



WORKING TOGETHER FOR EDUCATION

Unlocking Auckland's potential:

Adult literacy and numeracy skills in the new Auckland

Prepared by Alison Sutton and Bernardine Vester, August, 2010

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COMET's vision is "Educated and Knowledgeable Aucklanders". Our mission is to transform Auckland's social and economic landscape through education. We do this through advocacy to inform and influence community, council and government policy around education and through building partnerships and projects in high need, low-decile communities. Our focus is on skills and learning in families.

COMET was established by Manukau City Council as a not-for-profit charitable trust in 1999 to address education issues in the city. COMET will transfer into the new Auckland Council in November 2010 as a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO).

This Working Paper has been prepared by COMET to promote discussion on adult literacy and numeracy skills as part of the debate about Auckland's future.

It is part of a series of briefing papers to leaders and decision-makers in the new Auckland Council.

If you are interested in being involved in further discussions on the issues in this paper, please contact COMET on 09 9688773 or comet@manukau.ac.nz or go to our blog <http://cometeducationtrust.wordpress.com/>

COMET's work is supported by:



The views expressed in this paper are those of COMET and are not the official policy of the Manukau City Council or of the Manukau Institute of Technology.

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Key messages

410,000

Aucklanders
with low
literacy

478,000

Aucklanders
with low
numeracy

There is a substantial literacy and numeracy skills gap across Auckland. Over 40% of adults have low literacy and just over 50% have low numeracy.

It will take a whole-of-community effort, including leadership by Auckland Council, to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of adults living in the Auckland region.

Literacy is an economic issue: Low literacy skills impact on productivity and improving the literacy of the workforce helps employers lift the game.

Numeracy is an issue: 51% of all Aucklanders may struggle with simple calculations. Numeracy is the maths of everyday life and work and the workforce needs people with numeracy skills.

It's a workforce issue: 56% of the people in Auckland region with low literacy or numeracy are already in work.

It's an issue spread unevenly across the city: In five of the new wards of Auckland Council, more than 20% of the population have no qualifications – a proxy measure for low literacy and or numeracy. That's a big challenge for those communities.

It's an English language issue: Many of the people with low literacy and numeracy skills do not have English as a first language. As Auckland becomes more diverse, residents' need for English language support will also grow.

It's an issue that emerges early: 2,159 young people left Auckland schools in 2009 with no qualifications, a year-on-year addition to the adult literacy challenge.

It's a community issue: Literacy and numeracy skills enable people to participate in democratic decision-making, make choices about using goods and services, live healthy lives, continue to learn and contribute to their community.

It's a family issue: Adults with low literacy are less able to help their children and the children are more likely to have low literacy skills.

It's a growth issue: The population of Auckland region and in particular the population in South Auckland is growing faster than anywhere else in New Zealand. Auckland needs provision for the current population as well as additional provision to cater for population growth and specific high-need communities.

Government action alone will not be enough to unlock the door to Auckland's future. Local government action is needed as well.

The **Auckland Social Policy Forum** will become the linchpin for the Auckland Council and central government social action with regards to Auckland region. Literacy and numeracy skills must become a priority issue at the Forum table.

Literacy needs to become everybody's business. The leadership and culture of a community influences the desire for learning. The new **Mayor and Councillors** must consider how to unlock Auckland's economic and social potential as they develop and implement Auckland's Long Term Plan.

Unlocking the potential in our community requires a collaborative approach that includes:

- Leadership from the Auckland Mayor, Councillors, and the Social Policy Forum
- Recognition that Auckland's diversity means different communities have distinct needs; and action should be tailored to each geographic community, especially in the south and west where the need is greatest
- Maori-led community action that meets Maori aspirations for education outcomes
- A greater commitment to engaging Pacific communities in skills growth
- Simple, measurable targets for increasing literacy so all stakeholders can track progress
- Numeracy targets tackled via a community-driven campaign that is owned by all of Auckland
- Obtaining best value for money from the government, community, and philanthropic spend on literacy through co-ordinated action.

Measuring Auckland's literacy and numeracy skills

The **2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL)** was an international study of adult literacy and numeracy skill levels. The ALL Survey measured four skills of New Zealand adults:

prose literacy: the ability to read and understand continuous text such as news stories, editorials, instruction manuals

document literacy: the ability to read discontinuous text such as charts, maps, forms, timetables; document literacy is commonly needed at work

numeracy: the ability to read and process maths and numerical information.

