

COMET



MAKING EDUCATION WORK FOR MANUKAU

A SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE MANUKAU FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT (2004)

A REPORT PREPARED FOR
THE CITY OF MANUKAU EDUCATION TRUST
(COMET)

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February, 2005

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge contributions from the many people involved in the MFLP. In particular, we would like to acknowledge all those who agreed to be interviewed or cajoled into providing data for the report, COMET staff and most of all, the students themselves who had the courage to enrol in the programme and then the generosity to allow us access to their thoughts, feelings and records.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Manukau Family Literacy Project has now completed two full years of implementation since its inception. In this time there have been five intakes of participants – 70 adults and 70 nominated children, split roughly between the two years.

Based originally on the Kenan model of family literacy, the MFLP has started to develop its own distinctive ways of operating. As part of the programme's initial development, those involved in the Bairds Otara and Rowandale sites devised a set of goals for their sites at a professional development day in 2003 (see Appendix A for detailed lists). These goals have not been revised since that time and have therefore been taken as the broad guideline for this evaluation. Essentially, the goals crystallise into the following areas:

- Foundation skill gains for both adults and children
- Build parents' levels of self-confidence and self-efficacy
- Raise and identify long-term aims for education and employment
- Encourage parents' involvement in their children's education
- Explore and adopt new parenting skills
- Build learning communities among parents, their children and participating institutions.

Foundation skills

The great majority of the adults who have enrolled in the MFLP have had minimal success in the schooling system (as evidenced in their very low numbers of qualifications) as well as minimal educational experience since leaving school. In the course of their MFLP experience, most of the adult participants have successfully completed tertiary courses, some with notable pass levels.

In terms of their self-assessments that compared their foundation skills at the beginning of the year with the end, a clear majority of the students had made gains in their reading, writing, spelling, numeracy, computing and library skills. While some students did not assess themselves as having made gains in all of these areas (i.e. a 'spiky' skill profile), many did, and only one student consistently self-assessed as having made little or not progress in her foundation skills. Qualitative data from interviews confirmed that the students felt much more positive about their skills and how to use them in their study.

The data about gains in the nominated children's reading and writing over the year is more mixed. Feedback from both teachers and their parents indicated that some had been making good progress prior to becoming involved in the programme and this progress had continued. There was another group who had improved noticeably during the year and this gain was attributed at least in part to the MFLP. A smaller

group of only a few children were felt to have made little or no progress. The assessments of the children's before/after Running Records and Maths Strategy levels did show some positive gains for the MFLP children in comparison with their non-MFLP controls, but the differences were not great and the findings need to be treated with some caution because of methodological issues in these measures (the small sample numbers, control selection).

The uneven pattern of gain among family literacy children has also been reported in evaluations of family literacy children in the US (Paratore, et al. 1999).

Self-confidence and self-efficacy

Gains in self-confidence and self-efficacy are probably one of the most notable outcomes of this programme, both for the adults and the children involved. There is consistent evidence from a range of sources that family literacy participants gain significantly in how confident they feel in a range of contexts, from talking to friends through to speaking to large groups. In more general terms, the parents now feel much more confident about making plans for their futures, partly because they have been able to explore a range of options during the course, but mostly because they believe in their own abilities and skills to work towards these goals.

Allied to their greater levels of self-confidence, the adults' self-efficacy levels have clearly risen. Most of the adults in the MFLP have been out of school for many years and did not succeed much as students at school. They come into the MFLP with low levels of confidence about their ability to use the skills they already have, especially in some subjects such as maths. By building their self-efficacy (in which the programme is clearly very successful), the learners become immersed in a positive spiral where self-efficacy leads to improved skill levels, which in turn leads to greater self-efficacy.

Long-term education and work aims

The great majority of MFLP enrolees have been either out of paid employment or in low-skill jobs previously; similarly, most have had no, or very limited, previous tertiary education. As a result of the MFLP, most aspire to undertaking further study or moving into more skilled jobs. Very few are interested in returning to what they were doing previously.

This report has added a very useful dimension to the evaluation by tracking MFLP participants who have been out of the programme for over a year. The data from these participants adds credibility to the aims and plans of those just completing the programme. The data from the 2003 groups shows that a significant number of them have indeed gone on to do what they intended (or very similar) at the end of that year. Of those contacted, very few were doing what they did prior to the MFLP and even in the cases where they were not in paid employment or study, they were fulfilling valuable social roles for their whanau/community.

This evaluation has not been able to report much about what has happened to those students who withdrew from both the 2003 and the 2004 programmes, as most of these people were not readily contactable. These students withdrew for a number of reasons (not always of their own making and/or positive reasons) and possibly warrant special attention in any future evaluation of the programme.

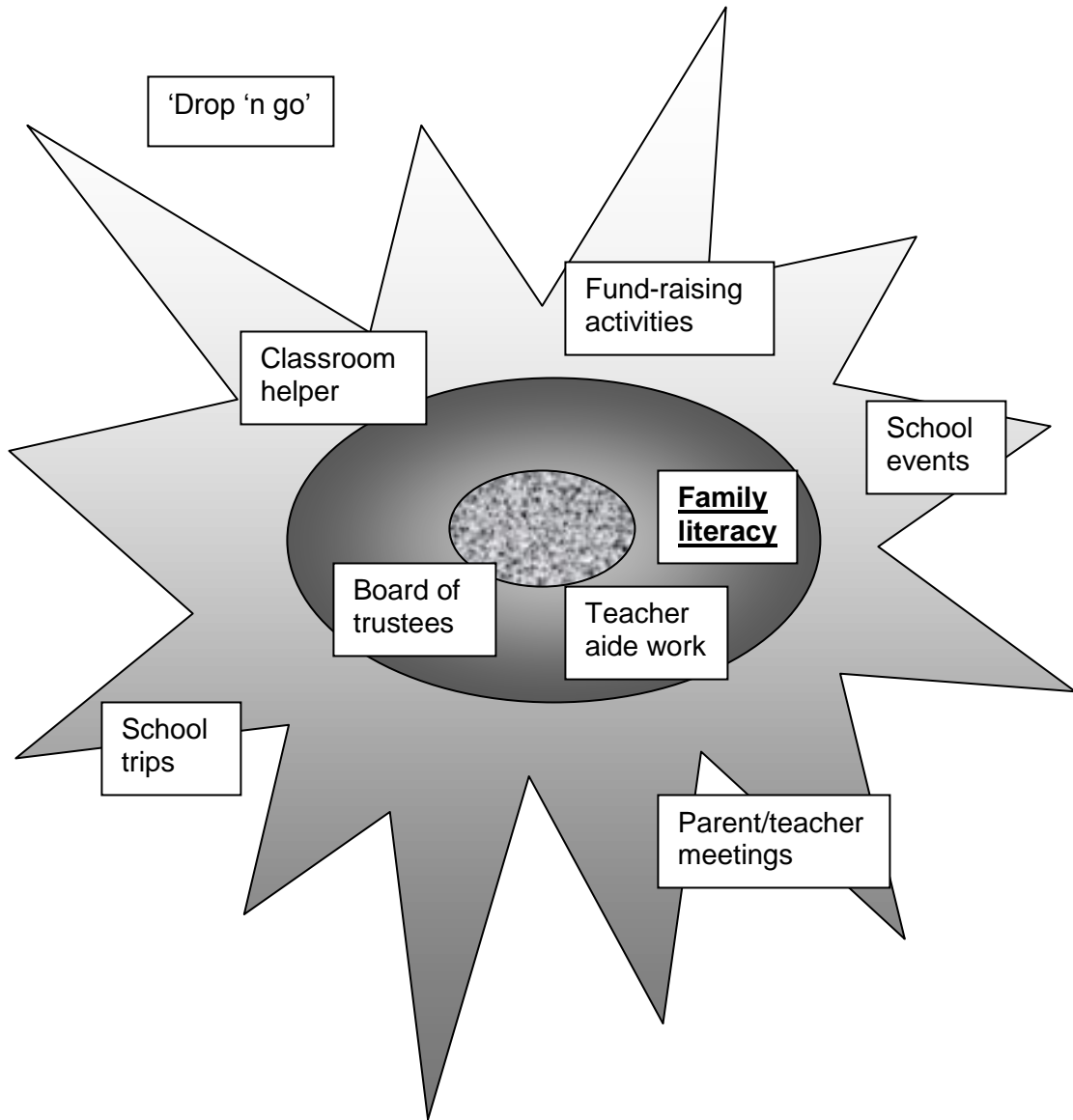
Parental involvement in children's education

Both of the schools whose participants were covered in this evaluation have long struggled to involve parents beyond peripheral activities where they feel comfortable such as festivals and fund-raising; kindergartens struggle to involve parents who 'drop 'n go'. There was considerable feedback from a number of sources that the family literacy programmes have helped change these situations. MFLP students have stood for Board of Trustee elections (necessitating ballots where there had often not been sufficient candidates for one), they (and their whanau) are a constant physical presence in the schools/kindergartens for most of the week, they are more confident about approaching teachers and they are active participants in their children's classrooms during PACTT. At home, family literacy parents report working with their children on their homework in a more involved way and for the first time in many cases. They are able to do this because of their own self-efficacy and newly-acquired academic skills. Most importantly, they value this new role and see its significance in their children's long-term educational development.

One of the distinctive features of the MFLP is that the adult participants are involved for sustained period (30 weeks) and receive intensive teaching throughout this period – both of which, the research literature specifies as conditions for learner gains (Benseman, et al. 2005).

All of these points indicate that an outcome of family literacy is the increased involvement of parents in their children's education, as summarised in the diagram below. It is interesting to note that three of the 2003 participants have been working as teacher aides in one of the schools, a role that has enabled them to continue contact with the programme, on-going contact with the school and also clarify career goals (one person has changed from wanting to be an early childhood teacher to a primary teacher as a result of working in the school).

Figure 1. Parental involvement in schools and early childhood centres



Parenting skills

Parenting is a cornerstone of family literacy and it is a key element of the MFLP. The exploration and debating of parenting issues and skills emerges in a number of ways in the programmes, ranging from formal course content through to informal discussion and peer support. Some family literacy programmes have been criticised as prescriptive and based on a deficit approach (Auerbach 1994), but the parenting component of the MFLP shows no evidence of these qualities. Parents have been exposed to information and challenges about parenting, but have engaged with this

content in an open and critical way, which is in keeping with the stated philosophy of MFLP to positively engage parents in this area.

As a result of this engagement, there are clear signs of participants wanting to do things differently as parents and feedback that they are acting in new ways in this role. Feedback indicates that they have gained new energy and commitment as parents fed by new information (such as child development) and alternative models of doing things in areas such as discipline. They are more interested in what their children are doing at school and more able to help them with their homework because of their own progress as learners.

Another outcome of the programme is the role modelling of different expectations and ambitions for children. Because the programme is located on school sites with frequent visits to nearby early childhood centres, children (including non-MFLP ones) see parents engaged in education every day in communities where few parents participate in post-school education. The MFLP families see their parents as active learners not only at school, but also at home – as epitomised by parents and children doing their homework together.

Learning communities

Traditionally our education system has been strongly stratified by age – layers of learners are defined by their age, with little mixing between them either by the learners themselves or the institutions that provide the programmes. Family literacy cuts across this age-stratification by mixing early childhood, primary schools and tertiary education in a way that is unusual in our education system. This improved integration has had positive effects for the providers, with increased awareness of each other's work, improved co-ordination of programmes, an awareness of being part of a larger educational system and a more prominent profile in the broader community. For the parents, there is increased awareness of the overall educational system, while non-family literacy parents see alternative models in operation for people like themselves.

Family literacy is a means of bringing parents into schools in a more sustained way and thereby de-mystifying education. The adults see teachers (both in schools and early childhood centres) working with children and exposed to alternative teaching methods they can use themselves. Teachers on the other hand, have parents involved in their classrooms on a regular basis providing opportunities to interact with them that rarely happens otherwise.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Education's *Statement of Intent*¹ lists a number of strategies that the government sees as essential to achieving its educational aims. They include:

¹ (<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=9644&data=1>)

- raising expectations for achievements of all learners
- strengthening family and community involvement
- developing a collaborative and responsive education network.

In particular, the Ministry wants to build quality involvement with communities by focussing on five main areas:

- strengthening families and whānau capability to support the learning of their children
- strengthening families and whānau collaboration and engagement with providers and teachers
- strengthening the engagement of families of children with special education needs in services and services development
- encouraging community engagement to support parents, whānau and providers to raise student achievement
- integrating education perspectives into wider social policies that contribute to raising student achievement.

This evaluation report has shown that the MFLP has made a strong contribution towards these policy priorities.

Firstly, the programme has been successful in recruiting (and retaining a high proportion) of adult learners who have historically been under-represented not only in the participation statistics of New Zealand education, but also the statistics of success in the educational system (Benseman in press). These participants have typically left school early with few or no qualifications and worked in low status, low-skill occupations with limited aspirations for their own and their children's futures. The great majority come into the programme as failures of the schooling system, and in some cases, the tertiary system.

Secondly, the MFLP has achieved a high rate of success in raising not only their academic skills, self-confidence and self-efficacy, but also their long-term aspirations and ambitions. There is also evidence that these ambitions are being achieved by many who have been out of the programme for some time – they are doing what they said they intended to do. As parents, MFLP learners have become more involved in their schools and more active in their children's education, both at school and at home. They are modelling new possibilities and provide valuable input for their children. There is some limited evidence that their children are performing better academically at school and are more confident and active socially than previously.

While many have succeeded as a result of participating in this family literacy programme, it does not always achieve the same level of outcomes for all those who enrol. There have been withdrawals and some have not changed much either academically or in broader terms as people as parents, but most have. There is universal support for the programme and criticisms are limited to operational details.

Thirdly, the MFLP is having effects beyond the learners themselves. The MFLP is contributing to a more integrated community of educational providers where it operates and is valued by the project's early childhood, primary and tertiary professionals for this outcome. The programme models a positive example of lifelong learning in action for the adults and children in the programme, for those professionals involved in the programme and increasingly, for children and parents not directly involved in the programme.

As one key informant said, "This really is lifelong learning."

A final word goes to two of the students who made the following speeches at their graduation ceremony at the end of the year.

This year has been a great year for me; I've met a whole new group of friends who are an awesome bunch. One reason for me being here tonight which I think is really special for me is my Dad. I lost my Dad two years ago and it was him that inspired me to get off my ass and do something with my life. He said 'it's time for you to get out there and do something for yourself' and I thank him so very much for these words. I know he'd be very proud of me tonight, but my beautiful Mum is here to celebrate.

On the first day of March 2004, with much trepidation and hesitation, 13 adults entered a classroom in this school with the number 5 on it. This was to become our home over the ten months that followed. When we embarked on this journey, we were all unaware of the impact this course was going to have on both ours and our families' lives. No one person in this group had any concrete directions whatsoever.

We all leave here tonight with direction and determination to pursue our future goals. We have waded through waters of all kinds – shallow, deep, muddy, clear and even shark-infested. But through all this, one thing remained clear. We became a tight-knit group who began to genuinely care for one another, almost as though we were all blood-related. [List of thanks followed] Through thick and through thin, eight of us remained and persevered and it is with so much pride that we all stand here tonight, this night, our graduation! Kia kaha whanau!

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth evaluation report on the pilot Manukau Family Literacy Programme (MFLP). The evaluation has been funded by the Tertiary Education Commission, the Ministry of Education and the Department of Social Welfare and administered by the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET).

The earlier reports were formative and process evaluations, documenting the development of the programme (see further details below).

This report focuses more on learner outcomes. It also discusses some strategic issues, such as the nature and significance of the role COMET has played in establishing a family literacy programme and the way the model of family literacy has developed since the pilot began. The report has three parts:

- Part A provides a brief description of the MFLP and its organisational structure
- Part B looks at summative outcomes of the MFLP, using a range of data sources for evidence of changes in both the adult participants and their children across a number of outcomes – academic, family, personal and social.
- Part C reviews the role of COMET as the co-ordinating agency for the MFLP.

The first report (Benseman 2002) provided an overview of family literacy programmes, a literature review of the research on these programmes and a analysis of the development of the Manukau Family Literacy Programme in its planning phase during 2002, with a particular emphasis on management and structural issues that arose in this initial phase of the project.

The second report (Benseman 2003) reviewed the operations of the MFLP on the two pilot sites over their first six months of operations in 2003, as well as some data on the impact of the programme on the first two intakes of participants and the issues that arose during that period.

The third report (Benseman 2004) covered the period of July to November 2003, when the first intake of participants at the Rowandale site in Manurewa completed their course and the second intake of participants at Bairds Mainfreight in Otago started and completed their course. A summary of this last report was also published by the Ministry of Education.

For readers who have not read these earlier reports, the next few pages outline the nature of the program and provide an overview of the MFLP's operations. Readers familiar with this information should go to page 14.

PART A - PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The MFLP grew out of an initiative by the Literacy Taskforce of the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET).² The initial planning for the programmes was undertaken during 2002, culminating in two pilot sites starting operation in 2003 at Bairds Otara and Rowandale in Manurewa; a third site at Dawson Road Primary School (known as Dawson Road Community) was added in late 2004. The MFLP has been broadly based on the following educational components (usually referred to as the *Kenan Model* of family literacy):

1. An adult education component designed to extend basic education skills, including teaching adult participants to: think critically and creatively, solve problems, set goals and achieve them and acquire successful interpersonal skills
2. Children's education to promote the growth and development of young children and to engage parents in their child's educational programme in order to foster meaningful involvement that will be maintained throughout the child's educational career.
3. Parent and child together time (PACTT); in the MFLP PACTT has developed into three forms – tahi PACTT (1:1), Classroom PACTT and Whanau PACTT.
4. Parent time to provide instruction on how children grow, develop and learn to read and write, address issues critical to family well-being and success, connect parents with a wide array of community resources and provide parents with opportunities to network and develop mutual support systems with others in the programme.

For a fuller account of the development of family literacy generally, see Wasik and Hermann (2004) and for additional details of the early stages of the MFLP see the first evaluation report (Benseman 2002).

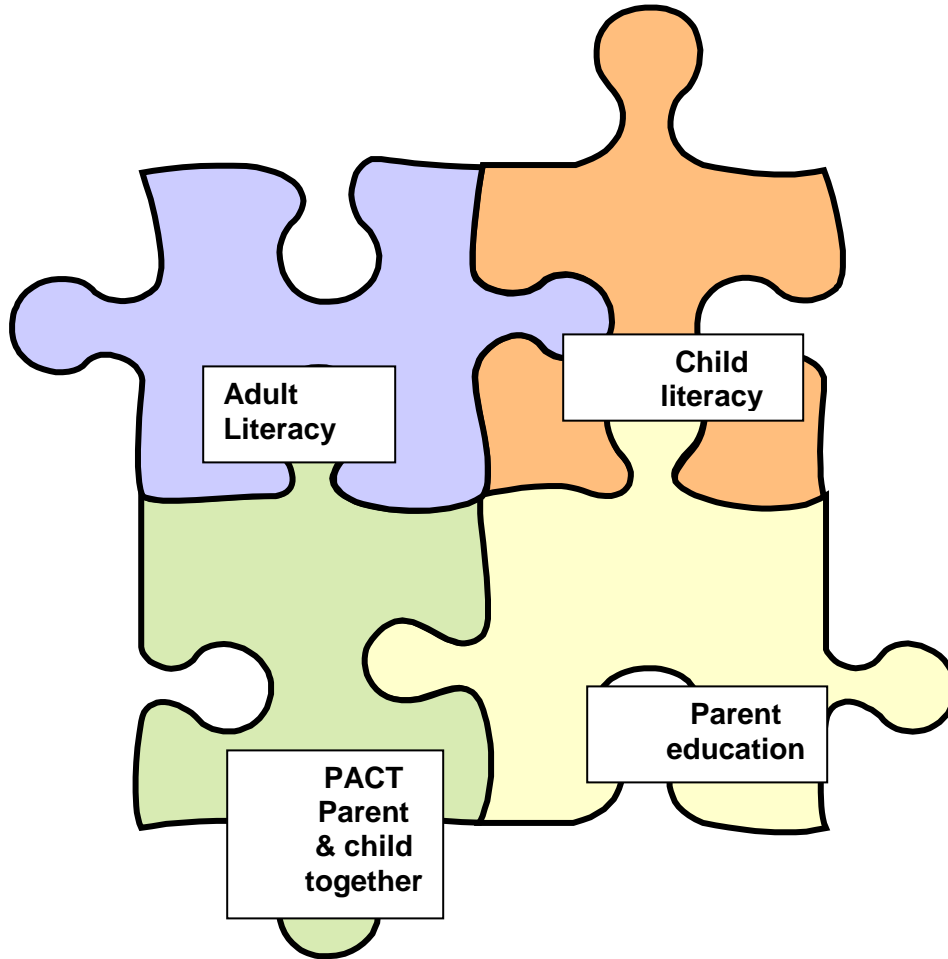
These four elements are shown in the diagram below. Figure 1 also illustrates what is sometimes referred to as the fifth element of family literacy programmes – integration. As Potts (No date p. 4) says

Integration has become a critical, defining characteristic of family literacy services, working to create a system for delivery of curriculum, instruction and assessment. Rather than providing stand-alone, isolated services such as early childhood education or adult basic skills education, family literacy programmes bring parents and children together to learn, weaving key strategies and message throughout the four primary components.... Integration of these components is used intentionally as a cohesive system to promote learning within the family unit.

