Although not directly articulated as such, L+N teaching in these programmes was approached from a sociocultural and material view. L+N were seen as including skills, but also as social and material practices.

This approach benefitted all 'layers' within the iwi whakapapa as change occurs within communities, the nation and the world. This is a model of L+N learning that has the wellbeing of individuals and collectives at its heart and allows people, despite initial anxieties, to participate and become excited about their participation and its benefits. The basic requirements for successful learning – knowledgeable and skilled tutors, relevant topics of study and respectful relationships – characterised all the programmes offered in the case study location. Crucial to that success was the *enactment* of shared values of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and rangatiratanga by those responsible for shaping and delivering these programmes, who clearly knew and understood the challenges and aspirations of

the learners. The presence of mana tuku iho, mana tautuutu, mana aheinga and mana whanake sought in He Ara Waiora could be seen.

It is also clear to us that people have aspirations for themselves and their whānau and will engage in learning that assists their progress towards these aspirations when respectful support is available, and when relationships facilitate opportunities becoming known and reachable. This is despite the fears and doubts that can result from disruptions and trauma faced whilst growing up, and/or the often-fraught complexities and expectations of adulthood. Amidst this, we note several points that we believe must be understood when designing adult L+N learning:

- People bring their existing skills and knowledge, their experiences, their current circumstances, and their fears and their hopes for themselves and their whānau to a potential learning opportunity
- Because people's experiences – and the sense they have made of them – differ, their motivations for participating also vary, as do the aspects they find valuable
- Their willingness to begin and stay in a programme depends on the relevance of the learning to their lives, and how they feel about the relationships they are exposed to as they enter and continue in the learning environment
- The relevance to their lives and the kinds of relationships that make this difference are embedded in the values the participants and the providers hold, and how well these align.

Our search for an understanding of the value systems that are attached to adults' participation in L+N learning is, therefore, clearly crucial. In this regard we conclude that L+N learning opportunities for Māori learners must follow as closely as possible a 'by Māori, with Māori, for Māori' approach. The approaches experienced in the study encapsulated relationships of care and respect for all learners, and a belief in them as contributing citizens. These approaches embodied a social practices account of literacy in which values are recognised as centre stage. It is worth noting that a curriculum has been developed for a social practices approach to L+N for Aotearoa (Whitten, 2018) but its uptake and efficacy are, thus far, unknown. Nevertheless, it appears that policymakers have available to them examples and models of how to deliver L+N learning for those who may be reluctant, uncertain or, not readily enticed; are afraid or see no relevance for themselves or their whānau; and who are often thought of as 'hard to reach'. Our findings align with research on programmes made available through the Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund, which that has found that a core part of the success of programmes has been the incorporation of Māori values in relation to teaching, learning and whānau, along with provision of literacy content that was directly relevant to participants' mahi (Alkema et al., 2019). Research by Rawiri (2016) and Te Maro et al. (2019) on programmes at Te Whare Wānanga o

Awanuiārangi illustrate even more deeply the transformational potential of L+N programmes that incorporate te ao Māori forms of literacy.

Finally, the LSF and He Ara Waiora give clear direction on where we should be heading as a nation in terms of what needs to be taken into account in L+N policy that will enhance the individual and collective wellbeing of all New Zealanders. Thus, despite the current lack of active adult L+N policy, and the lukewarm commitment to te ao Māori in the 2015-2019 Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (TEC, 2015) at the level of providers and in other policy spheres, success stories illustrate clearly that when Māori values are supported, communicated, and enacted positive change can occur.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Interview and focus group questions

Interview and focus group guidelines, questions, and prompts

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|---|---|
| **Wellbeing**<br>For the study, wellbeing is a broad concept. It includes what people/whānau say is important to them in life, what enables them to live the lives they want to live, what helps them be 'well'/live their best lives *holistically* (physically, psychologically/mentally, spiritually, whānau wellbeing/ environmental wellbeing/relationships) | |
| 1. What does wellbeing mean for you? | *Explore understanding of wellbeing*<br>*- What does wellbeing mean for you/your whānau/what does it look like for you/your whānau?*<br>*- Where did your understanding come from?*<br>*- What contributes positively to wellbeing for you/your whānau?*<br>*- What diminishes/takes away your sense of wellbeing for you/your whānau?*<br>*What is important specifically for Māori that might be different for others? (if appropriate)* |
| **Making change in your life**<br>This area is about their journey towards living the lives they want to live/making positive changes, perhaps from the time they can remember wanting to make change in their lives or pursue an interest or goal. It explores motivations, pathways, experiences, what has helped, challenges/barriers in their journey towards living the lives they want to live (being in a state of wellbeing). It includes their learning journey in a broad sense. | |
| 2. Tell me about your learning journey/making change in your life? | *Explore experiences of*<br>*- learning (formal (e.g., schooling), informal/outside the mainstream education system) (e.g., tikanga, adult learning, marae-based)*<br>*- and/or making change in their lives to improve their/whānau lives (positive change)*<br>*What has been their pathway/journey towards their aspirations/ living their lives in ways that are important to them?* |
| 3. What (or who) has helped you to make positive change (been a support to you)? | *What (or who) [e.g., people, places (e.g., home marae, maunga), programmes/courses (beyond Literacy Aotearoa) (e.g., WINZ, counselling), artefacts, events, tikanga] and how?* |

| | |
|---|---|
| | *Examples* |
| 4. What has made it harder for you to make positive change? (What (or who) has got in the way, made it difficult?) | *What (or who) and how?*<br>*Examples* |
| Interaction with Literacy Aotearoa (current, and previous if applicable) | |
| 5. Tell me about your experience with Literacy Aotearoa and what this has meant for you?<br>What led to you coming along? | *Try to get a sense of the situation that led to them coming along/the reason they came/what they thought they might gain/how they thought it might help them or their whānau in their lives (their wellbeing)* |
| 6. How has Literacy Aotearoa helped (or not helped) you/your whānau)? | *Try to get a sense of how Literacy Aotearoa is helping them towards what's important to them or their whānau in their lives.*<br>*- look for L+N examples (including skills but more especially sense-making/navigating the world: "reading the world, reading the word, being the world"*<br>*- look for cultural examples (tikanga), social/emotional/relational examples (e.g., being with others, communicating with others), learning examples* |
| 7. What other services/supports are you accessing at the moment? How are these other services/supports helping you or not helping you? | *Try to get a sense of other services they are accessing at present and whether Literacy Aotearoa has referred them/taken them along (or not) and how they are helping or not* |
| Looking forward | |
| 8. How do you feel about the future? (positive/negative) | *Explore*<br>*- How would you describe your skills and knowledge compared to what you would like to know and be able to do?*<br>*- What services do you think are needed for people in a similar situation?*<br>*- What could change (in your own health and life, the whānau, the community, the services) to better ensure wellbeing for people in your situation?* |
| Is there anything else you would like to add? | |

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