ALL has a five point scale: Level 5 is very high skills; Level 1 is very low. Skills at Level 3 are deemed necessary for full participation in working life, society and government.

The findings for Auckland

The ALL results show that the literacy and numeracy skills of many adult Aucklanders are below Level 3, which present a challenge for the new Auckland Council.

	Percentage in Levels 1 & 2	Number of adults
Prose literacy	47%	441,100
Document literacy	44%	410,400
Numeracy	51%	478,900

Table 1. Level 1 & 2 Auckland region, ALL 2006

The ALL data on document literacy shows that in North Shore and Auckland cities the majority of adults have skills at Level 3 and above but that in Counties Manukau the majority do not. There is a similar pattern for prose literacy and numeracy results – higher skills in the north and centre of the region and lower skills in the south and west.

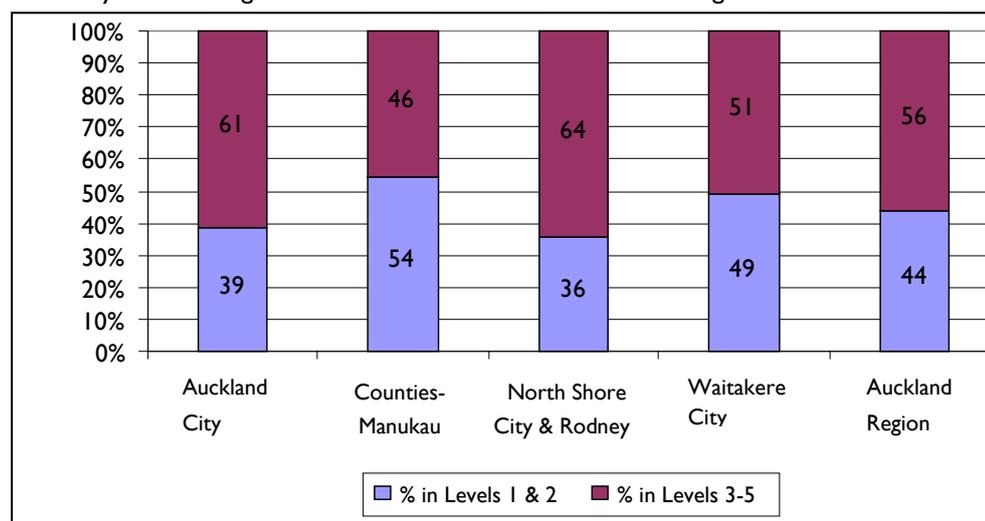


Figure 1. Document literacy, Auckland Region, ALL 2006

It's an economic issue

New Zealand is currently 22nd out of the 30 OECD countries in terms of GDP per hour worked (a basic measure of productivity). This is lower than our neighbour Australia (ranked 13th).¹

Improved workforce literacy correlates with higher productivity, enabling workers and their managers to work together to produce more valuable output per hour worked.

Employers report that when literacy levels are raised, there are reduced errors, waste and improved health and safety. Companies experience improved quality, customer service and employee involvement and increased productivity including the ability to implement new technology, lean manufacturing, innovation and change in the workplace.²

The goal for Auckland's Regional Economic Development Strategy is to produce a 'skilled and responsive workforce'. Auckland's economic potential lies in raising skill levels through a shift in the willingness of residents to engage in learning and an increase in learning opportunities.

Auckland has a substantial proportion of New Zealand's low income communities. Low income and low skills are related, so improving skill levels at a community level is a poverty reduction strategy. The average annual household income across the Auckland region (\$89,990 in March 2010) is above the New Zealand average. But the gap in median and average household incomes in different parts of Auckland, for example between Manukau City and North Shore City, can vary significantly.³ The median household income in Mangere is \$55,400 (Census 2006).

On literacy and productivity

"The low foundation skills of a large minority in the current workforce are a barrier to upskilling and productivity growth."