See Potts (2004) for a fuller discussion of this element.

²

Figure 2. Kenan model of family literacy's four components

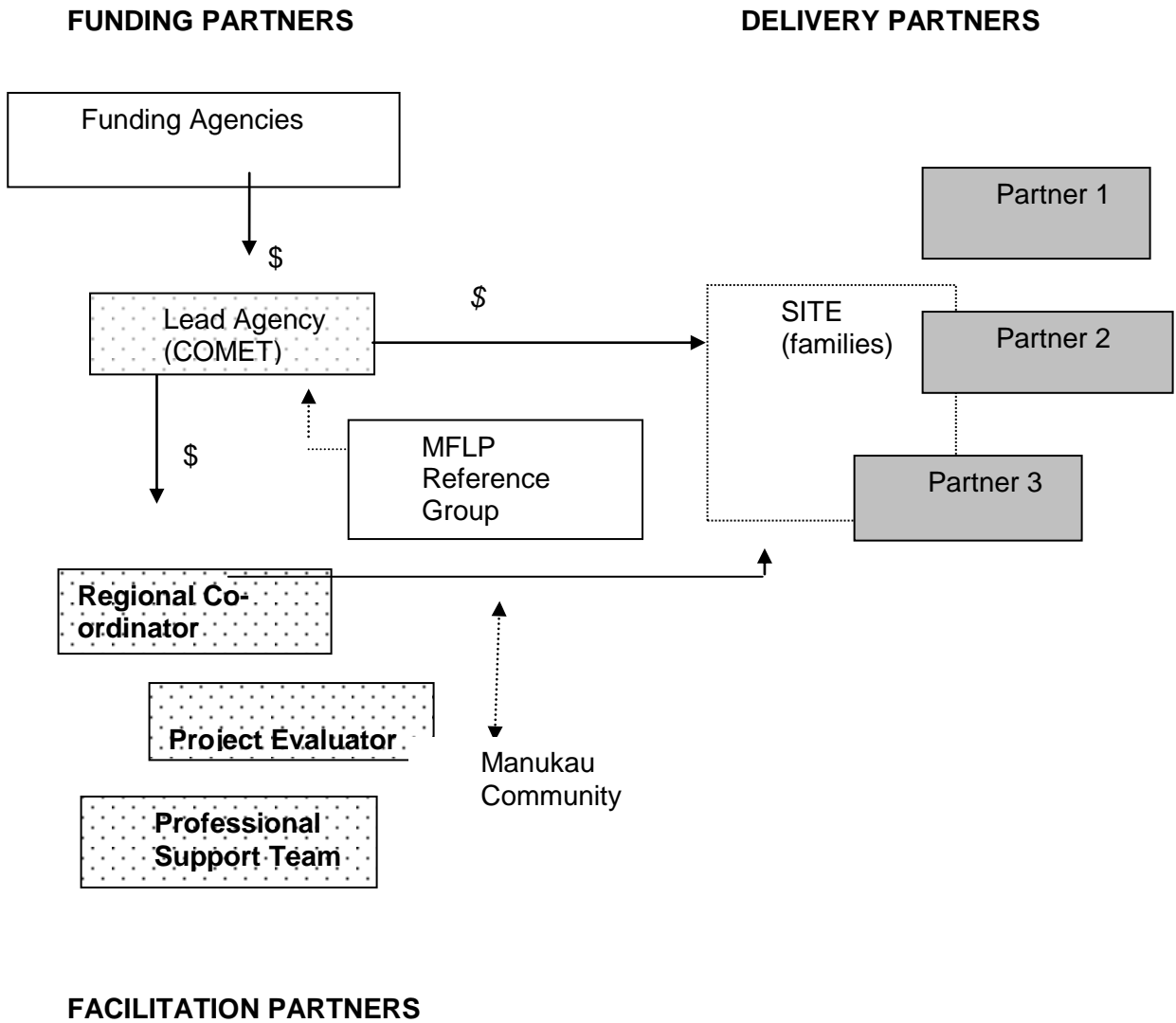


Each MFLP site involves three partner institutions – an early childhood centre/kindergarten, a primary school and a tertiary provider.³ The kindergartens and the primary schools work with the child participants (one per parent) enrolled in the programme and link with the adult components for key parts of the programme such as Parents and Child Time Together (PACTT). The tertiary providers employ the adult educator who is responsible for teaching the adult participants, as well as some involvement in other components of the programme. All three MFLP programmes are located on primary school premises – Bairds Mainfreight, Rowandale Primary and Dawson Road Primary.

The overall management structure of the MFLP is summarised in the following diagram provided by COMET.

³ Most of the participating agencies have developed Memoranda of Understanding with COMET.

Figure 3. Manukau Family Literacy Programme Management structure



B - SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

The purpose of this summative evaluation study is to report on the impact that the MFLP has had on its adult and child participants. The impact covers both the educational and social (especially in relation to parenting) outcomes; it covers not only the participants from the 2004 programme, but also a follow-up of those who participated in the programme in 2003.

This evaluation has been funded by three government agencies: the Ministry of Education, the Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry of Social Development. The involvement of the three agencies reflects the diversity of outcomes that have been identified as a result of family literacy. The evaluation results however have been written as an integrated report, covering all aspects of the programme's impacts.

Although the MFLP programmes at Bairds Otara and Rowandale started early in 2004, the evaluation contract could not be finalised until September. The delay in finalising the contract was not ideal in terms of data collection for the evaluation (mainly in relation to the early childhood children), but the co-operation of key people in the project have minimised the ensuing difficulties.

Most of the evaluation relates to the programmes at the Rowandale and Bairds Otara sites. Only a limited amount of the data from the Dawson Road Community site is included because this programme site did not start until late in 2004. The socio-demographic characteristics of their adult learners have been included, but none of pre-testing data collected from the adult participants, as the programme was not of sufficient duration that any noticeable impact could be expected or measured. The pre-entry data collected in October from this site could be used however in any future evaluations.

Methodology

A wide range of sources involving both quantitative and qualitative data have been used for this evaluation. Data sources included records of:

- adult students' work in MFLP (learning journals and other writing)
- MFLP students' tertiary academic achievements from official results
- children's school academic achievements
- attendance (adults and children)
- MFLP documentation and reports

and interviews (mainly face-to-face, but also some by phone) with:

- 2004 MFLP adult participants
- adult participants from the 2003 programme
- adult educators from the tertiary institutions
- early childhood teachers
- teachers in participating schools
- other key informants linked to the programme (e.g. school-based social worker, COMET staff).

Where appropriate, further details of the methodology are included with the following sub-sections of results.

Ethics

The main ethical issues in this evaluation involved maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents in the study and gaining informed consent from all those involved. Ethics approval for the project was given by the Human Participants Ethics Committee of The University of Auckland (reference 2004/242); ethics approval was also granted by the equivalent ethics committees of Manukau Institute of Technology and Auckland University of Technology as the students are enrolled with these institutions and the teachers in the programmes are employed by them. All of the 2003 MFLP participants had already signed Consent Forms in 2004, which covered a period of three years. The adult participants gave consent for access to their nominated children's school records.

No-one refused to participate in the evaluation.

1 THE 2004 MFLP PARTICIPANTS

A total of 66 adults and nominated children participated in the MFLP during 2004 (Table 1 below).

Table 1. Summary data on 2004 MFLP participants

	Bairds Otara	Rowandale	Dawson Rd Community*	TOTAL
Total adult participants	10	14	9	33
Total nominated children	10	14	9	33
Early childhood chn.	4	7	3	14
Primary school children	6	7	6	19
Withdrawals	1	3	1	5
Men	1	1	1	3
No. of days in 2004	79	115		31
Average attendance all enrolments	85.9%	68.2%	NA	77%
Average attendance of completers	91.8%	89.1%	NA	90.5%
Number in paid employment prior to enrolling in MFLP	3	3	2	8

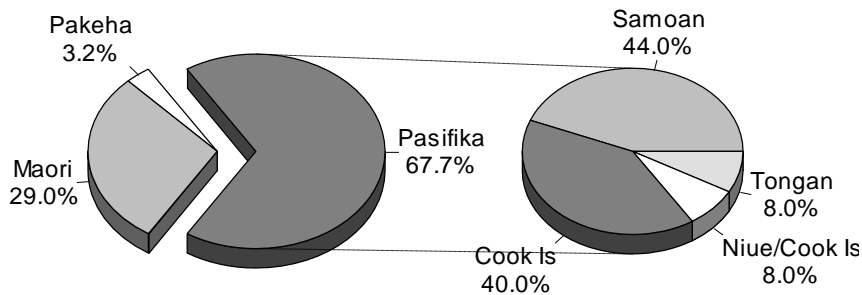
* data not supplied because of short duration of programme

As the table above shows, each of the sites had one male participant.⁴ This pattern mirrors the gender distribution of 2004, where each of those intakes also had a single male participant (one had two males, but one withdrew) and also overseas experience where family literacy participants are overwhelmingly female (Padak, et al. 2002). The average ages were 31 years at Rowandale (ranging from 18 to 40 years) and 34 years at Bairds Otara (ranging from 23 to 43). Two of the Rowandale adult participants were a mother and daughter and one adult at Dawson Road had her niece as her nominated child; these patterns continue those of 2003 where a number of participants were grand-parents or wider family members. Participants had an average of 3.3 children and the average age of the nominated children in the 2004 MFLP was 5.4 years.

⁴ In order to preserve the anonymity of the two male participants, all the adult participants are referred to as *she*.

The ethnicity of the 2004 participants across all three sites is shown in the following graphs. Two-thirds of the participants are Pasifika, of whom most are Samoan or Cook Islanders. Each of the programme sites is distinctive in terms of their participants' ethnicities: Dawson Road Community is predominantly Samoan, a majority of Bairds Otara participants are Cook Island and most of the Rowandale site are Maori. There is only one Pakeha participant in the MFLP. The high numbers of Pasifika and Maori participants is reflective both of their catchment areas generally and the participating schools specifically.

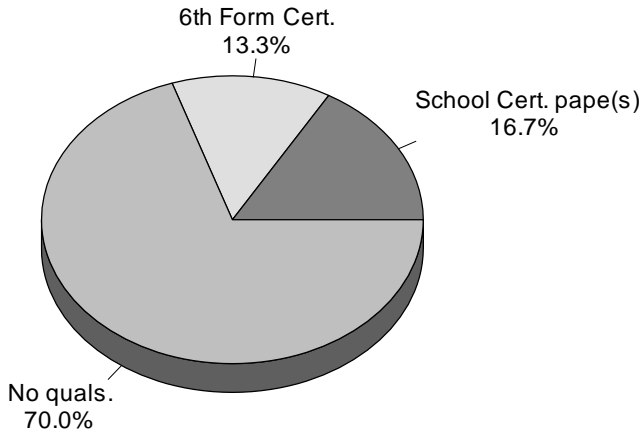
Figure 4. Ethnicity of MFLP adult participants, 2004 (n= 33)



A third (11) of the participants said that their first language was not English; nine said it was Samoan; one was Niuean and one Tongan. Nineteen had been born outside New Zealand (all in Pacific Island states), but had averaged 18 years residency in New Zealand. Fourteen said that English was not the main language spoken in their home; eight said it was Samoan, three Cook Island Maori and one each for Niuean, Tongan and Maori.

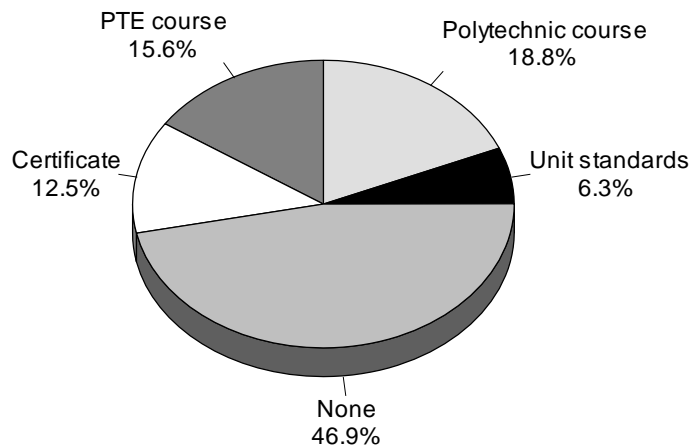
The following graph summarises the participants' highest school qualifications. Seventy per cent had no qualifications at all.

Figure 5. MFLP adults' highest school qualifications (n=33)



The next graph summarises any qualifications the participants have gained since leaving school. Nearly half have not done any education since leaving school; those who have completed a qualification are all at low levels.

Figure 6. MFLP adults' post-school qualifications (n=33)



In terms of their most recent work history, a quarter (8) had not been in paid employment prior to starting the MFLP course and had been working at home and/or on the Domestic Purposes Benefit. Most of the remaining 25 had worked in un- and semi-skilled jobs such as kitchen-hands, takeaway bars, factories, cleaning and shops. A small number had worked in skilled jobs such as machinists, panel-beater and call centres.

Teachers at the early childhood centres or the primary schools remained by far the most frequent source of information about the MFLP and how they were recruited, although some also mentioned previous MFLP participants and their children.

2 GENERAL FEEDBACK ABOUT THE MFLP

Interviews were held with the participating schools' principals, the adult educators, those teachers who had nominated children in their classes (primary and early childhood), the adult participants and some additional key informants such as a school social worker about their evaluations of the MFLP.

All of these interviewees were very positive about the programme from their perspectives.

2.1 School principals' perspectives

Both of the school principals interviewed were in the second year of MFLP operation and agreed that the programme was now running more smoothly than in 2003. Even though some of the staff at both sites had changed and these changes had necessitated familiarising the new people with the programme's operations and philosophy, the routines and structures established in the first year meant that operationally the programmes ran on a more routine basis requiring slightly less input from the schools and kindergartens – "family literacy is part of how we do it now and it's no longer onerous."

Both principals were extremely supportive of the MFLP in terms of its value for the children involved, their parents and the broader community. They were also clear that the programme is no universal panacea – a 2003 participant in one school for example had been recently 'chased up' over her child's attendance irregularities during 2004. On the other hand, some of the difficulties associated with the participants were considerable and take time to resolve successfully – one principal gave the example of an MFLP parent who had withdrawn from the programme in order to escape from a partner manufacturing and using P; she had since moved to another area with a new partner in a much more positive frame of mind (she said "he really looks after me") and was now looking to regain the custody of her children from her mother because they were "roaming the streets and getting into trouble." This principal was optimistic that the parent had been able to turn her life around successfully after a period of real difficulty. The case also illustrates that withdrawal from a programme is not necessarily a negative outcome for the learner.

The principals were adamant that the programme had had a broader impact on their schools than just the parents and their nominated children participating in the programme. Both principals said that historically their schools had really struggled to get parents involved in their programmes and day-to-day activities, despite constant efforts to do so. As one principal said:

Real parental involvement in this school has been zilch. We have tried everything – reading mornings, maths mornings, free computer courses – some of these worked at first, but nothing really worked. They turn up for festivals and so on, but you can't get them involved in planning or curriculum

sessions. But family literacy is changing that and it's become part of the culture of the school.

The other principal says that as a result of MFLP she now knows not only the parents really well, but also their extended families because "they're in and out of the school all the time." This school had also been using former MFLP parents to gather feedback from other parents on a range of issues after finding questionnaires totally ineffective.

At one school three of the 2003 MFLP participants had stood for the Board of Trustees election,⁵ several were now working as teacher aides in the school and the parents were much more prominent in the school and more confident in approaching teachers about issues. This principal felt that the effects of MFLP had spread well beyond the 28 parents who had participated in the programme to date.

It's helped raise the value of education around here hugely – people just don't see education as important in this community, but family literacy has opened their eyes to this. People hear about it even if they aren't in the programme.

This principal felt that one of the key features of the programme was that because the parents are on-site for long periods of time they understood the way the school functioned better than parents who only spend short times at the school, and then usually at times such as before and after school when there is little happening educationally:

They [MFLP parents] see the raw operations of the school, the good and the bad and so they understand the challenges of the job.

Both principals said that because MFLP children were in both early childhood programmes and at school, this had led to closer relationships with the participating kindergartens than they had had previously – even though both schools are in close physical proximity. Staff often came to each other's social events and the kindergarten children attended school celebrations and occasional school assemblies.

Both principals reported that while some of the earlier intakes had recruited from families where there had been relatively few problems, the MFLP had managed to recruit "some of the more difficult families" in subsequent intakes. They were satisfied that the recruitment was now successful in targeting high need families with poor attendance records, high academic and social needs (including social worker and CYPS involvement) and those who had had minimal involvement in the school previously.

⁵ One family literacy parent stood unsuccessfully at Bairds Mainfreight.

With regard to their assessments of the impact of MFLP nominated children, both the principals were cautiously optimistic. One said:

There's not been a huge academic gain as yet, but you can see big changes in their [children's] self-confidence and it's essential [for them] to ask for help and say 'I don't understand'. The parents model how it can work (it's wonderful seeing all these parents going off to university and these courses). So if Mum's here [at school], then 'I can do it' - so kids ask more questions and that's essential.

One principal talked about one of the 2003 participants who started her teacher training in 2004; this student told the principal that her goal is to come back to the school as a teacher – “I owe you so much.” This school's commitment to family literacy is reflected in the fact that they are currently planning an extension to their hall and will incorporate a family literacy room into it.

The greatest issues from the principals' perspectives were:

- recruiting sufficient numbers of adult participants
- less involvement of parents on-site at Bairds Otara in 2004 because parents were off-site much more studying at MIT (also less whanau involvement because of this factor)
- arranging childcare before and after school for MFLP children
- not being able to recruit parents with children aged 0-3 years.

Overall however, both principals were adamant that family literacy was a very positive development – as one principal said, “it's been a really positive move for this school.” She then listed why:

- it gives the school a sense of community by bringing parents in a on a sustained basis
- it models lifelong learning for the children – “they know their teachers do PD, but now they see their parents and the message they get is ‘if my parents think it's important enough to be involved, then it should be important for me too”
- they see that education is important, it's part of life, “so we get a culture of a learning school, a learning community”
- staff feel that they are part of a broader education community with multiple providers on-site
- it has given the school a profile
- teachers are more open to parents coming into their classrooms
- “it's habit-forming for the parents – because of the sustained duration of the programme, they get into positive routines and habits.”

2.2 Adult educators' perspectives

Both of the adult educators interviewed were also positive about what had been achieved in their programmes over the year. One of the sites had experienced difficulties with personality clashes between some of the students, which persisted throughout most of the year. While this issue had resulted in some 'personal dramas' at times, there was sufficient resolution of the issue to ensure that the group functioned satisfactorily through to the conclusion. This site also had problems with some students' attendance at times, requiring considerable work for the adult educator to avoid further withdrawals.

They were asked what they felt they thought the key aspects of the programme were in helping to achieve the outcomes.

It's a combination of everything really, the practical and the theoretical, how it's related to their lives (especially the exercises they do with their children), the importance of relationships and the sustained period of learning with one teacher.

The Rowandale teacher felt that her professional isolation had improved from the previous year and her study for an M Ed degree had been very beneficial for the opportunities it offered to focus on family literacy research and literature. The relationships with the participating school and kindergarten had further strengthened and were now a real strength of the site.

Rather than being taught mainly on-site as an integrated whole (as happened in 2003), the Bairds Otara students in 2004 were enrolled in an array of Manukau Institute of Technology courses taught on the polytechnic site, while the Human Development course was taught at the school. This strategy was done in order to try and match the range of students' literacy skills to appropriate course levels, but received a mixed reaction from programme participants and project personnel. Some people felt that the reduced physical presence at the school reduced the amount of interaction between the parents and the school and reduced the visibility of the programme generally. On the other hand, others felt that the range of course better matched the students' learning needs and helped increase the tertiary education profile in the programme.

Issues raised by the two adult educators included:

- poor communication at times about the co-ordination of programmes between the Bairds Otara schools, kindergartens and the tertiary partner
- confusion from having multiple partners in the programme – "who do you listen to?"

2.3 Primary and early childhood teachers' perspectives

There was a wide range of experiences and assessments in relation to MFLP among the teachers of the nominated children. However even when they had seen little progress in the nominated children's academic skills, the teachers were very positive and supportive of the MFLP because they saw benefits for the children in non-academic areas, they valued the way that parents were able to model learning behaviour for their children ("it's great for showing that learning never stops") and they appreciated the extensive contact that they had experienced with the parents involved.

You interact a lot more with these parents than with the 'drop-'n-go' ones.

MFLP is just brilliant, it's so good for the community and the children. The relationships with the parents have just grown, parents coming in for morning tea, so the news just spreads out from there.

As a parent myself I would have loved to have done it.

The communication thing [with parents] is much better, there's more understanding of how it [early childhood programme] all works and what we do here.

[Parent] used to drop [child] and go, now she's really involved here, doing all sorts of things for us and with [child] – even gave up buying beer so that [child] could complete the year [when WINZ subsidies finished].

The teachers' assessments of the nominated children's progress during the year ranged from none or very little:

Although he only moved into my class recently, we have seen only a little change in him. He is still not confident and easily distracted from tasks, except when his mother is here during PACTT.

She is making slow progress, in large part due to lots of absences (52 days). Her mother only came in about ten times for PACTT and was reluctant to attend these sessions. Unfortunately she [mother] only saw a limited range of areas like hand-writing rather than reading and maths.

He's a bit of a 'free spirit', 'away with the fairies' and is actually worse when his mum is in the room. His attendance is still very poor, mainly I think because his Nan keeps him at home for company. He hasn't been reading at home; his mum knows it, but just doesn't do anything about it. Advancements have been made, but not as many as I would have liked. But then with someone like [mother] you don't change things instantly, they come in with

patterns well established and you don't turn them round in a year, but you can see signs of some things being different.

through 'steady progress':

He's basically a good boy who works reasonably well and is getting along OK.

She's pretty intelligent and gets a lot of support from home, so she's doing pretty well, but was at the start too.

She took a while to settle in, but is very verbal and expressive now. She now says 'I love you Mum' a lot. At the beginning we couldn't get her to stay and now we can't get her to go.

to very positive changes:

He's completely changed. He was very aggressive and now has gone from one extreme to another.

She [mother] is much more confident and supportive of [child]. He's very excited and enthusiastic and wants to talk about the things they do together at home all the time.

He's really hooked now and his attention span is much better now.

She's now very noisy, very confident and has grown much more confident over the year. She's now in the top group - really because of her mother working with her. [Mother] got a lot more confident as the year went on and worked with other kids as well - [child] was OK about that. In Term One it was very daunting having her in here, it was like having a College lecturer, but in the end it was nice having another adult in the classroom.

Specific issues and suggestions for improvements that the teachers mentioned included:

- prioritising PACTT to cover key curriculum areas such as maths and reading rather than areas like handwriting and physical education
- PACTT parents visiting other teachers' classrooms
- timing PACTT for later in the day
- having an information sheet for teachers about how PACTT works
- better co-ordination of topics
- early childhood participation stopping because WINZ subsidies for fees don't cover period outside the MFLP programme

- longer duration for PACTT – “you just get started and it’s time to finish”
- parents visiting, but not engaging very much with their children
- uncertainty over kindergarten enrolments because of unknown funding outcomes for MFLP make planning difficult for these centres.

2.4 Adult participants’ perspectives

All 24 of the participants at the Bairds Otara and Rowandale sites were interviewed at the completion of the programme. These interviews included a range of questions about their involvement in the programme, their evaluation of it and reflections on how they had changed as a result of the MFLP. The latter comments are reported in the following sections of the report, but general comments about the programme were overwhelmingly positive:

Absolutely brilliant, I’ve never looked back, it’s just opened up so much and made me more aware – how to bring up my kids, how to deal with everyday problems, it’s taught me a whole new set of rules. It’s given me a path to my future.

I’ve always been a loner, so it’s done a lot for my self-esteem ‘cos it’s brought me into a group of friends. I’m glad I came as an adult, you seem to knuckle down as an adult ‘cos you know you haven’t got much time left [28 year-old].

It’s given me another opportunity, opened a door to explore other options that I thought had passed me by.

This course has opened up a whole new world for me. It has given me the opportunities to do the things I always wanted to do, but was hesitant to take the steps towards these goals.

It’s been really hard for me,⁶ I nearly walked out, but bugger it, I stayed for [child’s] sake. The course content has been brilliant for me – I thought I was doing a good job [as a parent], but I had nothing to gauge it against.

It’s been great getting out of the house and doing something for myself, also making friends and meeting people like [teacher].

It’s been really cool, I’ve learnt lots and it’s given me somewhere to go and made me more out-going.

⁶ This site had some considerable personality clashes between some students, which were readily discussed in the interviews. Despite this issue, the students concerned persevered and acknowledged respect for each other publicly in the class graduation ceremony.

It got me out of my isolation as a mother at home and started me thinking about my future – you tend to lose yourself [staying at home].

The parents had very few criticisms of the programme (mainly about the poor attendance of some students at the Rowandale site that made the class programme difficult at times). Suggested improvements were:

- better Internet access for Rowandale
- more use of AUT's library
- starting earlier to lessen pressure (Bairds Otara)
- better Maori studies content in the Rowandale programme.

3 2004 ADULT PARTICIPANTS

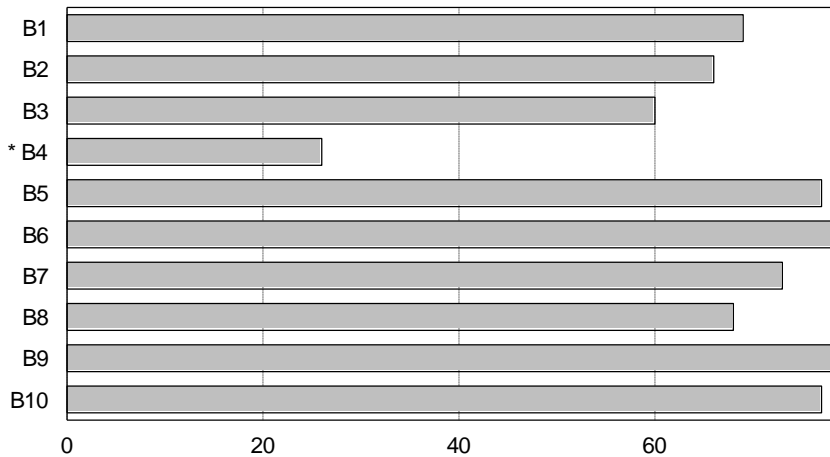
The following section reviews a range of data sources about the 2004 adult participants, including their attendance at the programme, academic passes, foundation skills of reading, writing, spelling, numeracy, speaking skills, self-confidence, self-efficacy, future plans and parenting.

3.1 Attendance

Consistently high rates of attendance in programmes in order to achieve duration and intensity of tuition is a self-evident, but somewhat underrated pre-condition for achieving outcomes and is confirmed in the research literature (Benseman, et al. 2005).

The graph below shows the attendance patterns for the Bairds Otara site over the 79 day sessions during 2004.⁷ The average number of days attended for the total group of enrollees was 68 (85.9%) and the average number of days for those who completed the programme was 73 (91.8%). There was consistently high attendance with all of the participants, including the sole withdrawal who attended regularly until she shifted out of the area mid-way through the programme.

Figure 7. Bairds Otara adult participants' attendance, 2004 (n=10)



* withdrew in mid-June

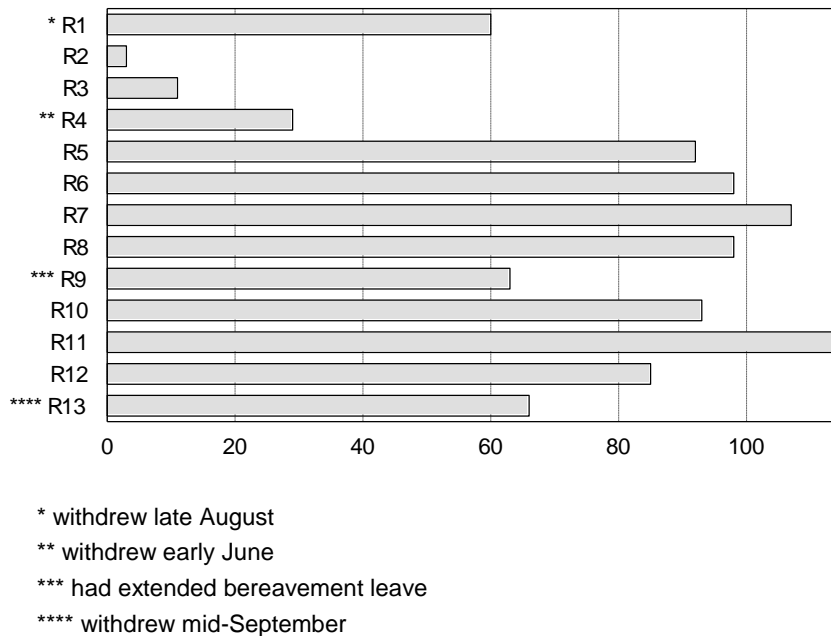
In comparison, the attendance patterns for Rowandale were quite different (see graph below). This site had much lower average attendance rates when analysed

⁷ B refers to the Bairds Otara site and R to Rowandale; the numbers are simply anonymous IDs

for the class as a whole (79 days out of a possible 115 - 68.2%); however when analysed in terms of those who completed the full programme the average was 103 days (89.1%). In other words, when attendance of the four students who withdrew from the programme and one other student who had extended bereavement leave are disregarded, the Rowandale attendance patterns are similar to the Bairds Otago site.

It is worth noting also that the Rowandale participants tended to miss blocks of classes (typically 4-5 days at a time), whereas the Bairds Otago participants' missed days tended to be single day absences. One student at each of the sites achieved 100% attendance and another four had fewer than five days absent.

Figure 8. Rowandale adult participants' attendance (n=13)



3.2 Academic outcomes - adults

As part of their programme, the Bairds Otago participants enrolled in a number of Manukau Institute of Technology courses throughout the year. The results of their course enrolments are shown in the table below (the student IDs given for anonymity match those given in the attendance graph). The QA level and number of credits for each course are given in brackets for each course.

Table 2. Bairds Otara adult students' academic records, 2004 (n=10)

Student	Maths course	Grade	Communications course	Grade	Prep for tertiary study	Grade
B1	Intro. Maths (2/20)	A	Communication (3/22)	A	Study skills (3/3)	A+
B2	Intro. Maths (2/20)	D	Intro to Communication (3/22)	A	Lang Learning Strategies	A
B3 *	Intro. Maths (2/20)	NC	Communication (3/22)	NC	Study Skills (3/3)	NC
B4 **	Maths 1 (3/24)	NC	Communication Plus (4/18)	NC	Research	NC
B5	Maths 1 (3/24)	A+	Communication Plus (4/18)	A	Research	A
B6	Maths 1 (3/24)	E	Communication (3/22)	B	Study Skills (3/3)	B
B7	Maths 1 (3/24)	NC	Communication (3/22)	B+	Study Skills (3/3)	A+
B8	Intro. Maths (2/20)	B+	Communication (3/22)	A	Study Skills (3/3)	B+
B9	Intro. Maths (2/20)	A	Communication (3/22)	A	Study Skills (3/3)	A
B10	Intro. Maths (2/20)	A	Communication (3/22)	A	Study Skills (3/3)	A

* B3 did not complete any of the Manukau Institute of Technology courses. She has been a student there previously and did not complete her courses then.

** B4 was unable to enrol officially due to outstanding fees. She initially attended these courses informally, but then withdrew. Her tutors indicated that she would have passed them with outstanding grades.

While it is difficult to make definitive statements about the grades in the absence of information about other students' grades, it is noteworthy that with the exception of students B3 and B4, there was only one 'not completed' (NC), two fail grades (both in Maths) and that 20 of the 23 grades (87%) were in the A range.

The Rowandale students were assessed for a written assignment, an observation study, an oral presentation and a course folder in order to pass their overall course. All of those who completed the course passed; because they had to complete all four components, those who withdrew from the course (even in its latter stages) did not gain any qualification from the course.

The Dawson Road Community site students' academic records are shown in the table below.

Table 3. Dawson Rd Community adults' academic records, 2004 (n=9)

	Reading and Writing for Academic Study	Study Skills for Tertiary Education
D1		D-
D2	B	A+
D3	C+	C+
D4	B	B
D5	C	C-
D6	C+	C-
D7	B-	A+
D8		C
D9	Started in last week of course	Withdrawn due to Head Injuries

3.3 Foundation skills - adults

There has been considerable debate as to the types and validity of different methods of assessing foundation skills. A recent major literature review of literacy, numeracy and language research (Benseman, et al. 2005, p. 24) pointed out:

The design and use of assessment instruments are contentious not only in New Zealand, but also internationally. There is considerable opposition from practitioners and learners to the notion of assessment testing, predominantly because of the perceived lack of appropriate tests and a negative association with schooling – a spectre that most practitioners strive to overcome with their learners. In the US (often seen as the 'home of tests and testing'), there is considerable use of LNL assessment tests, but this widespread practice occurs predominantly because of funding requirements, rather than any true acceptance of their validity or usefulness. Indeed, most practitioners use the tests under duress rather than out of professional choice.

On the one hand, proponents of standardised tests point out that while they may provide specific numerical measures (i.e. quantitative data) of learner gain, they are far from being definitive or unproblematic (Ehringhaus 1991; Kruidenier 2002).

On the other hand, the use of self-report (usually qualitative data) is often seen as a poor option for assessing, especially by funders. The debate among researchers is intense and divided as to the validity of self-report (Jones 1997; Sticht 1999). While this report is not the appropriate place to review this debate in detail, this brief account indicates that there is no single, unchallengeable approach to assessing foundation skills available at present. The approach taken in this evaluation therefore has been to employ a range of both quantitative and qualitative data sources to provide a triangulated view of what outcomes have been achieved in the MFLP.

The next section therefore details the MFLP adult participants' self assessments of their skills in the main components of foundation skills – reading, writing, spelling, maths, speaking, computer skills and library skills. The following section then reviews their assessments of their speaking skills and levels of confidence in different contexts.

The data comes from two assessments; the first was carried out in March and therefore represents the participants' skill levels at the beginning of the MFLP. The second assessment was carried out in November and represents their assessment of their skill levels at the completion of the MFLP programme.

At the initial assessment (done in class groups), the participants were asked "On a one to ten scale, where one is the lowest and ten is the highest, how do you rate your [reading] skills right now?" This question was then repeated for each of the components reported below. In the post-programme assessment, the same questions were asked and participants were not given any information about the initial assessment that they had done nine months previously in order to minimise any influence this information might have on their second assessment.

As Figure 9 and Figure 10 show, the individual participants' self-assessments of their reading skills at Bairds Otara and Rowandale as well as an average for each site. All of the students except one (B8)⁸ assessed their skills higher at the end of the programme than at the beginning. Four students (B3, B9, R2 and R4) made a gain of 2+ points on the 10 point scale during the programme; most moved about a point.

⁸ B8 has a 6th Form Certificate.

Figure 9. Bairds Otara adults' reading self-assessments, March & November

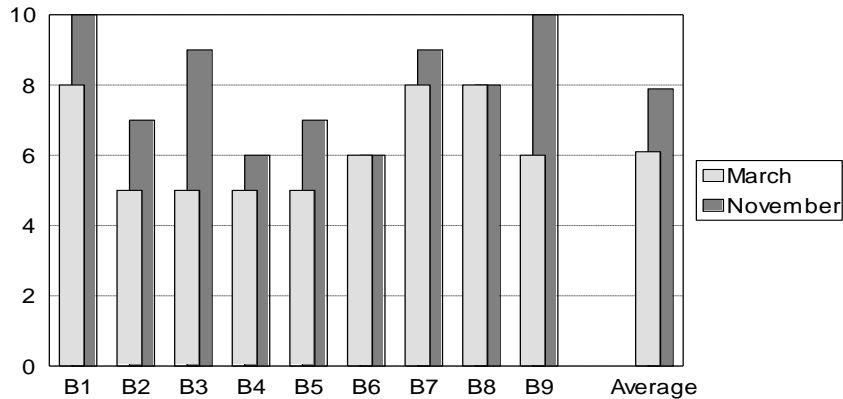


Figure 10. Rowandale adults' reading self-assessments, March & November

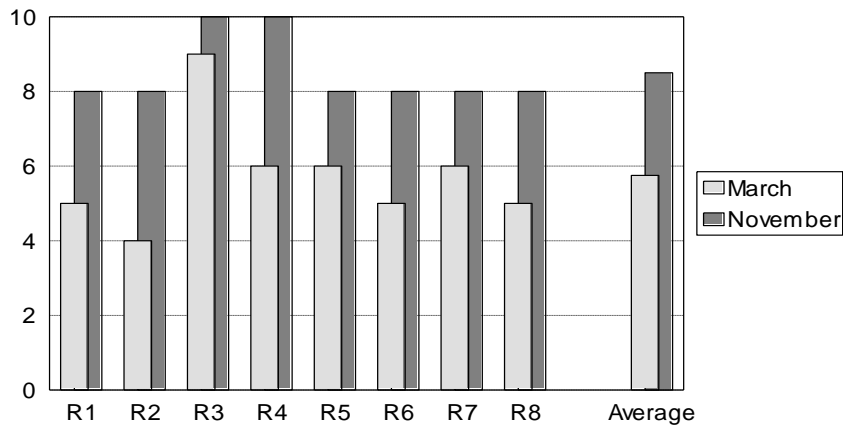


Figure 10 and Figure 11 below show, their self-assessments of their writing skills. (Literacy teachers report that learners often have lower writing skills relative to their reading skills and also that it is an area in which it is difficult to achieve significant progress (Kelly, et al. 2004)).

Again, B8 was the only one who felt that she had not made any progress during the programme and a typical change was about one point. However, two students felt that they had made quite spectacular progress (B9 – four points and R1 – seven points).

Figure 11. Bairds Otara adults' writing self-assessments, March & November

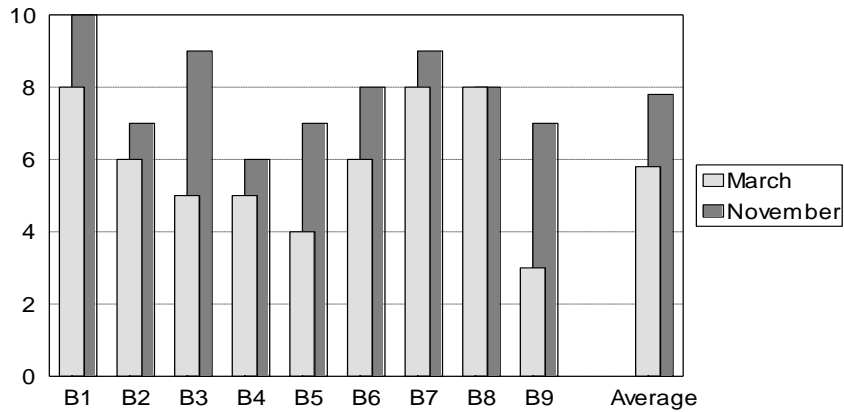
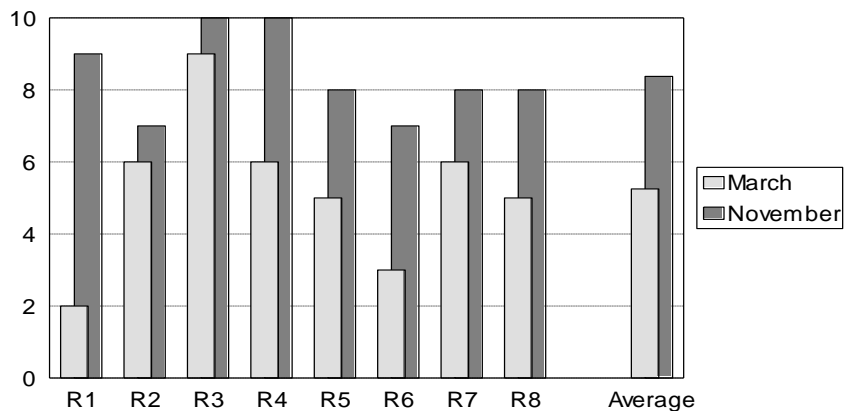


Figure 12. Rowandale adults' writing self-assessments, March & November



In terms of their spelling skills (Figure 13 and Figure 14 below), B8 felt that her skill levels were lower in November than in March. On the other hand, B3, B9, R1, R2, R5 and R8 all felt that they had also made progress in their spelling in addition to reading and writing.

Figure 13. Bairds Otara adults' spelling self-assessments, March & November

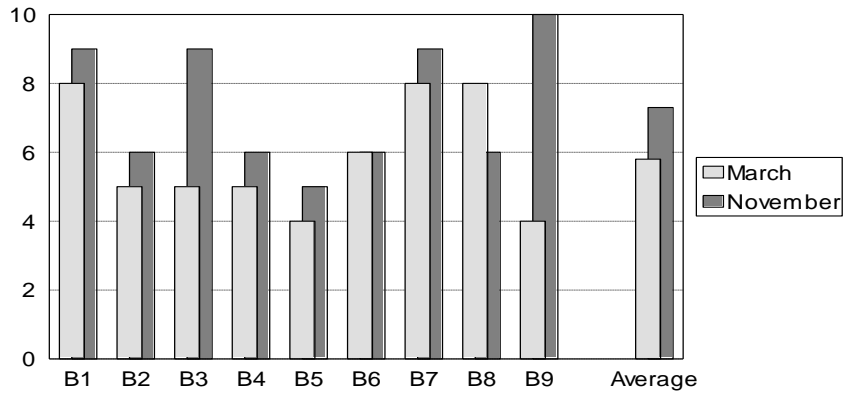
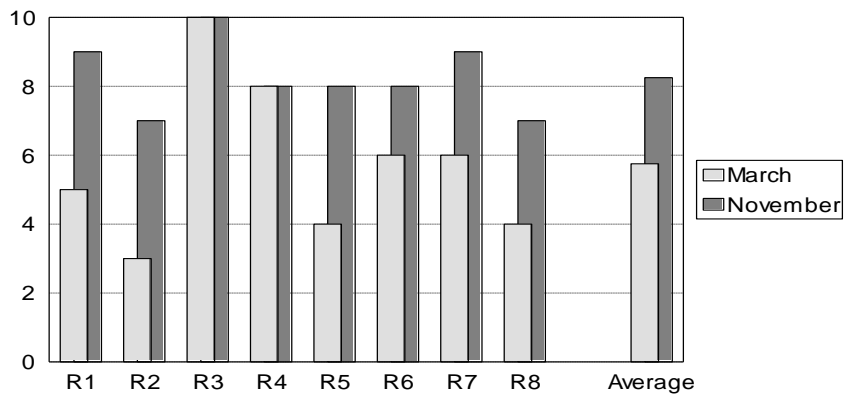


Figure 14. Rowandale adults' spelling self-assessments, March & November



The maths self-assessments (Figure 15 and Figure 16 below) show a slightly bigger gain in levels of three points on average for the Bairds Otara participants (including B8). With the Rowandale students, two (R2 and R5) made significant progress, but about half made little or no progress in their assessments.