NZ Treasury (2008) *Working Smarter: Driving Productivity Growth Through Skills*,

On moving Auckland to a Knowledge Economy

"The knowledge economy is an important concept in moving New Zealand away from a "low pay, low skills" labour market. This will enable New Zealand to retain advantages over our trade competitors, make our industries less vulnerable to off shoring and increase the unit price of our outputs. To support this development we need ... highly skilled workers, using indicators such as qualifications and occupation [as measures of movement]."

Department of Labour (2007) *The New Zealand Knowledge Economy at a Glance*

¹ NZ Treasury, 2008: *Putting Productivity First*. Productivity papers, April. <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-policy/tprp/08-01/>

² Gray, A. (2006). *Upskilling through foundation skills. A literature review*. Wellington: Department of Labour.

³ From Statistics NZ census data. Reported in [http://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/knowledgeAuckland/index.cfm?3B2C3862-145E-173C-985A-](http://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/knowledgeAuckland/index.cfm?3B2C3862-145E-173C-985A-3AD170D078C5)

[3AD170D078C5](http://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/knowledgeAuckland/index.cfm?3B2C3862-145E-173C-985A-3AD170D078C5)

It's a numeracy issue

51%

Auckland adults with low numeracy

201,000

Aucklanders with very low numeracy

Numeracy is everywhere, but it is often overlooked. Numeracy is used in everyday situations such as cooking, shopping, travelling, taking medication and managing money.

Numeracy is a key work skill. Employees need to count, weigh, measure, estimate, calculate and run quality control processes. Often these skills are so fundamental to jobs they are not recognised as numeracy.

The ALL survey found that 51% of Aucklanders (478,000 people) have low numeracy, making it hard for them to work out simple calculations needed for daily life and work. People in north and central Auckland have better numeracy levels than those in south and west Auckland; 65% of adults in Counties-Manukau and 59% in Waitakere have low numeracy. People who had only Year 11 or less schooling were more likely to have low numeracy skills.

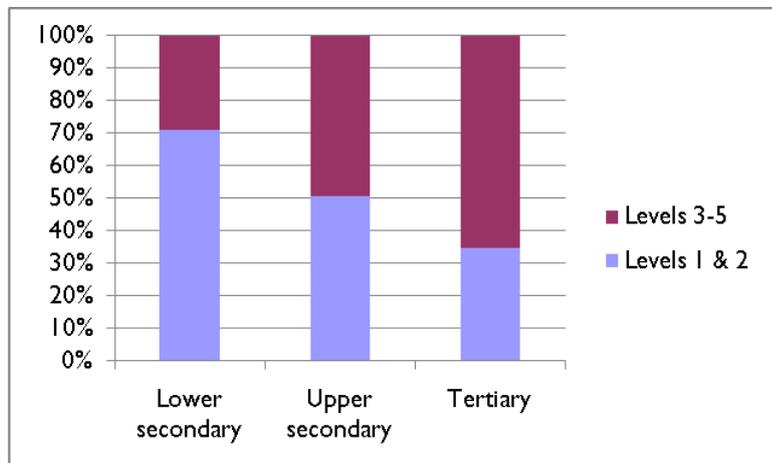


Figure 2. Numeracy of Auckland residents by level of education, ALL 2006

More people have very low numeracy than very low literacy. Over 200,000 adults are in ALL Level 1 numeracy, meaning they may struggle to carry out simple one-step calculations. This impacts on the workforce because 56% of those adults are in employment.

Numeracy, literacy and English language are inter-related, so many adults with low numeracy are English language learners. Adults need sufficient English language and literacy to understand problems or questions that come in written or spoken form, before they can apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to answer those questions. Very low numeracy is a particular challenge for Pacific communities because 51% of all Pacific peoples in Auckland (58,800 adults) have very low skills. See Appendix Table 3

Numeracy matters for employability, but it is also an important component of financial literacy. People with low numeracy may have greater challenges managing their personal finances and planning for retirement than those with higher skills.

It's an issue spread unevenly across the city

In 7 wards, more than 20% of adults do not have qualifications

Literacy and numeracy skills are higher in the north and centre of the new city and lower in the south and west. In Counties Manukau, 58% of adults have low prose literacy and 65% have low numeracy.