Figure 15. Bairds Otara adults' maths self-assessments, March & November

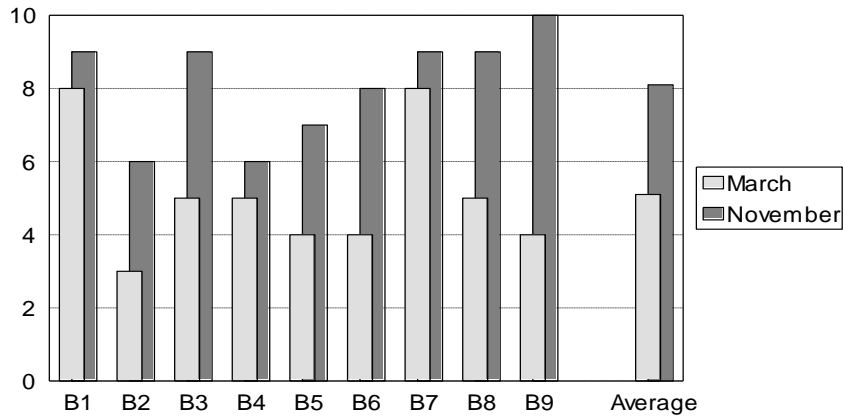
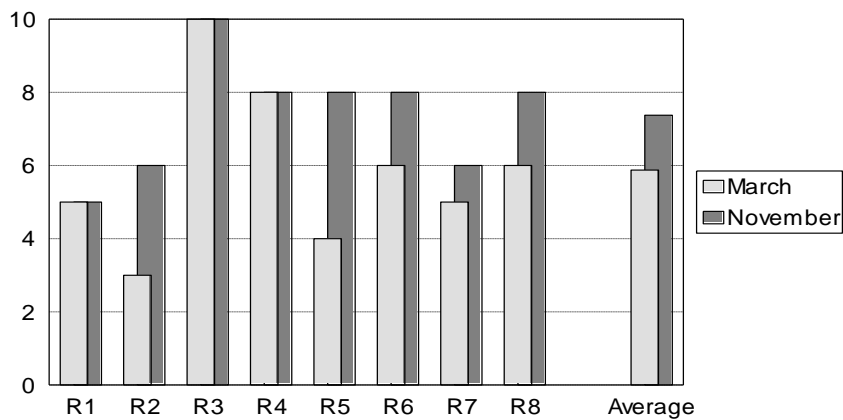


Figure 16. Rowandale adults' maths self-assessments, March & November



In terms of computing skills (Figure 17 and Figure 18 below) however, the Rowandale group felt that they had made much greater gain their Bairds Otara counterparts, moving about four points on average. This area is probably the one with the biggest gains for individual students, with B2, B4, B9, R1, R2 and R3 all making gains in excess of five points on the 10 point scale.

Figure 17. Bairds Otara adults' computing skills self-assessments, March & November

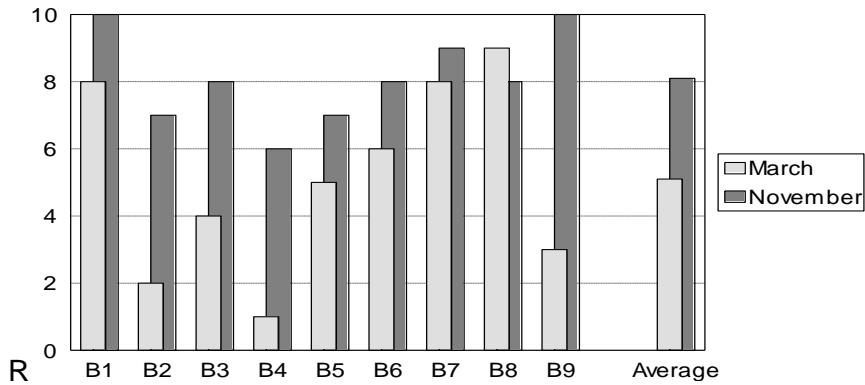
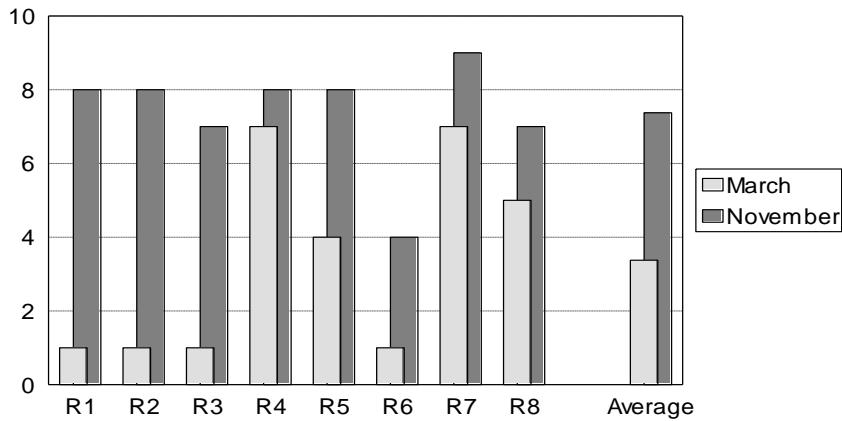


Figure 18. Rowandale adults' computing skills self-assessments, March & November



Finally in this section, Figure 19 and Figure 20 below show their self-assessments of their library skills before and after participating in the programme. Again, the Rowandale participants made big gains of more than three points on average, but especially for R1, R2, R3 and R7. In the Bairds Otara group, B2, B3, B5 and B9 all made gains over three points, but four reported no gain.

Figure 19. Bairds Otara adults' library skills self-assessments, March & November

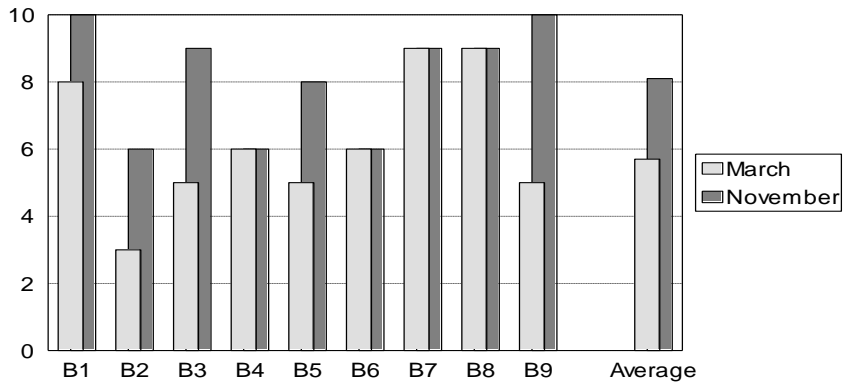


Figure 20. Rowandale adults' library skills self-assessments, March & November

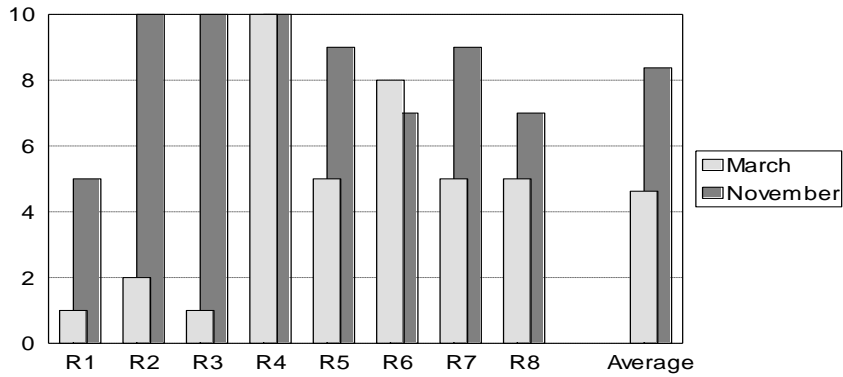
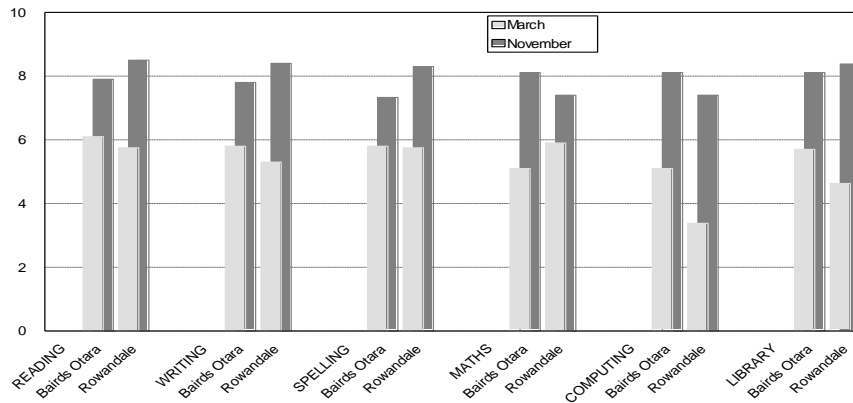


Figure 21 below summarises the self-assessment of foundation skills by showing the average gains for both the sites across the six areas discussed previously. The graph clearly shows gains in all skill areas, with computing and library skills having the greatest gains. Although some students such as R1, R2, R3, B2, B3 and B9 made considerable gains in most areas, there were uneven gains for many of the students, making progress in a couple of skills, but none or little in others. Such results are not uncommon in foundation skills, where learners' uneven skill levels and the gains they make in programmes is described as 'spiky'.

Figure 21. Average self-assessments of foundation skills of MFLP adults, March & November



3.4 Self-confidence- adults

Evaluations of general adult education programmes and adult literacy programmes (Benseman and Tobias 2003) specifically have long reported increased levels of self-confidence as one of the most consistent outcomes for the learners. As one researcher on the wider benefits of learning said, “It is hard to think of a single field where confidence is not mentioned as a key benefit of learning” (Schuller, quoted in Eldred & Ward, 2004, p. 14).

Despite the frequency of these findings, self-confidence outcomes have tended to be reported as somewhat removed from other ‘hard outcomes’ such as changes in cognitive skills and have also been consequently underrated by funders. More recently however, there have been more concerted efforts by researchers to unpack the significance of self-confidence in relation to learning and the broader implications of it as a learning outcome (Eldred and Ward 2004).

Eldred & Ward (op. cit., p. 46) concluded their study on self-confidence with 100 adult learners and 15 practitioners by saying:

It showed that confidence is not a static state, and that highs and lows in confidence can have a profound effect on learning, sense of self worth and activity and relationships in everyday life. Enhance confidence appears to increase success in learning. This in turn leads to heightened aspirations and progression in learning, although the nature and rate of this is very diverse. Further benefits include enhanced sense of self worth, improved ability to speak out in different situations and interactions. As people experienced success and began to feel better about themselves their sense of what was possible changed, and they wanted to take on new challenges. At the same time, changes took place in relation to family life, friendships, social and community activity and work. This illustrates the deep importance of

developing confidence through learning and suggests that more attention should be paid to this issue in policy, practice and further research.

Speaking skills

In addition to being considered a foundation skill, speaking is one of the key ways of demonstrating self confidence. This skill is 'situated' in that it varies from context to context. While almost all adults feel confident about talking to their friends, most find talking to large groups (even of people known to them) much more challenging. The MFLP participants were therefore asked to self-assess their speaking skills generally, but also in a number of different contexts – among friends, in small groups, large groups, to government department staff and to their children's teachers. The data from these pre- and post-programme self-assessments done in March and November are reported in the following section, with a summary of the average assessments for both sites provided in the final graph.

Firstly, the students were asked to assess how confident they felt about their speaking skills generally (Figure 22 and Figure 23 below). The Bairds Otara group had a higher initial level of confidence and made modest gains of about one point on average over the duration of the programme. The Rowandale participants were less confident initially, but made big gains in speaking confidence, especially in the cases of R1, R2, R3 R4 and R5. Only two students (B7 and B8) made no progress or felt that they regressed.

Figure 22. Bairds Otara adults' general speaking skills self-assessments, March & November

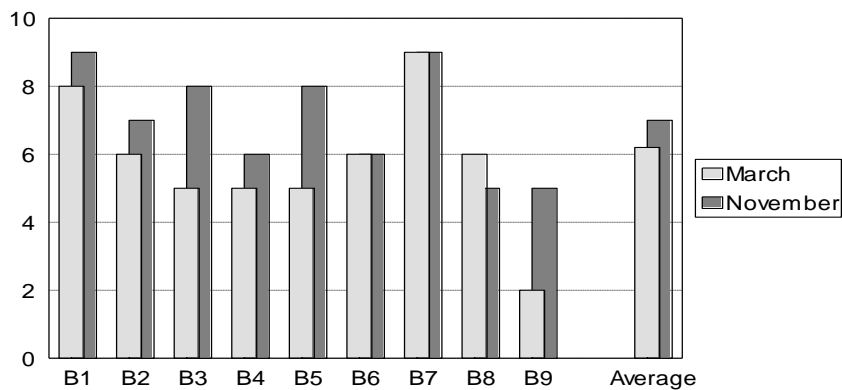
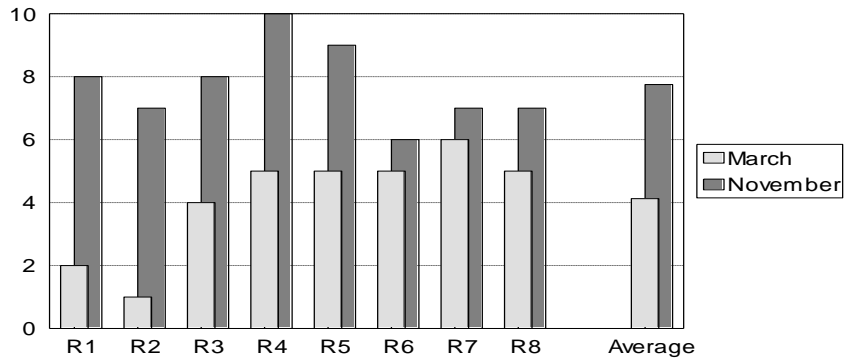


Figure 23. Rowandale adults' general speaking skills self-assessments, March & November



Not surprisingly, the self-assessments of confidence talking to friends (Figure 24 and Figure 25 below) were the highest of all the areas assessed (six had initial assessments of 10) and did not show much change for many participants (especially for Bairds Otara). Nonetheless, even in this area, three of the Rowandale students (R1, R2 and R9) made big gains of over five points, while two Bairds Otara students (B5 and B9) moved three or more points.

Figure 24. Bairds Otara adults' confidence speaking to friends self-assessments, March & November

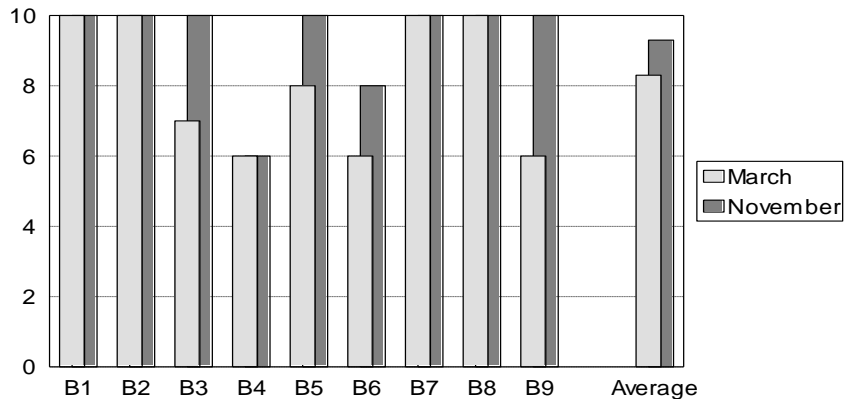
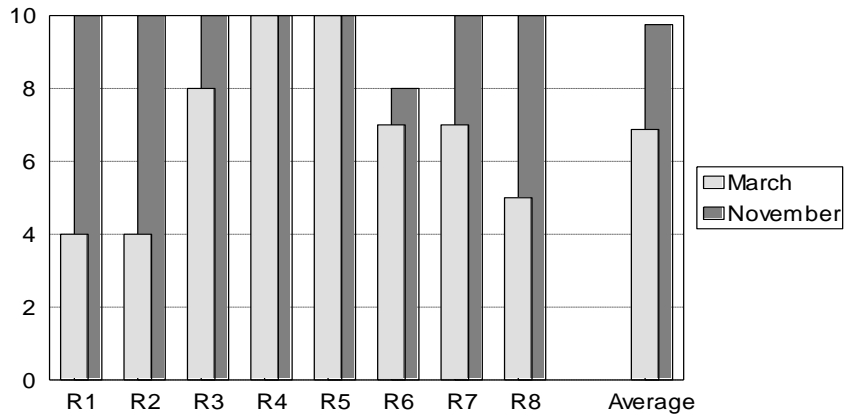


Figure 25. Rowandale adults' confidence speaking to friends self-assessments, March & November



The participants' confidence in talking to small groups (Figure 26 and Figure 27 below) was again higher with the Bairds Otara group, although three of this group still made gains of three points or more. With the Rowandale group, all made gains, but over half made gain of four points or more.

Figure 26. Bairds Otara adults' confidence speaking to small groups self-assessments, March & November

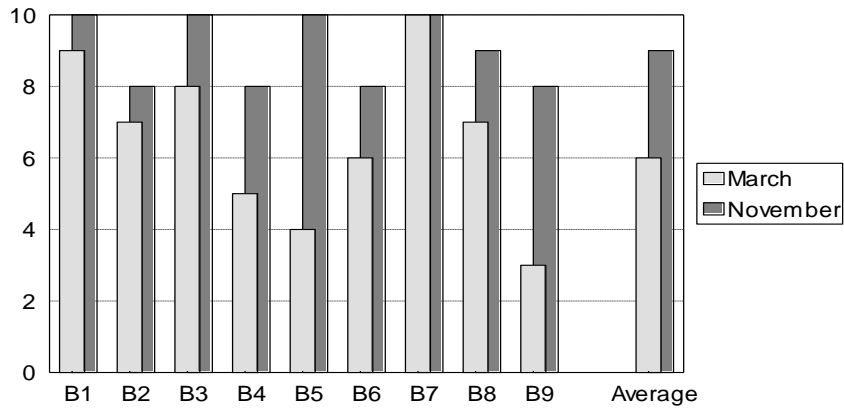
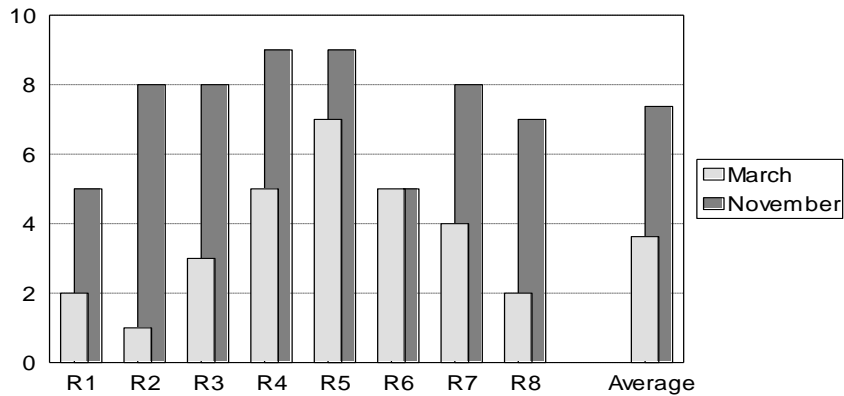


Figure 27. Rowandale adults' confidence speaking to small groups self-assessments, March & November



The Bairds Otara group were also more confident overall about speaking to large groups (Figure 28 and Figure 29 below), and about half (4) made gains of two or more points. The Rowandale group started with very low levels in this context and all made significant gains during the programme. All but one of this group made gains of four or more points.

Figure 28. Bairds Otara adults' confidence speaking to large groups self-assessments, March & November

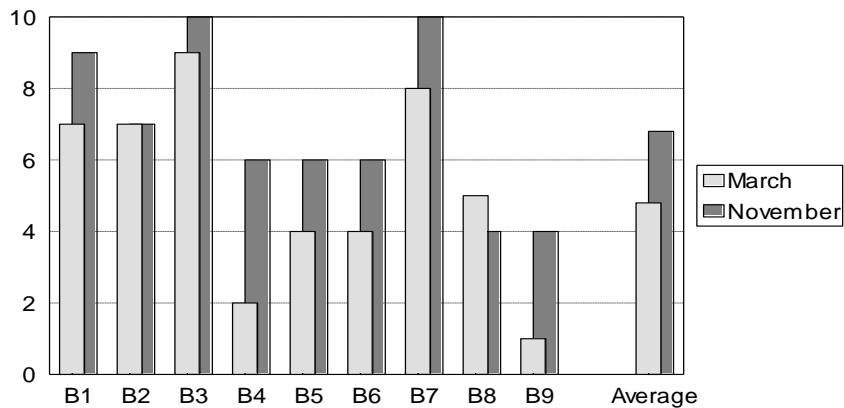
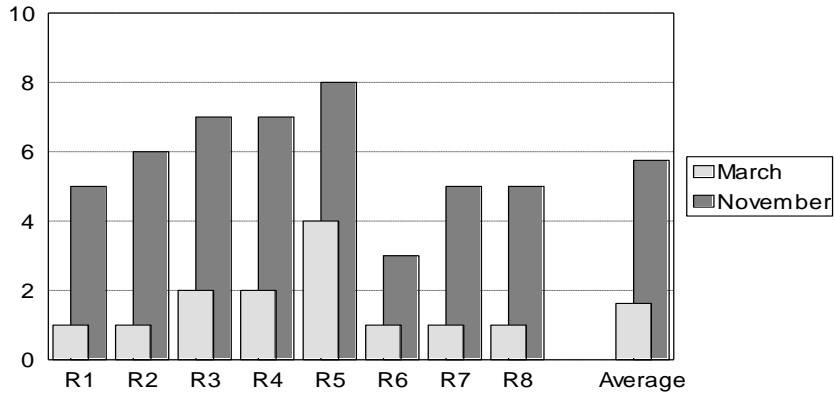


Figure 29. Rowandale adults' confidence speaking to large groups self-assessments, March & November



The initial levels of confidence of speaking to government department staff was noticeably higher at both sites than for large groups (Figure 30 and Figure 31 below). The gain at Bairds Otara was minimal for most, with the exception of B9 and to a lesser extent, B4. The gains at Rowandale were greater, especially for R1, R2 (seven points) and R8.

Figure 30. Bairds Otara adults' confidence speaking to government department staff self-assessments, March & November

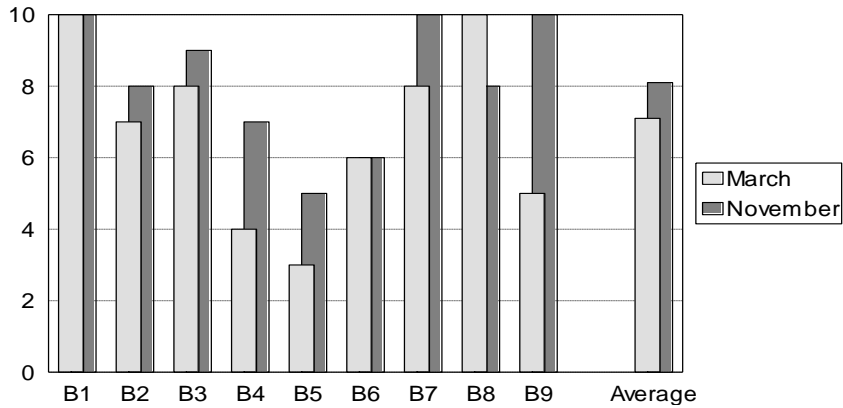
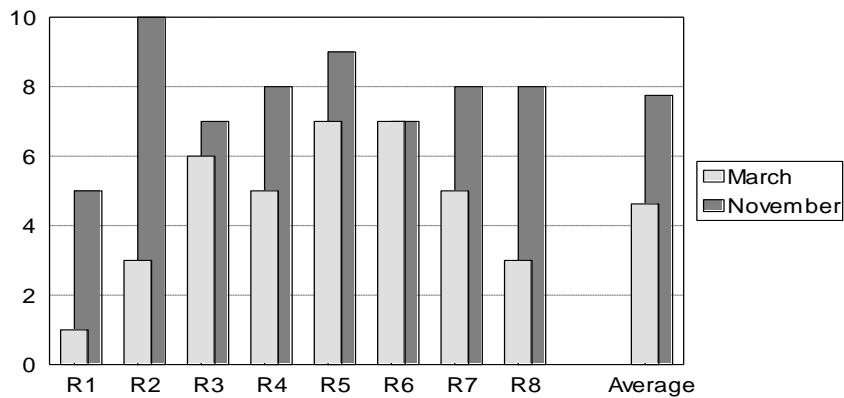


Figure 31. Rowandale adults' confidence speaking to government department staff self-assessments, March & November



The last context the participants were asked to assess confidence in speaking was in relation to their children's teachers (Figure 32 and Figure 33 below). Again the initial levels were high at Bairds Otara, but still showed some gain over the programme. At Rowandale, the initial levels were lower and made good gains over the year – especially R2, R4 and R6.

Figure 32. Bairds Otara adults' confidence speaking to child's teacher self-assessments, March & November

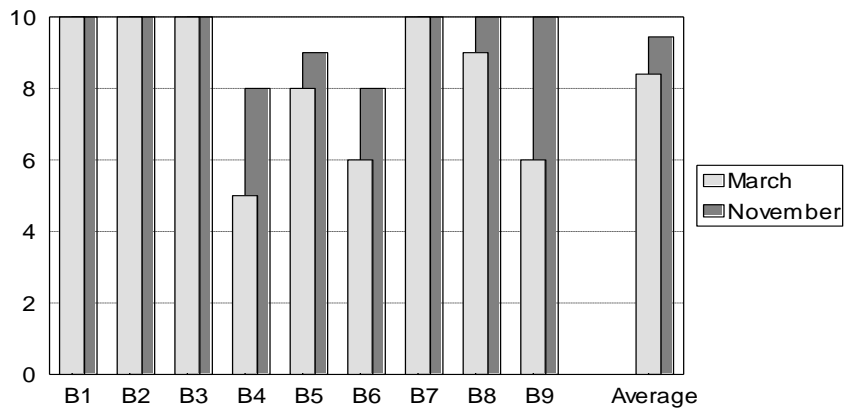
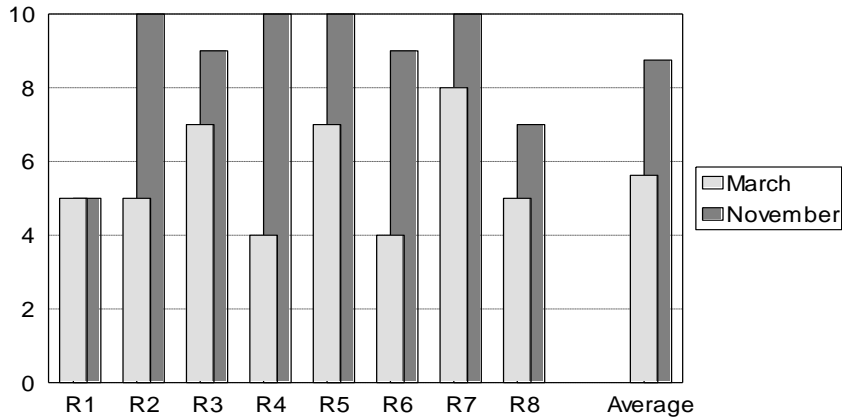
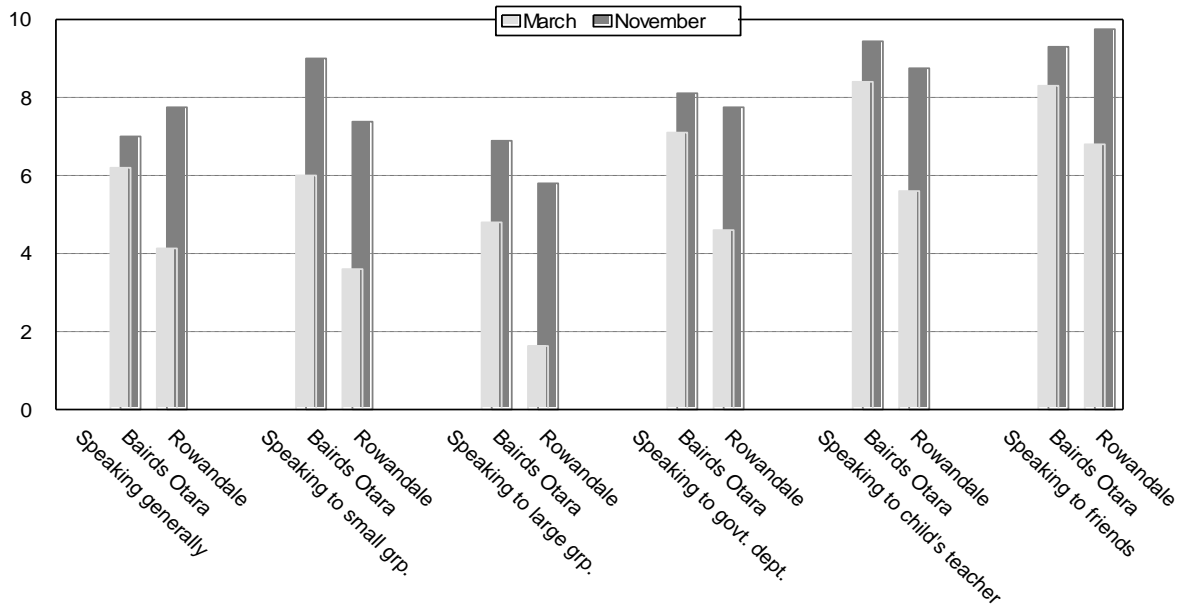


Figure 33. Rowandale adults' confidence speaking to child's teacher self-assessments, March & November



Finally, Figure 34 shows the average self-assessments for both sites across the six contexts for speaking. The participants felt that they had made gains in all areas, with the greatest gains being in speaking to small groups and large groups. Overall, the Rowandale group made larger gains, especially for some of these students such as R1, R2, R4 and R8.

Figure 34. Average self-assessments of speaking skills in different contexts of MFLP adults, March & November



Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a belief in one's ability to carry out the actions necessary to manage particular situations. It is more specific and contextualised to learning than the more

general concepts of self-confidence or self-esteem.⁹ In brief, it is a person's belief in their ability to learn. As the originator of the term Albert Bandura (1994, p. 71) puts it,

A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. They set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. They attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable. They approach threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression.

Many of the excerpts from interviews reported in this evaluation reflect changes in the participants' self-efficacy. The following quotes complement them in relation to self-efficacy.

I've changed. My confidence in writing, using paragraphs, learning new things, meeting new people. I used to be late, now I'm organised, especially with things like essays knowing when they're due and getting them done.

Look, I haven't studied for 18 years. It's boosted my confidence to do things that I already do, but I'm doing them much better. I'm glad I've had the opportunity to do this course, it's motivated me not to sit there and think 'later on'.

The maths, just knowing that I can do it.

It's given me new skills. I've learnt some new things I never thought I could accomplish – communicate, maths even!

I've been away from school for 25 years. It's been a big challenge for me, but when I'm standing here, it's amazing to know that the person I was before, I'm not now.

The best thing has been doing things where I think I can go this high, but I've got the ability to go even higher.

Maths, I never liked it at school, I always waggged because of it. Now I'm getting good marks. I've been here [tertiary education] before, but I started

⁹ For further information see <http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/efficacy.html>

too high and there was no-one there, but with this course they get you going, I've got started right.

You do things at school, but you don't go beyond that – here, I've gone way beyond what I thought I could do. My partner sees new things in me – especially my grades. He can't believe it (he didn't do very well at school either).

3.5 Future ambitions and plans

As the previous evaluation reports showed, the MFLP participants finished the year with a range of plans for the longer term. The 2004 Rowandale participants' plans for 2005 were:

- four have applied successfully for scholarships to do the Diploma in Early Childhood Pasifika at AUT in Manukau
- one was applying for a sports nutrition course at AUT
- one was moving her family to Waikato in order to do an early childhood course
- one is applying for a graphic arts course
- one is pregnant, but intends to do a fashion design course in 2006.

The Bairds Otara group listed the following plans for 2005:

- moving to Melbourne where she has arranged a receptionist job ("the course woke me up to think there are more options, so I decided I would do something, so this is it"), with a long-term aim of studying and then going into business
- applying for a TeachNZ scholarship to do an early childhood teaching diploma
- a social work diploma ("I've always wanted to be a social worker, but have had to put it on hold")
- enrolling in 3 year diploma in early childhood education
- enrolling in nursing bridging course
- enrolling in a sport and recreation diploma with the aim of becoming a fitness instructor or physical education teacher
- plans to enrol in a primary teaching diploma in the second semester
- a business management course with the aim of moving into business or becoming a counsellor
- a diploma in child development with the long-term aim of becoming an intermediate teacher

3.6 Parenting skills

As in most family literacy programmes, the teaching of parenting skills is one of the four key components of the MFLP.¹⁰ These skills have been taught in a variety of ways in the different sites to date. At both sites, they have been an integral part of the child and human development curricula, PACTT, as well as an important part of the informal discussion and debate that emerges in the course or running programmes for 30 hours a week.

Measuring the impact of the MFLP on parenting skills is not straightforward. Changes in parenting behaviours (especially ones that are thoroughly embedded in previous generations of families) do not occur readily or even in the short term. For this report a number of data sources have been used to document changes in this area, including key informant interviews (especially teachers and principals) and the parents themselves.

3.7 Parents' perspectives

As part of their end-of-year interviews, the participating parents were asked what they felt the programme had achieved for themselves as parents and their families generally. Their comments in response to this question included:

[When asked what aspects of their family life had changed as a result of MFLP, this student first looked very pensive and then started crying before giving this answer] It's just changed my whole life. I used to smack and belt them (it's not something that I'm proud of), now I talk to them. I send them to their rooms to cool down, then talk to them and try to work things out with them, how to change things. My kids tell me all the time that I'm different now.

I'm doing an anger management course 'cos I don't want to yell at my kids any more [this was prompted by a listening skills module].

We did a project on positive disciplining - I used to smack something awful. But now I've tried ideas on my son, using a chart to record behaviour, rewards and that. Now he listens, it's worked really well for both of us.

I have a lot more patience with my kids now. It's taught me to stop and listen, I was always too busy before and I find them easier to manage now.

I was a bit of a slacker to be honest. Things I used to do with [name] I don't do with [nominated child]. I used to be a discipline person, now I do better things.

¹⁰ It is the parenting component that generated the most criticism as 'deficit' models of provision – see Benseman (2002, p. 5).

I'm more patient with them, I respect them more and I listen to them. It's calmed me down as a parent. I used to yell a lot ... they seem to understand me now, we still argue, but we laugh a lot too.

It's made me focus more on education and given me insight into her learning, especially through watching teachers in PACTT.

It's taught me how to look after my kids properly, how to communicate - especially when they are attention-seeking. I never used to see it, but this course showed me all about it.

It's made aware of how I was bringing up my kids. I've learnt to discipline myself and not them. It was me at fault, not them, I've got so much more patience. We're much more involved in school functions now, we didn't bother before. We do family weekends that we didn't do before. We plan things, go to the beach, the zoo.

One parent was frank that she did not think that the programme had helped her nominated child, but that her relationship with her older children had improved.

To be honest, I don't think it's made much difference with [nominated child]. At home I try my best, but my kids treat me more like a brother or sister than a mum. But it is different with the older ones. Now I sit down and talk to them, I no longer scream at them. The 14 year-old sees me as a different person, she's not screaming at me, so we talk. She says that she saw me as someone who just sat at home, but now, 'Mum, you seem to be listening to me.'

Many of the Bairds Otara parents specifically mentioned the value of doing the Child Development course. They found the course particularly relevant to their parenting roles and issues by giving them a good understanding of how and why their children develop in the ways they do.

It's shown me why they are the way they are. [Talks in some detail about being over-protective about her first-born child, now 14 years old]. It's made me realise I'm not the only one who thinks and does things like that, there are others like it too.

One particular aspect of their parenting role that a number of the participants mentioned was their new-found ability to help their children with their homework.

The kids used to come home with their homework and I couldn't help them. You want to help, but you can't - I used to feel so put down. Now I have ideas about how to help them 'cos I understand it myself, especially stuff like maths,

It's so neat being able to work with them, showing them how to do things and that. I used to keep out of it before because I didn't know myself.

I never used to be able to do it, stuff like algebra, 'cos I'd never done it before myself.

It's great being able to watch the teacher [during PACTT] and then try those things at home.

I've got to be with my children when they need me like homework. Before, I've been with them, but not like now. Things are clearer for me. I could only help them with the easy things, now I can understand what they're doing, that's the beauty of it.

Being able to understand their homework, it just opens up a lot of cells in your brain.

You need to relate to your child, to understand what they're doing – especially in things like maths, fractions and that.

I didn't want them [younger children] to follow in the same footsteps [as older children]. They used to come in, have some food and watch TV and not get round to doing their homework. I needed to show them how important it is to be at school by being there – we can both do the same things now. She's improving a lot, especially the way she communicates with the teacher.

While for others, it has become important to model educational practices for their children.

Like this [interview with evaluator], I could never talk to anyone. Everything is 'more' now. Now I've got kids, I have to get an education, before it didn't matter.

Learning journal entries

The Bairds Otara participants kept learning journals as part of their Child Development course. These students agreed for the evaluator to have access to these journals and used them anonymously in this report. They are a useful source of data on how the learners' perspectives change over time and also how this course influenced their parenting beliefs and behaviours during the year. A selection of journal excerpts is given below.

Some journal entries illustrate how the parents saw what influenced their child's ability to learn at school.

[Child] was doing well in class today. She was doing maths by herself. She could do things by following the instructions she had from the teacher. In this way I can see how she improves from day to day by listening and following the instructions she had been given. She could also help her classmates in working as a team. This helps her understand things in class.

Other excerpts recount their on-going struggles to change parenting skills.

[Child] moves back to the [train] track, he tries to grab a toy off [other child] then hits her for not giving it. I get all frustrated because I'm trying to teach him not to hit, to try and use his mouth. So in a situation like this I just walk away because he's not listening to me.

Or resolve personal issues (with support from fellow classmates).

[Child] is all clingy today and it took me a long time to get away from him. I'm finding it hard, I don't know why he is behaving like this. I came to it as a result of discussing it with the other friends [on the course]. [Child] is lonely being the only child. Him and [friend] have this brother/sister relationship. He used to get his way with [friend], but ever since she's been saying 'NO' to [child], he doesn't have that dominant power over her, so he's been trying it on me. And when you push the wrong buttons with [child] someone ends up crying and it's not me. [Fellow student] suggested I made the first step coming on this course and now I have to make the first step for him. A brother or sister for him, that is the question. I have just figured out that what I wanted to do and if I decided to have another child, what I wanted to do would have to be put on hold, plus losing a child last time was hard enough. I feel sad for [child] being by himself, I can understand why some of the things he does are driving me mad. I cried because reality has hit me in the face with this situation. What do I do? Do I have another child and put my future on hold or do I deal with this up-coming situation, knowing that he's lonely?

The following series of entries shows how one parent had learnt to apply concepts from her course to help her son and also the ups and downs of a child's progress – but also the joint efforts of the teacher and the parent trying to overcome the downs.

April 17: today the whole middle syndicate classes had split up into groups and went into different classrooms for maths time. [Child] went into Room X, the teacher was playing a game with a deck of playing cards. The children had to learn to identify numbers and counting up to 15. They also had to learn to identify numbers from the lowest to the highest. The teacher unscrambled four cards for [child], he had to put the cards in order, which he did correctly and fast. He showed no hesitation, he was eager to do the cards again. He showed a big smile for doing it right. He also showed three basic stages in learning: taking in information, storing information and recalling the information. I just learnt it today in Child Development about cognitive development.

April 24: today [child] showed the three stages of memory. On the weekend I had shown my children number counting methods and today [nominated child] showed all the stages of memory. He did his work fast and correctly because of what he had learnt and remembered. He's more happy when he knows what he's doing and especially in maths. When he doesn't know, he shows trial and error, but teaching him on the weekend had helped him with his maths.

May 27: today [child] had a test with his teacher on his maths levels. The teacher reviewed him on all the methods he has been learning. He had to do all the stages of memory, he had to shuffle in his schema on what he knows or on what he has learnt. He passed the test, the teacher said he can move up to the next stage into another group. I'm proud to see my son develop a good learning strategy in his maths.

June 6: the lunch lady made a noise down the back of the hall by opening up the door to the lunch-room. This made all the children turn to see what was that noise? This made me think about what we had learnt in class on primitive reflexes and it just happened today at Bible Study. The children and the teachers, also ourselves, reflexed to stimulus, an involuntary response to a sound. This was a laugh for [fellow student] and I, we both looked at each other and said, 'REFLEX'. So we acted this scene for our role play in class.

June 30: this week and last week [child] has developed great learning methods throughout his maths time. He has developed a lot in his cognitive development for a seven year-old child. It is really good to watch my child increase his fine motor skills and gross motor skills through his growth. When I first watched him in the beginning he showed confusion and a lack of understanding, but through this term in helping him with his maths and reading and maturing he has shown a lot of the stages of sequences of cognitive development. It has been a great progress and this has given him confidence and understanding in everything he does now. Since he shows confidence in himself he now says, 'I know Mum', which makes me laugh and happy to see him have that confidence in his maths and play and himself.

[following a new teacher, the child has lost some confidence in his maths]

November 18: maths time and spelling with [teacher] today. [Child] played up today because he couldn't get the answers for the maths test. I tried to help him remember the methods he had learnt but he couldn't and started getting mad and frustrated with himself and started crying. I started giving him positive talk telling him 'it's OK to get things wrong' and 'it doesn't matter you can try again' and 'it takes a lot of practice' and 'you're going to get it right next time'. [Teacher] gave him the same talk, trying to encourage him. It made him a bit better, until he played the maths game and got over it very quickly. Typical boy, when it comes to games, they stop sulking!

The next series of entries demonstrates a growing confidence in a parent's confidence in her daughter and the enjoyment of working alongside her.