ALL Levels 1 & 2	Auckland City	Counties-Manukau	North Shore & Rodney	Waitakere City
Prose literacy	129,100	157,800	82,600	71,700
Document literacy	116,900	147,100	81,400	65,100
Numeracy	128,600	176,500	95,700	78,200

Table 2. ALL levels by Auckland sub-region, ALL 2006

Three factors are associated with the distribution of high and low literacy: the level of education, computer use at work (those whose jobs require computers have higher literacy and numeracy) and whether a person has English as a first language. Counties Manukau has significantly smaller percentages of people with upper secondary or tertiary qualifications, who use computers at work and who have English as a first language than the country as a whole.⁴

At ward level, ALL data is not available, so the level of formal educational qualifications can be a proxy for low literacy.⁵ Over 20% of adults in the new wards of Franklin, Maungakiekie-Tamaki, Rodney, Waitakere and Whau and over 30% in Manukau and Manurewa-Papakura wards do not have qualifications. These communities face a skills challenge on a significant scale. Remember that individual suburbs in Auckland are sometimes larger than other cities (for example Manurewa has a population similar to Palmerston North).

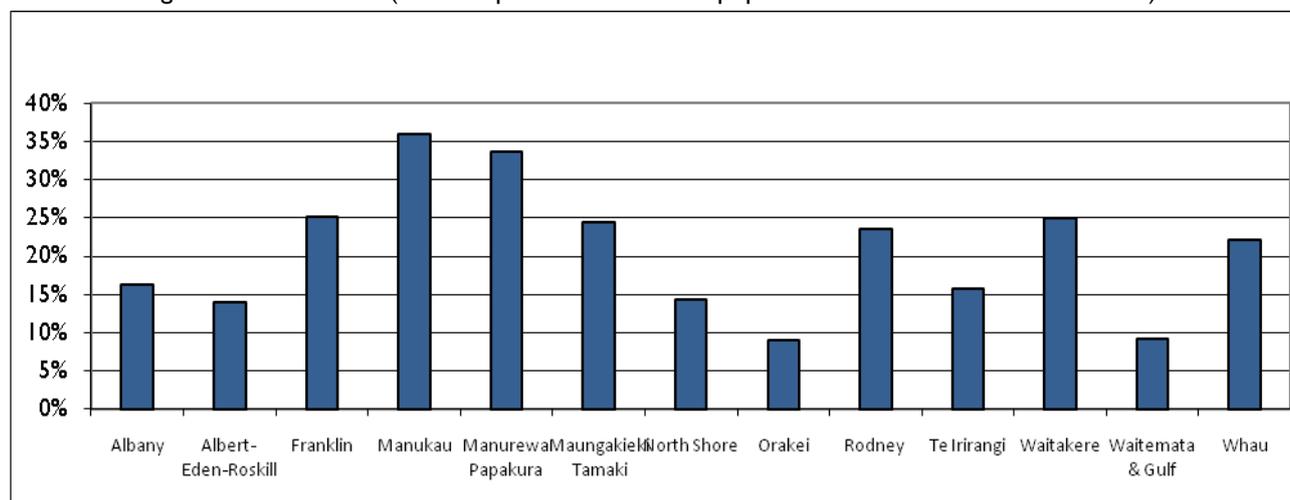


Figure 3. Percentage of adults in Auckland Council Wards with no qualifications, Census 2006

⁴ Lane, C. (2010). *Adult literacy and numeracy in New Zealand - A regional analysis. Perspectives from the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

⁵ Earle, D. (2009). *Skills, qualifications and wages - an analysis from the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

It's a workforce issue

256,000

working people in
Auckland have low
literacy

\$55 per week

Shift in income with
a Level 2
qualification

Auckland region has approximately a third of the New Zealand population (1,303,000 residents at the 2006 Census and growing). The region has correspondingly about a third of the country's workforce (702,600).⁶

Literacy and numeracy are issues at work because 63% of people with low document literacy in the region in 2006 are already working. They are often in low skill jobs (plant and machinery operators and assemblers or labourers, agricultural workers) and are most vulnerable during economic recessions. People who are 20 years of age and in the workforce now will be working for another 45 years; if they do not build their literacy and numeracy over that time, their potential to contribute to the workforce and economy will be reduced.