June 6: I am happy with the way my daughter is doing in school. I can see her improvement, she is making with having my support around. I hope that she will continue to be like this as she grows older.

June 10: getting to know the changes in working along with my daughter encourages me to keep on going with my study. Helps me on my weakest point too, specially with the different tasks we are doing.

June 17: sitting back to help my daughter everyday in PACTT draws me closer to my kids. Also learning at the same time as my daughter.

June 21: a well performed day for my daughter. She has done her exercises well before time. I was amazed with her. I gave her a hug and patted her on the back - she was overwhelmed.

June 22: teaching kids the right path to go at home and learning off them is a bonus to me. Hoping that I would continue doing it for her in the future is what I am dreaming.

June 26: see your own kids improving with their study uplifts your loneliness and confusion. Happy to work with my daughter in her class with her maths every day. Shows me she has the ability to succeed in whatever career she will pick when she is old enough.

August 4: after our long two week holiday which was good to have a break from study. I enjoyed being together with all my kids. Now I have started study again, I have to be with my daughter in class for half an hour a day. So this morning she was doing her maths. It was good to work with her doing maths, also because I was doing the same, which was fractions, which really interest me to learn and teach her at the same time.

4 2004 MFLP NOMINATED CHILDREN

This next section examines data about the nominated children who participated in the MFLP during 2004. Most of the data presented is of a pre- and post-test comparison, but is supplemented by some qualitative data from their parents and their teachers.

In order to give some degree of comparison, data from a 'control' child is given wherever possible. This methodology was used in a British study of family literacy (Brooks, et al. 1997) and involves the identification of a second child in the same class (but not participating in the MFLP) who best matches the MFLP nominated child in terms of their academic levels at the beginning of the year, gender, ethnicity and social background.¹¹ Although this form of control comparison is somewhat crude, Brooks et al. argue that is a reasonably valid method of isolating the effects of the family literacy and therefore provides a useful comparison.

4.1 School attendance

The first factor to compare the MFLP participants with their control counterparts is attendance (Figure 36 below).¹² The graph shows very few differences between the two groups in their attendance patterns, with the average for MFLP children of 88.7% and 89% for the controls.

¹¹ Achieving matches across the last two factors is not difficult in most cases because of a high degree of homogeneity in the participating schools.

¹² In these figure IDs *R* refers to Rowandale, *B* to Bairds Otara and *C* to controls. The ID numbers refer to the same children throughout the report – i.e. R MFLP 6 is the same child each time.

Figure 35. Rowandale MFLP children and controls' attendance totals, 2004

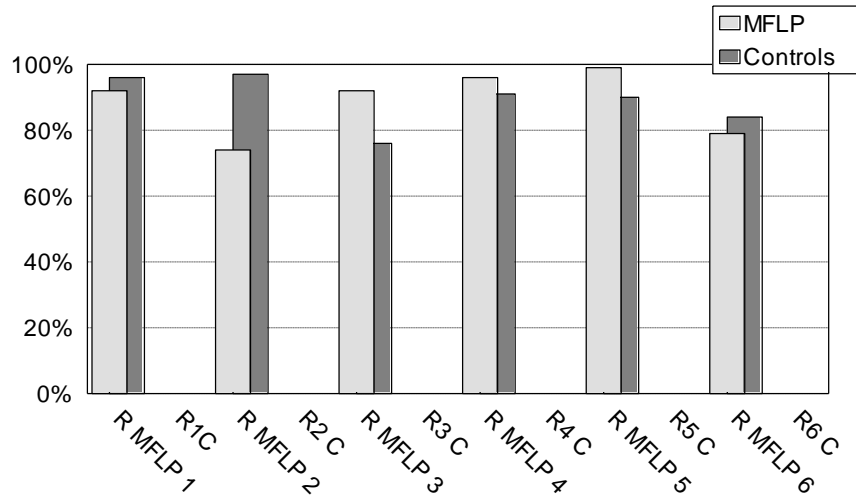
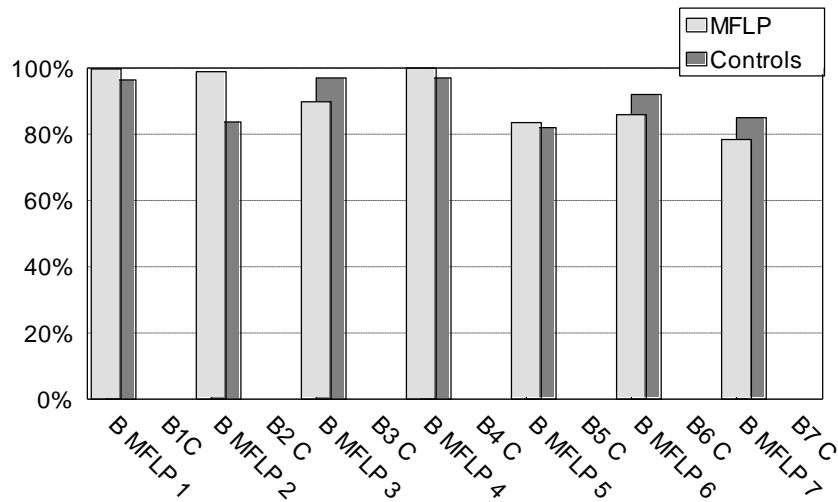


Figure 36. Bairds Otara MFLP children and controls' attendance totals, 2004



B MFLP 3, 6 & 7's parents had either poor attendance at MFLP or were absent for sustained periods during the year

4.2 Reading

Developed by Marie Clay, *Running Records* are commonly used in New Zealand schools as a "framework for systematically observing a child's reading behaviour" (Ministry of Education 2003b). They are seen as an appropriate method for monitoring early reading development in a child's first few years at school. The observations cover oral language, concepts about print, reading of continuous text, letter knowledge, reading vocabulary, writing vocabulary and hearing and recording sounds in words.

Figure 37 below shows the Running Record levels for both the Rowandale MFLP nominated children and their controls recorded at the beginning and end of 2004. Most of the MFLP clearly made better gains than their controls, especially R MFLP 3 and 4; the only exception is R MFLP 6 who made no gain at all over the year. The average gain for MFLP children was 5.3 levels and for the controls, 2.5 levels.

Figure 37. Rowandale MFLP children and controls' Running Record Levels, beginning and end of year

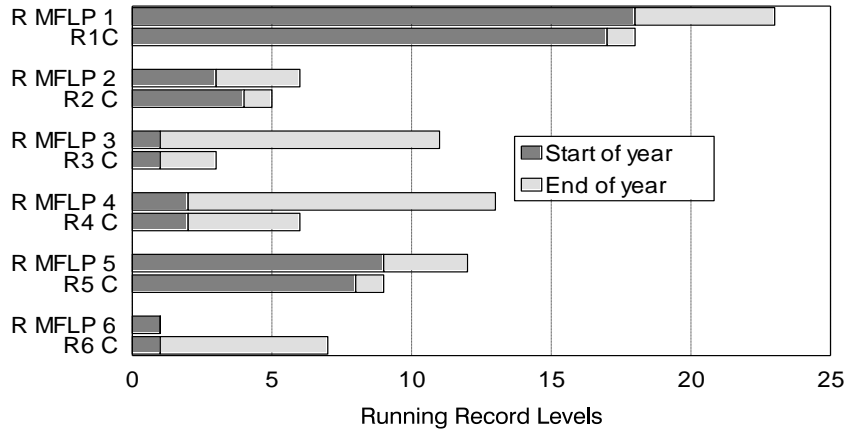
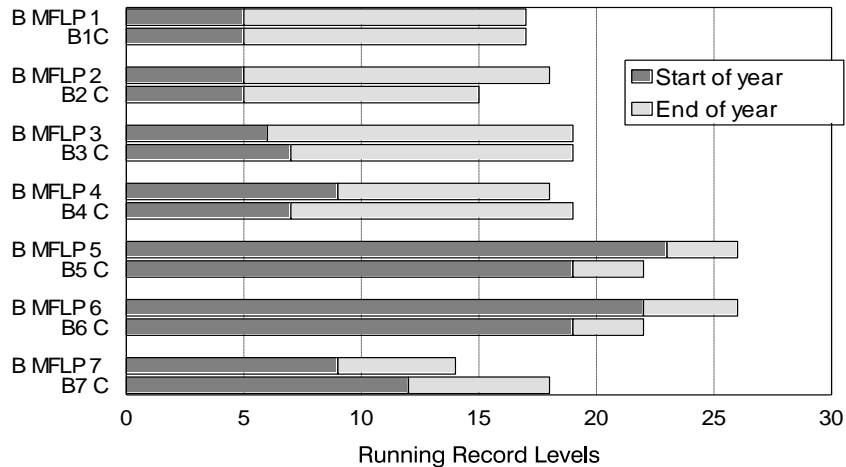


Figure 38. Bairds Otara MFLP children and controls' Running Record Levels, beginning and end of year



B MFLP 3, 6 & 7's parents had either poor attendance at MFLP or were absent for sustained periods during the year

4.3 Maths

Progress in maths was assessed using Maths Strategy levels. Figure 39 below shows the before and after assessments for the Rowandale nominated children. Here, there was less movement between the levels over the year (albeit on a smaller scale of levels than with the Running Record levels), but the average gain for MFLP children was 1.3 levels and for controls, 1.1 levels.

Figure 39. Rowandale MFLP children and controls' Maths Strategy Levels, beginning and end of year

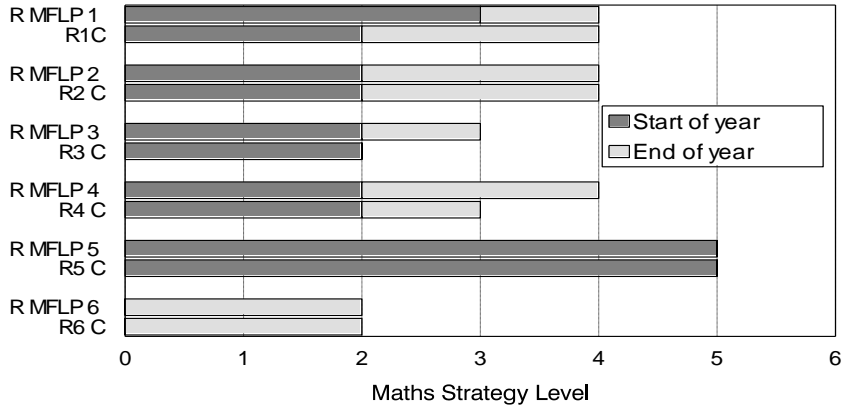
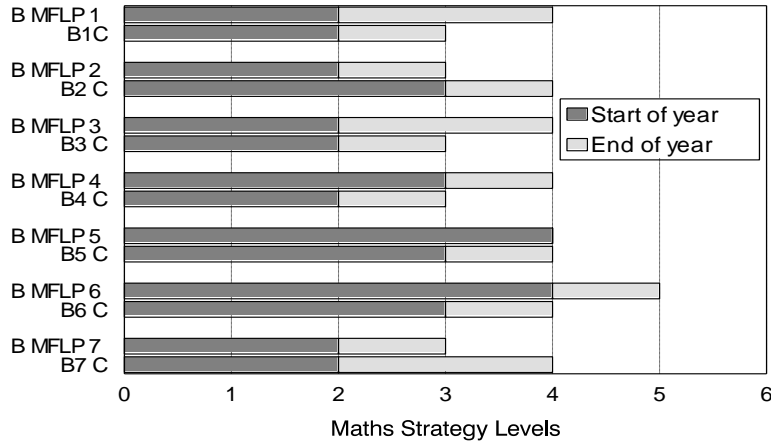


Figure 40 shows the comparable data for the Bairds Otara children and their controls. Again, there are not big differences between the MFLP children and their non-MFLP controls. The average change of 1.1 levels overall is the same for both groups.

Figure 40. Bairds Otara MFLP children and controls' Maths Strategy Levels, beginning and end of year



B MFLP 3, 6 & 7's parents had either poor attendance at MFLP or were absent for sustained periods during the year

4.4 Parents' assessments of children's progress

As part of their end-of-year interviews, the parents were asked what they thought the programme had achieved for their nominated children. Consistent with teachers' and principals' perspectives, there was a range of views about the amount of progress that parents felt their children had made over the year.

Some felt that their child's progress had been satisfactory prior to coming into the MFLP and that this pattern had continued during the programme, albeit with some additional benefits.

He's always done reasonably OK and had lots of things to help him, although I do think it has helped him socially.

She's always been at the top of her class, so she has real pride having her mum in the class showing me what she's done.

Others felt that their children had made considerable gains, especially in terms of their attitudes towards learning.

He had been finding his homework hard, but now he's doing it much easier and he's less grumpy with it.

She's changed – she always looks forward to me working with her. She's improved a lot, got motivation to do her homework straightaway after school without being asked.

He's learnt different ways of communicating. He used to be physical, hitting his sister, in trouble quite a lot. Now he's learnt to use his mouth, not his fist.

He's changed a lot. He used to be an observer, now he watches and then joins in. He speaks a lot, didn't used to at all and he now says 'I've got friends'.

She reads heaps, makes me go to the library. She's more advanced than my older one, 'cos I never read to her. I thought reading was nothing eh?

Everything has come up so much from where he was, especially to do with me working with him. He's much more involved in extra-curricular stuff, getting into school activities now.

Her writing book wasn't at all clear at the beginning, but is great now. She's talking clearly and lost all her shyness.

She talks to her classmates, she was very shy to start with and me being in class helps.

And making transitions,

It's the first time he's been to kindy and he's been able to settle in really well with me being involved.

And a few felt that they had not changed much at all in the short term, although there were indications of improved social skills.

He still plays up a lot. When I walk in, he thinks he can do what he likes. PACTT hasn't worked that well for him. But it's still great being in class, seeing how teachers talk and relate to children. I want to take what they do and do the same.

He's coming out of his shell a bit, being round him in class. I can see the things I need to work on now by watching him in class.

[Name] is still doing the same things, but she can play with the other kids now, she used to just sit back and watch.

4.5 Early childhood educators' perspectives on child participants

The early childhood teachers involved in the project were also consistently positive overall about the programme for the nominated children in the kindergartens – “there's definitely been a difference since it started.” The main changes they had noticed in the children were their growth in confidence, greater independence and improved oral skills.

One group of kindergarten teachers said that most of the parents were very shy initially, but had gradually become more comfortable in visiting during the day with PACTT. In particular, they felt that sustained periods in the kindergartens were especially valuable in exposing the parents to the modelling of teaching methods by the kindergarten teachers. They listed a number of changes they felt that had occurred as a result of the MFLP:

- parents were now staying on outside MFLP to help with programme activities
- parents were staying longer to work with their children
- they were asking for their children's artwork to take home
- they were also making comments about their artwork and its development
- they were noticeably more interested in what their children were doing
- mutual support among the parents over issues that had arisen.

In addition to the changes for the children and the parents themselves (their motivation, life skills and job skills), they felt that the family literacy parents' involvement was beneficial for all of the kindergarten children because of their active involvement in the programme – “it's had a ripple effect among whanau and the community, other parents see the [MFLP] parents doing the course and hear us talking [about MFLP], so they ask questions about it.”

5 2003 MFLP PARTICIPANTS

Many changes that occur as a result of education do not always happen in the short-term. Sometimes learners do not immediately appreciate the relevance of their new-found knowledge and skills, sometimes opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills do not eventuate and more commonly, other events and issues prevent learners from acting on their new-found goals and ambitions (Benseman and Tobias 2003). Learners may need to put their new plans on hold in deference to others' needs and issues (such as health crises or financial constraints for example). Despite the self-evident nature of this observation, very few summative evaluations look at impact on participants beyond a very short period after the completion of the programme. In most cases, this restriction is due to the pressure to show results to funders and also that the emphasis is usually on changes in specific knowledge and skills rather than the broader impacts that can occur, particularly in programmes like family literacy.

In recognition of this dimension, this evaluation has also included a follow-up of the participants from the 2003, who had been out of the programme for at least 12 months and in some cases, 18 months.

5.1 2003 adult participants

There was a total of 37 adult participants in three intakes (two at Bairds Otara and one at Rowandale); the Dawson Road Community site was not operating in 2003. Of the 37 (seven of whom withdrew at some point during the programme), a total of 22 were able to be contacted for an interview. Most of the interviews were done by phone because of difficulties in locating the respondents and finding suitable times for interviews; because of their previous contact with the evaluator, the lack of face-to-face contact was not seen as a difficulty for the interviews. In a few cases, information about what the former students were doing was gathered by way of their fellow students during the latter's interviews. Of the 15 who could not be located:

- six of these had withdrawn from the programme during 2003; of these, one had gone overseas, three had moved out of Auckland and two had changed their addresses and phone numbers
- five had changed addresses and/or phone numbers
- four could not be contacted despite a minimum of four phone calls.

Some additional information about some of the above group was however picked up in the course of interviews with their fellow students included the following:

- **A**¹³ has shifted to another part of Manukau and now has a full-time job

¹³ To preserve anonymity some details have been generalised and the participants are identified by letters of the alphabet; the four male participants are referred to as *she*.

- **B** enrolled in a Manukau Institute of Technology course, but withdrew and has now left the area
- **C** has been nursing her sick mother in her home town
- **D** enrolled in an Manukau Institute of Technology course in the second term of 2003
- **E** has moved out of Otara and is working night shifts
- **F** is currently working part-time and is considering applying for an early childhood diploma course
- **G** has moved out of the area and working as a cleaner.

Because of the diversity of their experiences the data from the interviews is presented as a series of individual vignettes covering the most pertinent points from the interviews to illustrate what these former participants have done as well as their reflections on the impact of the MFLP since completing it.

H initially enrolled at a tertiary education course, but had to withdraw because of family issues. She then worked as a teacher aide and as a community support worker with special needs children for the rest of 2003. As a result of working in this area, **G** has clarified that she wants to work with primary-age children and is planning to enrol in a Diploma in Teaching course in 2005. **H** felt that the MFLP had been “ a great stepping stone for me, it opened my eyes.” She says that “I carry myself differently now, I project myself, I speak more eloquently and words are more important for me now.” Talking about the MFLP, **H** said that it contributed to a very important turning-point in my life. It taught me that if you want changes, you’ve got to get involved.” **H** feels that her child is doing really well at school – “she is a lot more communicative, ‘cos she would have been hiding under the table otherwise.”

I is now eight months pregnant and has put her plans to work for a social service agency as a secretary on hold for now. Reflecting back on the MFLP, she thinks that it was “just awesome. It changed my attitudes towards my kids, I’m just so much more patient with them, especially working with them on their homework. I’m not yelling at them like I used to.” **I** thinks that her daughter is finding her schoolwork much easier and she enjoys working with her on her homework.

J has spent the past year playing a strong support role for her whanau, including caring for two relatives with terminal illnesses. She has also been enrolled in a free te reo course offered by an out-of-town polytechnic, which she says has been important in understanding “where I come from and who I am.” **J** misses the MFLP – “it brought my inner me out.” While she says that she still has problems with maths (“I just can’t seem to retain it”), she says that her reading, spelling and writing are now of a level that she can manage on her own and is no longer dependent on her husband for help. **J**’s grand-daughter was her nominated child in the MFLP; **J** feels that she stills “gets a bit distracted” but her reports are excellent. She feels that taking an interest in her grand-daughter “was really important at that time.” She regrets that she had not been able to do the course herself when she was a young mother –

“if I had known what I know now when I was a mum, I wouldn’t be where I am now.” J’s plans are to continue in her support role for her whanau (“they really need someone you know”) – and the te reo course.

K has been doing relief teaching for an early childhood agency over the past year, which has helped confirm her interest in working with this age-group of children. While she had originally planned to start her ECE diploma in 2004, she had to defer it as she had trouble finding suitable childcare for her three year-old son, but she is hopeful of enrolling in 2005. Her reflections on the MFLP were mainly about its value of showing her the value of working with her children and giving her the confidence and skills to do this. She also felt that the programme had prompted her to review how she disciplined her children – “I always used to smack them, but now it’s good ‘cos I know what to do that’s better.”

L did what she said that she intended to do at the completion of the programme – she has a full-time job working as a packer in a factory. Although she has been quite sick recently (requiring a hospital stay), both she and her husband are both now in jobs for the first time. She feels that her daughter is very happy at school now and “has done really well.” L also reported that she had changed how she interacted with her children, sitting down to talk to them much more now.

M has just completed her first year of a social work degree at a tertiary institution. The year’s study has not been without its problems and challenges however. She passed seven papers, but failed one due to health problems (an on-going medical condition). At one point she said that she nearly withdrew due to her health, but also “not knowing how the system works” – especially considerable enrolment difficulties and paying fees. During this period she got a lot of support not only from the institution’s Pasifika Centre staff, but also MFLP staff who have maintained contact with her since she left the programme and supported her through her selection interview. M is effusive about how the MFLP changed her perspective on herself as a learner as a learner – “Being out of school a long time, I never thought that I could get back into education, but family literacy changed all that for me. I didn’t believe in myself until I went there, about what I could do.” M’s grandson was her nominated child in MFLP; unfortunately he has had to return to his Pacific homeland and is not enjoying his schoolwork there because of the different teaching approach he has encountered there. M is clear that her tertiary study has not been easy, but is confident her second year will be easier because of her better understanding of “how it all works.” As she says, “I’ve started on a journey, there’s still lots of issues, but I’ve started on my trip.”