Even those in Level 1, with the lowest level of literacy or numeracy skills are mostly in employment (79,600 people). See Appendix Table 4

Lower levels of skills have a clear impact on wages.⁷ Gaining a Level 2 qualification can make a difference of \$55 per week to average weekly income. The average weekly income if you have no qualification is \$705, if you have equivalent of Level 2 NCEA \$760; and if you have a degree \$1,252 per week.⁸

Low literacy and numeracy are employability issues. Adults with low skills are more likely to be unemployed and not ready for the workforce. The unemployment rate in Auckland region is higher than the national average. It increased to 7.3% for the year to March 2010 up from the regional figure of 5.1% the previous year and is greater than the national unemployed rate of 6.4%.

There were 23,954 working aged people on unemployment benefits in the Auckland region at the end of March 2010.

On managing skills growth

“The easiest strategy to addressing a low skilled population is to grow sectors that can employ those people.

A more difficult but better strategy is to increase skill levels and expand higher value sectors. This high skills strategy requires more effort but it is better in two ways; it provides more income and more rewarding jobs for the people, and it lifts the average GDP per capita...”

Boven, R. (2010) *A skills agenda for posterity*, The New Zealand Institute.

⁶ Department of Labour Auckland Region Quarterly Labour Market Update, March 2010. <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/regional/joint/lmr-regional-akl.asp>

⁷ Earle, D. (2009). *Skills, qualifications and wages - an analysis from the Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey*. Wellington Ministry of Education.

⁸ NZ Income Survey, Statistics NZ, June 09 quarter.

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/work_income_and_spending/Income/NZIncomeSurvey_HOTPJun09qtr/Tables.aspx

Learning and Earning: Targeted provision for Literacy in the Workplace

The **Workplace Literacy Fund (WLF)** assists employers to establish workplace literacy projects where employees are taught skills related to the literacy, language and numeracy requirements of the workplace. Programmes run for at least 40 hours over 10 - 40 weeks (i.e. 1-4 hours per week). In 2010, funding has been allocated for 2,613 places in the Auckland region; six providers have been funded to work in Auckland/South Auckland and another six providers can deliver programmes nationally. Providers will deliver according to demand from companies anywhere in the region.

The **Workplace Literacy (employee-targeted) Fund** enables employees to approach Literacy Aotearoa or English Language Partners directly for help with workplace literacy and numeracy skills. New Zealand residents in employment (including seasonal and part time) receive approximately 24 hours teaching (usually 2 hrs x 12 weeks) individually or in small groups. Where possible, tutors use real materials from the workplace (e.g. forms, course material or written procedures).

Modern Apprentices can receive up to 30 hours support with literacy and numeracy from Literacy Aotearoa while they work toward their qualification. Difficulties with the written work required to successfully complete apprenticeships has been recognised as a barrier to success.⁹ In the Auckland region in 2009 there were 3,179 Modern Apprentices, but only 37 accessed this support.

Most **Industry Training Organisations (ITOs)** have received funding to build the capability to strengthen trainees' literacy and numeracy during their trade training. There were 30,668 industry trainees in Auckland region in 2009; nationally, approximately 6,000 trainees were involved in projects where literacy and numeracy were embedded into trade training during 2009, but the number involved from Auckland is not available.

By January 2011, all ITOs are expected to support the literacy and numeracy needs of any trainee signed up to a Level 1-3 certificate. There will have to be a significant step up in the industry training system to ensure all trainees in the Auckland region have the opportunity to develop the literacy and numeracy they need to successfully complete their industry training.

2,613

targeted places for
workplace literacy

⁹ Jeffcoat, S., & Jeffcoat, M. (2006). *Evaluation of the Modern Apprenticeships Programme*. Mobius Research and Strategy

It's an English language issue

40%

Aucklanders born overseas

Auckland is one of a select group of 'super diverse' global cities.¹⁰ Residents come from 190 ethnic groups and 40% of the population were born overseas.

English language is an important issue for Auckland Council because **more than 65% of the country's non-English speakers reside in Auckland.**

Future population growth in the region will be largely driven by minority ethnic groups, particularly Pacific Peoples and Asian, so demand for English language services will grow.¹¹

Proficiency in English is vital for the successful settlement of migrants and refugees. Migrants with limited English are disadvantaged in their ability to participate in work and their earning potential is restricted. Limited English makes it harder for migrants to participate as citizens in their newly adopted society.¹² Even highly qualified migrants who are literate (and degree qualified) in their home language may not have sufficient English language skills to work in their profession or at a similar level of employment.¹³ Language learning takes time.

Recent migrants (i.e. overseas born who arrived since 2000) and workers whose first language was not English are significantly more likely than Pakeha and the New Zealand-born to have very low skills and be in ALL Level I.¹⁴

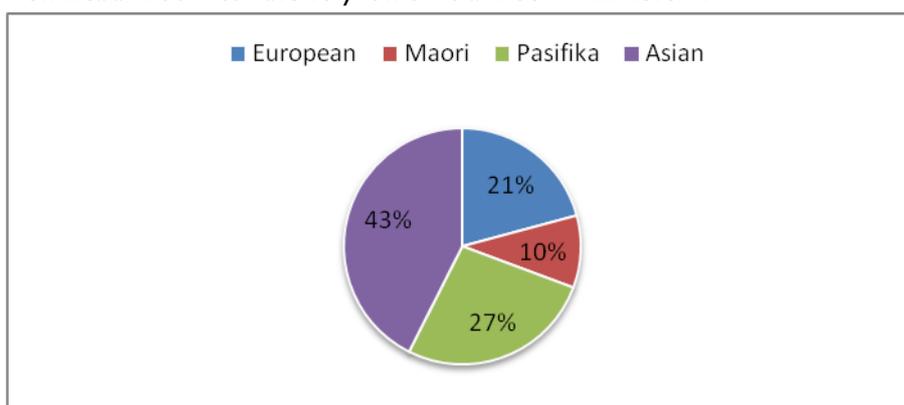


Figure 4. Level I document literacy, Auckland residents by ethnicity, ALL 2006

The scale of need for English language provision is hard to establish. Using a non-English speaking birthplace and no qualifications as proxies, approximately 48,000 Aucklanders may need English language provision. See Appendix Table 6.

¹⁰ *The Auckland Economy Situation and forecast March 2010*. BERL and Institute of Public Policy, AUT University.

http://www.aut.ac.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/108640/The-Auckland-Economy-WEB_Mar10.pdf

¹¹ McDermott, P (2008) *Auckland's population*. CityScope consultants. Briefing paper prepared for the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance. Vol 4 Reference Papers.

¹² See Spoonley, P., & Crowley, J. (2009). English language acquisition in 21st century Aotearoa. Trends and challenges for English Language Partners New Zealand. *English Language Partners NZ Organisational Review*. Wellington: English Language Partners and Goal three, English Language for Adults, Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/settlement/regionalstrategies/auckland.htm>

¹³ This paper focuses on literacy in English. A population confident in both English and mother tongue becomes an asset that can be turned to powerful use in the global economy and has long-term social and cultural rewards. Being bilingual requires policy approaches that are not discussed here.

¹⁴ Sutton, A. (2009). *Understanding the needs of adult literacy and numeracy learners with very low skills: A discussion paper*. A Report to the Tertiary Education Commission, unpublished.

Provision for English Language learning

Adults may enrol as [fee-paying students](#) at a range of public and private English language providers. AUT University, Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT), Selwyn College and Unitec are particularly large providers in the region.

Other migrants (often family members accompanying principal migrants) access lower-cost, part-time community-based English language courses.

Refugees often have special language and learning needs. Auckland takes about half the New Zealand refugee quota plus their families (approximately 500 people per year). Eighty percent are not literate in English and about half that group are pre-literate in their first language as well, requiring ESOL-literacy teaching.

[English Language Partners New Zealand \(ELP\)](#) is the largest provider of free English language teaching and resettlement support for migrants and refugees in the region. English Language Partners offer free spaces for 1,860 ESOL and 160 ESOL-literacy learners, funded from Adult and Community Education funding. They fundraised to provide another 1,282 free places. ELP does not advertise and has long waiting lists.

The [English for Migrants scheme](#) provides English language tuition for migrants who were required to pre-purchase ESOL provision as part of their residency applications because they did not have sufficient English. Funds are held in Trust for them for five years and they can apply to a language provider of their choice on arrival. Uptake of the scheme has been variable in recent years.¹⁵ In 2009, only 675 learners participated across the Auckland region.