N has completed one year of a business diploma at a polytechnic. She has passed everything to date and is contemplating starting on an accounting B Com in 2006. N was one of two MFLP students who were awarded Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year awards for the national Adult Learners’ Week in September. N had tried tertiary education before, but had been

unsuccessful. She feels that MFLP had made the difference for her this time round because “they give you more detailed help, so it’s a good step up – I went into it much more confidently this time.” Her nominated child has made a successful transition to school from his kindergarten and is doing well in his new environment. Talking about what MFLP has meant for her, N said that “as a parent I used to like them to go to school, but no more than that. Family literacy helps parents participate in school. The teachers are calling for parents to come in and the children see it’s important. They like to see us [parents] come in and be around the school. My [14 year-old] son says that he sees that I can do it and now I’m going to do it too. [He says] My mum’s famous [for the Adult Learner Award] ‘cos I can see her doing all this. They’re always asking me, ‘Mum are you proud of me?’ when they get awards at school.” N has not found her new direction easy, as reflected in her story of a discussion about stress in one of her courses. When she listed all the stresses in her life (church, part-time job, family, tertiary study), a fellow student commented on how much stress she had in her life – to which N replied, “yes, but it’s positive stress, ‘cos I’m doing very good things for my children, in my heart I want my children to follow my footsteps, even though it’s not easy.”

O has been working as both a cleaner and a teacher aide at her MFLP site school. She finds working with special needs children very rewarding and “just loving it. You never know what’s going to happen, they’re just great.” She plans to continue this work in 2005 to gain additional hands-on experience and then embark on a special needs qualification. O says that MFLP boosted her confidence, helped her make friends and gave her insight into cultural differences. O is clear that the teacher aide work has been the appropriate step for her at this stage – “If I had jumped straight into study, it wouldn’t have worked, so this is a good medium step. The experience here is just awesome, especially with [husband] back in work now, managing the kids and everything else. O’s daughter is doing well at school (she is now reading at her age level for the first time), although she is finding it difficult without her mother coming in for PACTT. O had chosen her as her nominated child “because I didn’t know how to teach her. I learnt a lot just from watching her teacher – I had been doing things wrong for her.” Overall, O found the programme to be of tremendous benefit – “I was a stay-at-home mum, doing a bit of housework, you know. My husband got a job two months after I started family literacy [his first in nine years], so it’s all go now.”

P has also been working as a teacher aide at the same school as O as well as working for a social service agency. She sees this move as “taking time-out really” at this stage while she re-assesses her future direction. She had originally intended to do a teacher training course, but is now contemplating a bachelor’s degree in child psychology (“it’s always fascinated me, but I never knew that I could do it or not until I went through family literacy”) and some distance education courses in 2005. She has a long-term goal of working with youth as a counsellor. Previously at home on the Domestic Purposes Benefit, P was glad to have done the MFLP – “it was all about getting out and doing something about it [being at home]. She particularly valued learning how to communicate better with her teenage sons. Her younger son, who was in the

programme, has continued to make good progress at school, especially in reading and writing. P stood successfully for the school Board of Trustees election in 2004 – something she says she would never have thought of doing previously.

Q worked part-time in two jobs in 2004 – one with a pre-school and the other at a mail centre. She had planned to enrol in an early childhood diploma in July 2005, but her husband has been sick and is also expecting a child early in the year, so has put these plans on hold for now. Q says that she is excited about being pregnant again – “it’s just excellent that I’m having another chance to do it all different.” Talking about the MFLP, she says that “it gave me a lot more patience, it opened my eyes to all of that child development. When you’re working, you don’t have time to do that, but now I see it how a child sees it.” She related how a relative had commented to her recently, “you’ve got a lot of patience with them to do it like that [giving answers the children could answer].” Q was particularly pleased that her relative had noticed the change. She says that her nominated child is making great progress; she is especially pleased that he is more focussed in his schoolwork and gets his homework done straight after school – something that did not occur previously.

R is also pregnant, with the baby due in early 2005. She says that she is spending more time with her children and especially with their homework. She is not clear about what her long-term plans are at present.

S has just successfully completed her first year of a diploma in social services at a polytechnic. She says that she coped reasonably well due to the preparation that MFLP provided, although she did find the te reo component difficult. She sees the MFLP as “one of the most important things in my life, it gave me a focus on the future. I had tried to learn at home, but it didn’t make sense, I didn’t know what to do.” She had been “doing nothing much at home – I had wanted to do a course, but didn’t know how to do it.” Prior to her involvement in family literacy, she said that “I didn’t want to make my children first, I wanted [partner] to control them. It’s working now.” S feels that her daughter is doing “OK” compared with before the MFLP.

T had recently given birth to another child just prior to the evaluation interview. She was very complimentary about the value of MFLP for herself and her family. She feels that her son has benefited from it; since starting primary school in May, he had received three awards of which they were immensely proud.

U was also awarded an Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year Award and stood successfully for her school’s Board of Trustees election. In 2004 she successfully completed the first year of a B Ed qualification to become a primary school teacher. She has found the level of her study quite manageable, but managing the workload of completing assignments etc. on top of her family obligations as a single parent very demanding. She admits

that she nearly gave up twice – “but then when I think about why I wanted to get into this, I want to get a better life and that’s what I’m about now. That’s what kept me going. I get \$13k on the benefit, but I’ll get \$42k as a teacher – why wouldn’t I want that?” U says that she learnt to cope with the demands of her study by getting strong support from her brother and parents who have provided back-up childcare when needed – “we went into this together, I said ‘I need your support for three years if I’m going to get through this.’” She now feels confident about being able to complete her bachelor degree and is starting to think about a masters or even a PhD in the future. U says that she had been “at home on my own, not wanting to work or anything really” before she enrolled in the MFLP and that the programme had prepared her “for everything that I’ve done so far.” She feels that her daughter is doing “not too bad” at school, especially in terms of wanting to read more (“she never wanted to before”), although it has been hard for her at times because of the demands on T.

V’s daughter was in hospital for an extended period in 2004, which curtailed her activities somewhat. She had found it difficult “to get back into things” at first, but had done a free computer course “to keep things going.” She had recently heard that she had been accepted for training as a corrections officer, starting in February, 2005. She is very excited about this success, as she said “I’m not very good at study and I think this suits me better.” The value of MFLP for V is that “I know what the kids are going through with their homework. I take much more notice now about their homework now that I can help them. They used to come to me and I wouldn’t know what to do ‘cos everything is so different. Now they come home and we get it done straight away.” V is very happy with her daughter’s progress.

W has been working full-time as an early childhood reliever and has enrolled for an early childhood diploma starting in 2005. She says of family literacy, “it was just a great start for me, it’s given me the confidence to carry on.” W feels that her son has continued to make good progress at school, which he was doing before enrolling in the MFLP. W stood unsuccessfully for the school Board of Trustees election.

Other points that were mentioned by a number of the interviewees included:

- The tremendous importance of the MFLP adult educator who has stayed in contact with these former students, offering them support, advice and always conveying an absolute conviction that they are capable of success in their tertiary studies
- The value of seeing alternative ways of managing their children’s behaviour (especially in terms of disciplining), even though it is fundamentally different from how they were raised – “just because that’s how we were brought up doesn’t make it the right way.”

Only one Rowandale participant had been in paid work and none in tertiary education prior to enrolling on the MFLP; a year on from the programme, at least eight were in some form of employment two were studying and six are planning on doing a tertiary course in the next few years.

With the Bairds Otara groups, three were in paid employment and none was in tertiary education prior to enrolling in the MFLP; a year after the programme, at least seven were in paid employment,¹⁴ six were in a tertiary programme and two are planning on doing a tertiary course in the next year.

5.2 2003 MFLP nominated children

In the case of the nominated children who participated in the 2003 programme, the teachers who taught these children in 2004 were also able to provide their Running Record levels at the beginning of 2004 and at the end of that year. As with the children of 2004 MFLP participants, the teachers also nominated another child in the same class who best matched the 2003 MFLP nominated child in terms of their gender, ethnicity, social background and initial assessment levels. The comparisons for both groups of children for their Running Record levels, Maths Strategy levels and attendance records are given below.

The Running Record levels in Figure 41 below show little difference between the MFLP children and their control counterparts except for R MFLP 6 and 7. The average gain in levels was 7.5 for the MFLP and 5.6 levels for the controls.

¹⁴ A smaller percentage of the Baird Otara students were able to be contacted, so these numbers probably under-report these outcomes.

Figure 41. 2003 MFLP Rowandale nominated children's Running Record Levels

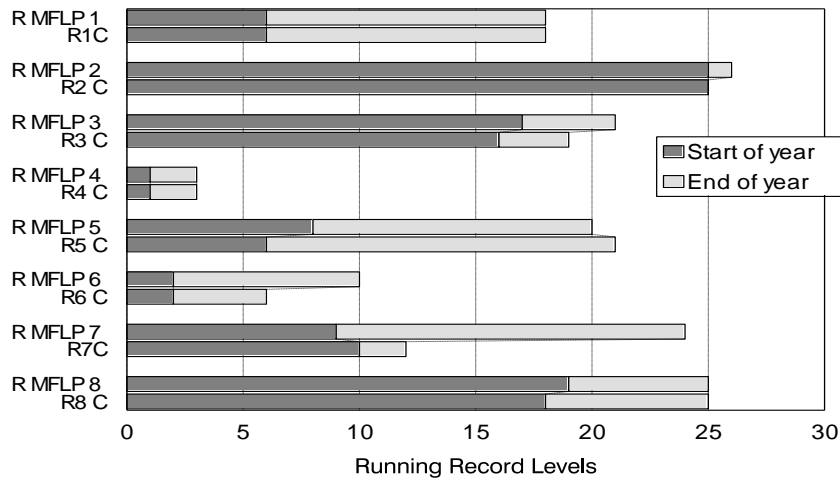
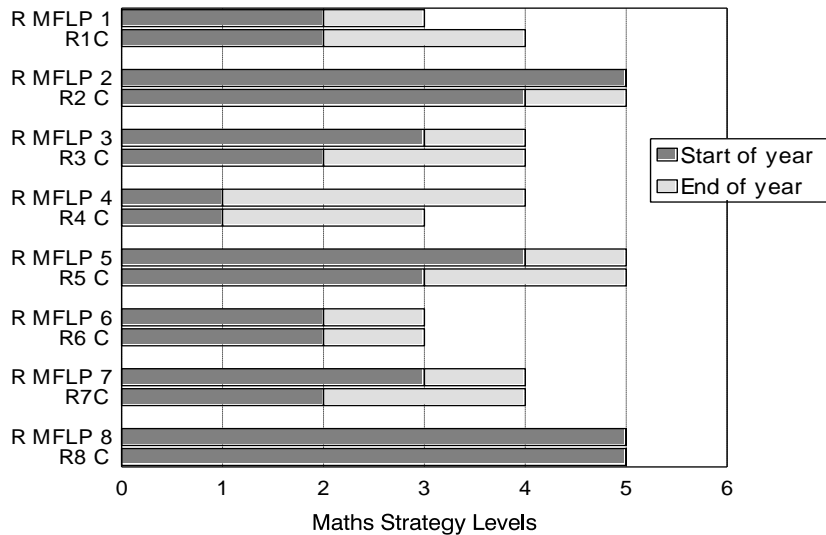


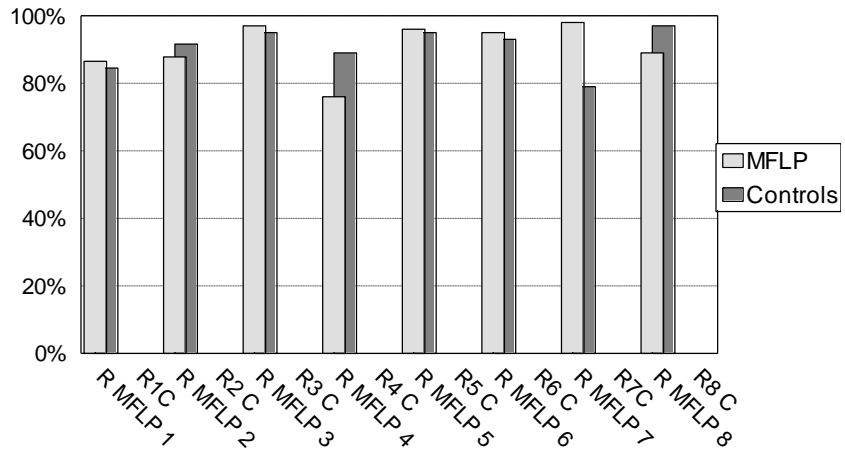
Figure 42 below shows the comparison in terms of their Maths Strategy levels. Overall, there was not a lot of change in the levels (apart from MFLP 4 and his control), with three children making no change in levels at all. The average gain for MFLP children was one level, while the controls gained 1.5 levels on average.

Figure 42. 2003 Rowandale nominated children's Maths Strategy Levels



Finally, in relation to attendance during 2004 (Figure 42), there are very few differences, with the average figures of 90.6% attendance for the MFLP children and 90.5% for the control counterparts.

Figure 43. Rowandale 2003 MFLP children and controls' attendance (%) in 2004



C - COMET'S ROLE AS MFLP'S LEAD AGENCY

This part of the report discusses the perceptions of stakeholders about the role of COMET and the issues and challenges that have faced the programme since its inception and how the model might develop over time.

Interviewing for this part of the evaluation involved a range of key informants in different roles, all of whom had close contact with MFLP (lead teachers, principals and Boards of Trustees in schools, managers and liaison staff with the tertiary providers and early childhood centres, adult educators, and COMET staff). Sampling continued until there was data saturation (i.e. no new themes or perspectives were being added). Seventeen interviews were conducted to inform this part of the report.

In the course of these interviews, some respondents made comments about broader issues in relation to the development of the MFLP model. These have been incorporated into the final section on the evolution of MFLP.

1 The roles COMET played during the pilot

All respondents talked about the role COMET had in instigating the MFLP programme and bringing the partners together, particularly at the pilot stage. To understand the significance of bringing the partners together, it is necessary to recognise how the major elements work: the partners on each site (a tertiary provider, a school and an early childhood centre) hope to achieve outcomes for adults and children that are different from, and in addition to, those required of each partner individually. This cumulative effect is central to the concept of family literacy [Benseman, 2002]. The degree of innovation this requires becomes evident when working through two fundamental issues - integrating the outcomes of the programme and funding.

Integrating programme outcomes

The model intends that all three partners on a site integrate the curricula and learning outcomes from each of the four components of the MFLP model (adult literacy, child literacy, PACTT and Parent Education).

- The schools and early childhood centres are responsible for the learning outcomes for *children's literacy*, which is their core business.
- The tertiary partner is accountable for the tertiary curriculum and the formal *adult literacy* learning outcomes for the adults (the qualification) – their core business. The tertiary partner is required to report to COMET on the achievements of the adult participants, so COMET can advise the TEC as part of the funding contract.
- The learning outcomes of *Parent education* and *PACTT* times are not part of the conventional requirements of any of the providers (although some

elements of parent education may be able to be linked to the curriculum and outcomes of the tertiary qualification, depending on the courses being taught).

- In particular, the outcome of ‘engaging families in schools’, which has become increasingly important to COMET and is a major focus for the schools and early childhood partners (and the Ministry of Education), is not recognised (and therefore not funded) by the Tertiary Education Commission, the major tertiary education funder.

Collaboration across the different parts of the education sector is apparently not common, “There is no tradition of partners from different sectors in education working together”. Most respondents saw COMET playing an important role in bringing the partners together.

[COMET] gets the partners together behind the scenes. They make sure it all keeps working.

COMET challenges everyone to think about their core business and different ways of delivering.

To make the model more complex, COMET has to influence the programme rather than direct it, because all staff (other than those from COMET) are employed within their own sector.

A number of respondents talked about how integration worked in practice through *Stories together* which involved all the partners working together on a related area of curriculum, with all parts of the MFLP model being involved. This project encompassed a range of activities.

The ‘Strengthening School Libraries’ programme, run by the National Library, was already operating at Rowandale School; it contributed 10 copies of the same school library book so the MFLP parents and children could read the book during PACTT. This was a good example of how MFLP drew on the resources of another programme to enhance both MFLP and that other programme. The National Library was delighted to contribute because it added value to their project by raising the profile of the National Library and by making connections between their work and the school and early childhood curriculum.

It’s hard to quantify the benefit – it got parents talking about the book; the author’s visit was inspiring

An author and an illustrator of children’s books were brought into the school to discuss story-writing and publication as part of the adult literacy programme. The families made up books as part of their early childhood development curriculum and PACTT, and the parents made up a production of their own writing and presented it at Whanau PACT at the end of term.

Another example of integration is the way Tahi PACTT time is changing each term at Rowandale so adults and children work together on different elements in the

curriculum. This requires flexibility in the timetabling of the adult education component.

Funding

No additional funding is required for children's literacy. COMET purchases educational programmes for adults from tertiary providers, either from the Adult Literacy Learning Pool or EFTs funding via the tertiary provider.

COMET is accountable for this funding and reports on it to funding bodies. However, COMET itself is not a provider, so meeting the reporting requirements of the funding system (geared as it is to providers) can be difficult.

Neither the Adult Literacy Learning Pool, nor the EFTs funding system (or the school funding system for that matter) can easily allow for a programme that seeks outcomes across diverse partners outside the scope of each funding source, and that seeks to both achieve and report on outcomes over and above what is normally required of each sector.

Respondents described a range of other roles carried out by COMET.

Advocacy and leadership

Programme partners clearly saw COMET providing the vision for the programme, and the commitment to make it happen:

COMET is passionate about the programme. No-one else has an emotional involvement.

COMET leads the school – they had a bigger vision than the school to start with. Their staff sells it with passion.

All respondents were clear that an independent organisation was needed in the initial stages to get family literacy off the ground. They reported that COMET's vision and enthusiasm led potential partners to be interested in the concept at the pilot stage, and that it was COMET that got the partners to the table.

The leadership role was seen as significant because there were so many issues that were over and above the responsibilities and requirements of any one of the partners and also outside their natural area of work.

Each partner has its own curriculum, different time allocations (semesters, terms, sessional day care), the holidays don't synchronise.

Their head is in family literacy all the time. We don't have the time, it wouldn't get off the ground.

One example was given on why COMET had to take a wider view than any one site. Ensuring that schools had Internet access for the adult students has a flow-on effect into

IT policy, systems and on-going resources within a school. What is an issue for one school may well be an issue on another. Anyone employed to coordinate on a site-specific basis would not be able to deal with those sort of cross-site issues.

Several respondents talked about the broader role COMET played in arguing for the continuity or growth of the programme.

They have to keep on doing publicity to recruit and retain families and to retain support from government

COMET accessed funding streams. They has been invaluable in promoting the model. They have energy and resources; have got family literacy in front of ministers.

A related role is brokering partnerships at the start of programmes. This is seen by all concerned as a highly skilled and specialised role and it is known to take a huge amount of time.

Administration and support

All respondents talked about COMET's roles in administering the programme, taking the day-to-day load off the partners. The specific functions that were described included:

- Attending weekly operational meetings at each site, involving the adult educator, the liaison teachers from both the school and kindergarten plus COMET; these people were in daily contact at the start of the programme as necessary.
- Running regular management meetings with the designated decision makers for the partners (i.e. a senior staff member from the relevant Kindergarten Association, the school and the kindergarten plus COMET). There was weekly contact (or even daily if necessary during recruitment and enrolment time) with a move out to fortnightly once the programmes were up and running.
- Background administration – sending out agendas, keeping and distributing minutes of all the meetings etc. making PACTT-time happen
- Finding resources; both in terms of people and funding.
- Organising Whanau PACTT – finding resources, networking with other organisations to build in special features into the curriculum; organising food.
- Supporting learners and their families. COMET was an active recruiter of families, with COMET staff standing in school carparks before and after school at the start of school years or semesters, and visiting families identified by other people as possibly interested in the programme. They also did home visits as required. COMET staff said their job was to identify barriers to learning and get them removed. This might mean for example going with a learner when their early childhood subsidy was cut by Work and Income or advocating when their social worker wanted them to leave the course and get a job.

- Celebrating success. COMET was seen as very good at setting up events to acknowledge the progress participants were making.
- Building networks with organisations in the community and between the sites.
- Taking the load off partners – organising graduations, guest speakers
- COMET staff saw they had a staff development role, but the other respondents did not mention this.

Crisis management

The crises described by respondents ranged from not enough families being recruited as the deadline for funding approaches, personal crises for students, resources and systems not being ready when required. COMET staff were seen as both a sounding board and also active solvers of problems.

Specialist expertise

In general, respondents saw that COMET provided expertise that was outside their own sphere of interest, influence or role. The contacts the Regional MFLP Coordinator had with other educational sectors and the community were particularly valued.

[the programmes] Need skills, knowledge, contacts and time; schools and tertiary providers are fairly autonomous – early childhood centres are not. Its really important to know how schools and tertiary work. Schools don't have time to find out

Schools don't have networks outside their immediate school functions – they don't have time

2 The need for an independent organisation

Respondents were asked if an independent organisation such as COMET would be needed if the family literacy concept were to be developed outside Manukau. All but two of the respondents believed the leadership and active involvement of an overarching organisation like COMET was needed and the dissenting voices acknowledged that the independence and time COMET had was necessary during the pilot stage.

Two main reasons were given for needing an independent broker in the project. The first was the complex understanding that was needed about all aspects of the education system (early childhood, schools and tertiary) which were beyond the scope of what each of the partners would normally be required to know.