There is a [network of informal, community-based English language classes](#) offered by many community groups and churches across the region. These are often 1-2 hour conversation based classes run by volunteers; they offer important community support and language practice but are not part of the formal education system. Some ethnic communities also run their own learning programmes.

Challenges related to English language learning provision include: increasing demand from temporary work permit holders (Work to Residency visas) or family members waiting for residency (e.g. wives of refugees) who are not eligible for services; provision of insufficient length to allow learners to progress, particularly pre-literate and entry level learners and elderly migrants who need English to negotiate their way around community and social needs, who learn slowly; and the disproportionate centralisation of ESOL services in central Auckland compared to the distributed population need.¹⁶ ESOL services across the region are often full.

2,020

Community ESOL places for very low level learners



¹⁵ Workforce Group – Immigration Service. (2005). *Migrants and their take-up of English for speakers of other languages tuition*. Wellington: Department of Labour.

¹⁶ Tertiary Education Commission. (2008). *English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) Report on national gaps and priorities* Wellington: Tertiary Education Commission.

2,159

Auckland school-leavers with no qualifications, 2009

Literacy and numeracy issues can often be identified early in schooling.

Around three-quarters of school students who have low literacy and numeracy levels at age 8 still had low levels at age 16 (with related poor performance at NCEA). Disengagement in learning—not doing work in class—often starts before students reach secondary school. When students do not have the literacy and numeracy they need to keep learning they may lose motivation.¹⁷

Success at school matters. Achieving an upper secondary school qualification is linked to better labour force status and incomes, so young people leaving school with qualifications start their working life with an advantage. Of the 17,423 school leavers in the region in 2008, 75.5% gained NCEA Level 2 or above (compared to 69.9% in 2007). NCEA Level 2 qualifications are the minimum level for enrolling in post-school training.

Achieving the right combination of skills for qualifications starts with achieving the literacy and numeracy credit co-requisites, starting at NCEA Level 1. In 2008, 76% of Year 11 students across the region achieved NCEA Level 1. The percentage of students who gain NCEA Level 1 is highest in Rodney (73%) and on the North Shore (72%); and lowest in Manukau (52%) and Papakura (39%). See Appendix Table 7

But 5,182 Year 11 students (not school-leavers) did not achieve the eight literacy credits required to pass Level 1 and 3,891 did not achieve the required eight Level 1 numeracy credits. Fewer Maori and Pacific students obtain the literacy and numeracy credits than students of other ethnicities.¹⁸ This has a flow-on effect for access to tertiary education. For example, Pacific students are only half as likely as their non-Pacific peers to fulfil the requirements to enter university. Equally importantly, those who leave school with few qualifications are at much greater risk of unemployment or vulnerability in the labour force, and may not value the benefit of ongoing education. In 2006, New Zealanders without qualifications had an unemployment rate over 53% higher than those with a school qualification.¹⁹

In 2009 2,159 students across the region left school without NCEA Level 1, 721 of whom left school with fewer than 13 credits at any NCEA level. These students need to be able to access low-level tertiary education so they can build the foundation skills necessary for higher level tertiary study or work. But many of these young people will end up 'Not in employment, education or training' (NEET). NEET figures have risen during the recession, particularly for Maori and Pasifika. Nationally, among 15-24 year olds, as at March 2010, 17.6% of Maori, 14.3% of Pacific and 9.3% of Pakeha youth were not actively engaged in education or training.²⁰

¹⁷ Wylie, C., Hodgen, E., Hipkins, R., & Vaughan, K. (2009). *Competent Learners on the Edge of Adulthood: A summary of key findings from the Competent Learners @ 16 project*: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

¹⁸ Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2010). *Education and Pacific peoples in New Zealand*. Wellington.

¹⁹ Earle, D. (2009). *Skills, qualifications and wages - an analysis from the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

²⁰ *Youth Labour Market Factsheet*, Department of Labour, March 2010. <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/lmr-quick-facts-youth.asp>

Over 2000 young people without qualifications are being added to Auckland's literacy challenge each year. That is equivalent to the roll of one of our large urban high schools.

Where are these young people going?