COMET understands each partner and their processes and systems on each site. Each site is different and run on different lines.

Without COMET the programme would collapse. It needs an independent body to oversee everything; someone who knows what has to be done; who can look at each partner. They have to understand our systems.

The second issue was the workload associated with the programme that was in addition to the core business of each of the partners. People accepted an increased workload within their jobs because they were committed to the programme; however, taking over the sorts of roles COMET undertook was seen as well beyond their scope and sphere of expertise.

We are not trained to do finances, to negotiate memorandum of understanding.

We employ the principal to get the best education for our children. If we had to set up family literacy ourselves, we would have looked for someone to run it because the principal's job is too big.

It's harder than I ever imagined and takes more time because every partner needs to time to adapt their systems and ways of thinking and this is only one small part of their jobs.

In addition to this, respondents mentioned the importance of COMET's independence and the fact that they were therefore able to take a wider and more strategic perspective than the partners themselves, who were more influenced by the needs, conventions and systems within their own sectors.

It's hard to think outside the square when it's your own sector or organisation that has to change.

COMET is neutral and that's pivotal to the role. They look at things that are best for learners and Manukau City Council, they're not aligned to the providers - not captured.

How would they deal with problems – 'the rules don't allow it', without an external driving force. Practical things are problems, where structures work against families.

If there was no COMET-employed coordinator, a few respondents said the only way the project could continue would be if they employed someone to act as one, because of the workload. However, it was pointed out that having one of the partners employ the person with overarching responsibility for making it all happen would upset the balance between the partners – it would be 'owned' by that partner, and would cease to be a collective of equals.

Respondents did acknowledge that once sites got established the workload declined. Recruitment of students was a very busy time but once that passed and the programme was running for the year, things became more manageable. Stability of partners and the adult education programme would certainly also make a

difference to the workload, as would more certainly of funding. As programmes matured and staff in them became more experienced, outside coordination would be less significant (until there was a crisis).

3 Challenges and issues during the pilot

While every effort has been made to ensure anonymity in all other aspects of this evaluation, in the discussion of the most major issues faced by MFLP, the institutions have been named because the facts make them recognisable.

The most major issue involved the model of adult education to be used and the second, related issue, was childcare, to enable the chosen model to be put into place.

The delivery of the adult education component

At the start of the pilot, the intention was for the adult education component to be delivered on-site at Bairds Mainfreight School. MIT became the tertiary partner and the programme ran that way for two semesters. During that time, MIT identified the adult-programme component that focused on parenting skills as too prescriptive and values laden, and argued that the emphasis should change to child development and early child teaching and that shift took place in the curriculum.

MIT then wanted the programme re-structured for the adults to be mainstreamed into MIT on-campus classes for 2004. MIT staff believed on-campus delivery would give the adults much more choice of programmes (they doubted that every student wanted to do the same programme) and would better meet their learning needs. MIT saw foundation education as “the crux” for the cohort being sought by MFLP, and the specialist skills of the foundation learning team would not available to students in the off-campus option of a specially designed course. Some students had lower literacy levels than others and needed more foundation learning support, others went on to participate in modules of teacher aide or social services courses and all of them got exposure to specialist foundation education maths teaching.

It was the open-ended training that allows them to go on [to other tertiary study].

MIT is only a few hundred metres from Bairds Mainfreight and students were able to move quite easily from school to MIT to attend classes and use the library and other facilities. The programme was altered so that some group time and teaching took place at the Bairds Mainfreight site but about two thirds of the adult programme shifted to the MIT site.

This modus operandi for the programme was very different from the model COMET had envisaged and there appeared to have been vigorous disagreement. On the one hand, MIT argued that their prime concern was the educational progress of the adults. They believed the MIT-based option got the adults to progress much more effectively and that their on-campus proposal was educationally sound for the adults

and viable in the long term. They saw real benefit in MFLP participants being mainstreamed with other students.

If they get moved out and mix with other students (not like themselves) they see they can do it.

COMET wanted someone on site; MIT wanted to give the students exposure to the tertiary context. Students didn't want to get out of their comfort zone but within two weeks they were enjoying going to MIT and socialising with other students.

They perceived COMET as inflexible in this respect, to be arguing for the programme rather than the participants, and not allowing the model to evolve according to need.

COMET wanted to keep the model pure compared to the operational realities of this provider...COMET had a clear picture of what it should look like, rather than letting it grow and develop organically.

On the other hand, COMET and the school thought that while adults benefited, the programme as a whole did not, because the focus on whanau that is integral to it was reduced. Having the adults off-site and participating in a range of different courses broke up the integrity of the model and the overall cohesion of the group. As far as they were concerned, Bairds Otara MFLP then ran in a way that "was good for MIT and good for the adults but less good for the programme." They thought MIT did not recognise that MFLP was a programme with a number of components of equal value but treated it simply as an adult education course they were offering off site.

...better for adult ed [and MIT]. For PACTT and Parent Education it was not better. They [the parents] struggle because they are not on site as often - it is more disjointed, and harder to integrate Parent Ed/PACT. The aspects that are about families supporting their children's learning suffered.

MIT did not think the other partners were prepared to understand enough of the timetabling and resource realities under which the tertiary provider had to operate.

They wanted a course at school, flexible and one that was to be dropped at any time to suit the demands of the school timetable.

However, whereas MIT thought these points were limitations (flexibility to fit in with the school timetable for example), COMET regarded them as important elements for creating an integrated programme. For example, when the school went on trips, MFLP participants took part, both to make a contribution back to the school for all the support they had been given, and also because being involved in the school-based life of their children was as important to the programme as the adult education component.

COMET were also concerned that changing the adult education model at Bairds Otara during the pilot to one of off-site delivery was unrealistic, given that it wouldn't

be feasible at other sites where it would be unlikely the school and tertiary provider were across the road from each other.

Childcare

Childcare difficulties for pre-schoolers were related to the way the adult education component was to be delivered. When the adults mainstreamed into MIT, some classes began at 8 am and ran at different times to the school/kindergarten timetable. Bairds Kindergarten, the early childhood partner, was licensed for two sessions from 8.30 –3pm, so there was no childcare available at the start of the day for parents to attend early classes. Some MIT classes ran into lunchtime when there needed to be childcare cover as well, to fill the gap between the two childcare sessions (not an issue when parents were on-site because they had their young children with them over lunch). MFLP eventually resolved this issue by funding a teacher aide to cover at the start and middle of the day. However, identifying the issue and trying to find solutions was apparently very stressful.

The two issues were sufficiently resolved for the programme to run during 2004 but the resulting philosophical disagreement remains. For 2005 COMET has sought a partner who is prepared to deliver an on-site programme. Both AUT and the Auckland College of Education participated as tertiary partners offering on-site programmes during 2004 and AUT is going to be the partner on all sites for 2005, offering an on-site certificate level course - Introduction to Early Childhood Education.

Section Four discusses the adult education component of MFLP more generally.

Meetings

The concern expressed by the most respondents was the number of meetings the project required. People understood that collaborative decision-making was part of the programme's philosophy and recognised its importance.

I was challenged by others about the amount of time spent in meetings but all partners have to understand, always work to be done like when you are negotiating PACTT, you have to do it with the kindergarten as well as the school.

But a number of respondents were frustrated by the number of meetings, the fact that key people were late so meetings did not start on time, meeting process was "woolly", sometimes they did not have clear agendas and were not sufficiently focused. The tertiary partners in particular thought COMET was 'time-rich' (unlike themselves) and somewhat unrealistic about time demands being made on behalf of a relatively small number of participants. One respondent said the project was "over-managed". However, other respondents were complimentary about the amount of work that was achieved at meetings.

A number of respondents referred to frustrating meetings where decisions could not be made because the MFLP Regional Coordinator did not attend (although the new project coordinator came in her place, sometimes she could not make decisions either). A number said the Regional Coordinator was increasingly hard to get hold of, as the number of sites grew. They did acknowledge that she was good at getting back to them on issues by email or phone. It was acknowledged that the need for meetings declined once programmes became more established and staff became more experienced – i.e. they reduced once students were recruited and enrolled, and again later in the year once programmes were established.

Several respondents (including, but not only, tertiary partners) talked about the amount of time the programme required being disproportionate for only a small number of participants. However, some also weighed that up against the benefits, which they say outweighed the effort. One person said she had been cynical at the beginning because of the work demands for only nine students, but now could see how worthwhile it had been.

I saw differences on an everyday level, not just for those children [in MFLP] but other children in kindergarten. It had a flow on effect to other children and kindergarten community. Some times it felt like it required a huge organisation. But it was like ripples in a pond, going out and out and out.I could see that something was happening. I learned how powerful parents can be. I always knew it but something like this can make them even more powerful.

In a few cases, respondents talked about communication problems – mail sent to wrong addresses, notices about meetings that did not happen etc. However, these did not seem to be out of keeping with what might be expected of a pilot programme. A small number of people working at operational level talked about needing to know what was going on at the strategic level, so they could better understand why funding wasn't available for particular projects or ideas or to know what the problems were.

Aspects of funding and administration

COMET has to apply for funds and report on provision arrangements and outcomes for programmes that are not readily comparable to others. For example, the Adult Literacy Learning Pool tends to fund short courses or a staff position on one site or in one institution. The fact that COMET funding is for a full-time course running (in different ways) on more than one site is not easily accommodated. The diverse learning outcomes achieved by adults and their whanau, schools and also the wider community make it difficult both to get funding and report on the programme in a holistic way.

4 Evolution of the model

The pilot of family literacy programmes in Manukau has now been running for two years, involving eight intakes of students from three schools, two early childhood

centres and three tertiary providers. In the light of this depth of experience, while it was not part of the brief for this report, we think it is timely to reflect on the model and how it has developed. Our involvement with COMET and family literacy and goes back to its inception and John Benseman has carried out three evaluations of MFLP, so we are well-placed to make some comments. Our comments and questions are interwoven with observations made by key informants during the interviews reported on earlier.

The issues we discuss here will not be exhaustive and solutions to the questions raised will only evolve over time and through discussion with all the stakeholders. Nor should they be seen to detract in any way from the overall quality and benefits gained from the MFLP to date.

There are some significant differences between the US four-component Keenan family literacy model and pre-conditions here, which have a significant impact on how the programme operates. In the USA, funding is available for the model in its entirety from one source – a 'one-stop-shop' approach. It does not have to be cobbled together from a variety of sources as it does here.

Also, in the US, the early childhood and adult education curricula are designed and delivered by specialist staff directly employed by the family literacy programme. Therefore, they do not have to develop unique partnerships and either use or develop specific curricula per programme as has had to happen here.

Also, in the US, there is recognition that support services are part of the programme. Typically, there would be one coordinator per eight programmes, plus that cluster of programmes also would have a social worker and career counselor to help the adults move on to other study or work.

Creating a unique model of family literacy

The MFLP approach is innovative and challenges the partners to think outside the square, which most partners have found to be rewarding and to have added value to their institution and to the families involved. However, the very nature of that innovation makes it more complex to fund and to organise and requires extra effort in every sphere. A funding regime more appropriate to the programme that could be replicated between sites would reduce the time required to organise and broker partnership arrangements, time that would be freed up to work on other programme development issues.

Developments such as Tahi PACTT and Whanau PACTT show how the programme is evolving to fit the Manukau (and national) context. However, do the benefits and learning outcomes from whanau and extended Whanau PACTT warrant the amount of planning and energy involved in making them happen? How could this be made more manageable?

The sites appear fairly autonomous. How could more links be built between sites or economies of scale be achieved from having a number of programmes running? Is it appropriate or important there should be, given the different characters of the

programmes on each site? Has that difference come about more because of the adult education programme than any other element and if so, does it matter?

Reviewing the MFLP pilot and strategic planning

As yet, there has not been a detailed de-brief between the partners in the pilots and other key stakeholders (including operational and management staff) to both finish off this phase of the project and try to bring together the detailed insights each sector has gained. This short section of the report might prove a starting point for that discussion.

A review process could end with the creation of cohesive MFLP goals that all parties clearly identified with.

Sustainability

There is concern about the sustainability of the model within an individual school. Assuming in a typical school there are 100-150 families with four children each, only 50% of those families might meet the family literacy project criteria. Twenty families go through in two years. What is a realistic number to assume will want to go through, and how many years would it take before the programme was no longer viable? Could the programme be owned by a cluster of schools, or a community rather than be based in an individual school, to increase the potential catchment of families? For example, the Bairds Intermediate site might be a physical site for a programme that drew more widely across the community. If it were to move out of an individual school, the logistics of getting parents back to their respective schools for PACTT time etc would need to be funded and allowed for.

Sustainability is also related to funding. At present the programme runs year by year and because the funding of the coordination by COMET is more difficult to access than the other components (but no less important), it is the last to be confirmed. However, all funding was confirmed very late. This delay impacts most on the ability of providers to ensure they have an appropriately trained adult educator in place. Respondents talked about the frustrations of never knowing until the last minute whether the programmes could get started, the difficulties of recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff for year-to-year contracts and the time pressure that results when funding decisions are made at the last minute. The lack of surety was seen as a significant limitation in the current model.

A practical issue related to sustainability is whether space is guaranteed for adults if a school roll grows.

The staffing ratios and costs involved

The tertiary partners argued strongly that they do not make money from their courses; what is less clear is whether they cover their costs and by how much. COMET has not been able to establish clearly how much EFTs funding is generated by the courses. Having to deliver a specially designed programme (as was used in the beginning) is more expensive than using a programme already in existence that can be adapted for off-campus delivery (in the way that AUT is taking a pre-existing six month-long certificate programme and delivering it off-site over one year).

The 1:10 staff student ratio used is below normal tertiary class ratios of 1:17, which make them expensive. However, this low ratio is important because building a cohesive group is seen to be important for ensuring success for the adults. It is also realistic because although the adult is the one enrolled in the adult component, the actual participant 'unit' is a family, not an individual. The adult educator (as well as all other staff) is working with not just to ten adult MFLP participants, but also the ten children who are also MFLP participants and other children in that family, plus wider whanau members as well.

At least one of the tertiary partners had allowed for .2 staffing for the liaison staff member involved, taking into account the meetings and additional work required because the programme is seen to be management-intensive. Some of that time demand is because there is additional work for the tertiary provider in supporting a staff member off-site, who is working in an isolated position teaching students with complex educational and social needs. The model has built into it some funding for the partners to acknowledge liaison time, but it would be timely for consider now to whether that funding actually matches what actually takes place.

Greater transparency of tertiary course costs will be needed if the model is to be promoted for use in other areas. Schools and early childhood centres are not required to generate revenue from their activities in the same way and did not identify the cost of the programme to them as an issue during the interviews.

The adult education component

The comments made by respondents clearly identify the adult education component of the programme as the most challenging, because it is where adult-related funding, and curricula interface with a primary school site and learning outcomes that are outside the norm.

In the life of the pilot, there has been three ways of providing that component. First, a single tertiary provider offered a specialised course on site. Then, three providers offered three different qualifications (one of which was partly off-site and where students took part in a range of programmes). Now, during 2005 one provider (AUT) will offer one course on three different sites.

As these different organisational models are explored, there are more fundamental questions still to be debated fully by the partners and stakeholders.

What should the features be of the adult education component? Presumably, it has to be sufficiently generic programme so it can be delivered in a number of contexts, without constant re-organisation of structure and funding. A nationally-applicable model may lack flexibility, but make up for it by enabling systems and procedures to be developed that minimise the workload when a new programme site is being developed. On the other hand, a site-specific programme could adapt to local need e.g. if the largest local employer in an area was a hospital, perhaps an introductory health care qualification would be more appropriate than a child development-oriented programme. However, this approach would demand greater coordination as the requirements on each site appear to be heavily influenced by the flexibility possible within each adult education qualification.

Secondly, it has to be able to integrate into the other components of MFLP (in particular child development, which is why introductory early childhood teaching qualifications are useful). Thirdly, it has to be broad enough to meet the needs of diverse student groups on different sites. Finally, the findings of the evaluation suggest it is important that the adult component deliver a qualification to the participants to provide a pathway through to higher-levels of study or work.

Meeting all these requirements is challenging and the pilot may not yet have come up with the right course mix. Perhaps a purpose-designed family literacy programme would be more effective, incorporating generic and some optional elements that would allow sites some flexibility. An evaluation at the end of 2005, after running one programme on three sites will provide some useful insights. Also, existing options such as the Certificate of Employment Skills could be reviewed to see if they could be flexible enough to meet the programme needs.

A related issue is the ability of MFLP to meet the needs of any adults with very low literacy or ESOL needs. In the earliest intakes, people with very low literacy levels were referred on, rather than included. Specialist skills are needed to teach adults with foundation learning needs (i.e. ESOL or literacy), yet the job descriptions for the adult educators are directed by course content and appear to have less emphasis than expected on skills related to the teaching of literacy and language to adults. How can the programme ensure that there is the capability to work with learners with high needs?

If MFLP is to expand within Manukau, MIT and COMET need to debate the adult educational issues more comprehensively (perhaps as part of a broader forum), in order for MFLP to be able to utilise MIT's location in Manukau and its strengths as one of the largest providers of foundation education in the country.

Issues for learners

Some parents may have trouble making the time needed available for a full-time course. Most people engaged in foundation learning do so part-time and many of the programme participants work part-time (a few actually worked full-time at night and were considered full-time students by day). In the USA, there are programmes

organised for part-time students. This option would be challenging but worth investigating.

Every intake the programmes have had to work very hard to recruit families. Part-time programmes may make that easier and may increase the opportunity to recruit men (there have only been four men so far across the programme). Adult education content geared to childcare is not likely to be particularly attractive to men.

Currently the programme cannot cater for children under three and childcare issues have occurred across all sites at times. It has also concentrated on primary and early childhood. A new programme involving older-aged children is being planned for later in 2005. This development will raise a new set of issues. Issues such as childcare can be more readily dealt with if there is appropriate funding.

Will the model work as it stands if it was targeted to one group of learners (for example either Maori or Pasifika)? What would be some of the issues, from MFLP's experience if another community wanted to try that approach?

Greater recognition of the work involved

The time involved to establish and participate in on-going management of the programme is not yet fully recognised in the job descriptions of some of the key participants (other than COMET).

The adult educator's job effectively has two parts – teaching the programme and 'facilitating a learning community'. The adult educator has contact on a daily, or at least weekly, basis with adult students, their children, the school and early childhood staff. The adult educator has to relate to all of those people, and to understand the components of the programme on a day to day basis within the school and the early childhood centre, in order to keep the adult programme running and integrated with the others. It is not clear that the job descriptions for this position consider this complexity. In addition, the degree of personal support and guidance that the adult educator is required to give to students when operating alone in a school may not be adequately recognised within their workload. It is unrealistic to say those support services are available from the tertiary provider because it is highly unlikely students will go to a campus to which they are not connected.

The new initiative, *Second Steps*, where students are supported in their first year out of MFLP, has yet to be evaluated. Is it needed and who best should offer it? If it is to be expected as part of the work of an on-site adult educator, how is it to be incorporated into an already very full role?

Early childhood, school and tertiary respondents all mentioned that in addition to the meetings they attend as part of their jobs, being involved in family literacy has involved work outside work time. They become involved in the life of the programme and the families and attend graduations, Whanau PACTT, powhiri to welcome new groups etc. While people have chosen to go the extra mile, it is something that

needs to be taken into account when planning events and looking for support for additional activities.

5 Concluding remarks on this section

The findings of this section of the evaluation are completely in keeping with the findings of the other evaluations of MFLP over the last two years – the programme has offered a great deal of benefit to the individual adult students and their families and to the schools and early childhood centres that have taken part.

There was great good will toward COMET as the instigator of the concept and recognition of the skill, knowledge, energy and commitment COMET staff have brought to the role of coordinating the programme.

The issues that have been raised in this section are typical of the nature and purpose of a pilot programme – to see if something will work and the factors that impact on success.

APPENDIX A - MFLP GOALS FROM 2003 WORKSHOP

Bairds Otara

Goals	Adults	Children
Increase literacy skills	X	X
Improve attitudes to reading and learning generally	X	X
Increase the use of books	X	X
Increase and improve reading to and with children	X	
Learn how to learn	X	
Improve self-confidence	X	X
Increase educational aspirations	X	
Increase awareness of opportunities – education and work	X	
Spend more focussed/special time between children and parents	X	X
Demonstrate greater awareness of parental roles and responsibilities	X	
Demonstrate greater encouragement of children	X	
Participate more in school/kindergarten activities	X	
Increase contact with child's teacher(s)	X	
Maintain attendance	X	X
Improve transition to school	X	X
Increase parent/child outings together	X	X
Improve links between school and kindergarten		
Increase and improve child/parent interaction	X	X
Increase parents' awareness of hauora	X	
Show commitment to on-going learning	X	X

Rowandale

Goals	Adults	Children
Increase literacy skills	X	X
Improve attitudes to reading and learning generally	X	X
Increase use of books	X	X
Increase and improve reading to and with children	X	X

Increase vocabulary	X	X
Reduce transiency	X	
Improve links between school/kindergarten		
Increase parent/child interaction	X	X
Increase parents' awareness of hauora	X	
Increase self-confidence	X	X
Improve attitudes towards school	X	X
Increase & improve help with homework	X	
Increase ECE attendance to min. of 1 yr		X
Maintain attendance	X	X
Increase use of outdoors for educational purposes	X	
Increase use of te reo	X	X

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