Targeted provision: Youth Guarantee Scheme

The Youth Guarantee scheme is a flagship scheme for the Government. It funds young school leavers (16-17 year olds) into free vocational education that aims to improve their literacy and numeracy while completing qualifications.

Improvements in literacy and numeracy are a specific outcome expected of Youth Guarantee programmes. A total of 810 places have been made available for 2010 across the region.

Targeted provision: Training Opportunities and Youth Training

Training Opportunities (TO) provides training targeted at Work and Income clients aged over 18 who have, or may face, significant periods of unemployment and who have no or low qualifications. A total of 4,110 people went through TO courses in the Auckland region during 2009.

Youth Training (YT) targets 16-17 year olds with no or low skills to provide foundation skills that pathway learners into sustainable employment or higher level training. TO and YT programmes are typically full-time, 30 hours per week. A total of 3,187 young people went through Youth Training programmes in 2009.

Not all TO and YT programmes have a literacy focus. Across Auckland in 2010, 383 TO places and 10 YT places can be identified that specifically include literacy, English language or numeracy.

In 2011, within the same resource, 60% of TO funding will be allocated through TEC to programmes with a more specific focus on literacy and numeracy.²¹

801

Youth Guarantee places for 2010

393

Training Opportunity and Youth Training places focused on literacy, numeracy or ESOL across Auckland for 2010

²¹ Announced by Isabel Evans, Regional Commissioner of MSD, 5/08/2010

It's a community issue

Literacy underpins strong communities. Enhancing the literacy and numeracy skills of adults makes it easier for them to access social services, take part in the democratic process and fully participate in the communities in which they live and work.

The health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities is affected by literacy. Health literacy is the ability to read, understand and effectively use basic medical instructions and information such as instructions on medicine bottles, appointment slips, medical education brochures, doctor's directions and consent forms, and the ability to negotiate complex health care systems. **People with lower health literacy have poorer health outcomes** (higher hospitalisation rates, higher health care costs and worse health status than people with adequate literacy) independent of socioeconomic and educational factors.²²

Low literacy may also make our communities less safe. Crime and safety are key concerns for ratepayers and community safety is core business for local government. There is no escaping the connection between prison and literacy. The Department of Corrections reports that 45% of sentenced prisoners left school prior to the 5th form (year 11), 16% of prisoners have [only] School Certificate or an NCEA level 1 equivalent qualification.²³ A study reported by the Dyslexia Association showed that 90% of prison inmates were not functionally literate.²⁴ Attending to literacy rates appears to be a critical intervention for long-term community safety outcomes.

On literacy and society

“Literacy is, at its very heart, a pivotal component of nation building. Fully realised, it enables people to take part in the fullness of the society we live in.”

Maori Adult Literacy Reference Group. (2001) *Te Kawai Ora - Reading the world, reading the word, being the world. Report to the Hon. Tariana Turia, Associate Minister of Maori Affairs.* Wellington

²² Ministry of Health (2010). *Korero Marama: Health Literacy and Maori*. Results from the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

²³ <http://www.corrections.govt.nz/about-us/fact-sheets/managing-offenders/foundation-skills.html>

²⁴ <http://www.infonews.co.nz/news.cfm?id=31059>

Targeted provision: Adult and Community Education

Adult and Community Education (ACE) has always been an important vehicle for adults to engage or re-engage with learning. ACE attracts learners with low literacy and numeracy, people who, because of their lack of success at school, are often wary of formal education. ACE courses provide a useful starting point for many people because learners are usually not assessed, provision is flexible and informal, participation is voluntary and courses are usually low cost or free. ACE is provided through a range of schools, community organisations, and tertiary education providers.

ACE provision now includes an explicit focus on literacy and numeracy. Government's priorities for ACE now include: attracting learners whose initial learning was not successful (including Maori, Pasifika, migrants and refugees); raising foundation skills; and strengthening social cohesion. This covers literacy, numeracy, English language, NZ sign language and te reo Maori.

A total of 10,463 places have been resourced for Auckland region **school-based ACE** for 2010. Each place provides for a minimum of 16 hours of ACE learning per school term. Historically, most provision has been in the south and central areas while the south and west of the region, the areas with greatest need, have had fewer resources.

Literacy Aotearoa is New Zealand's largest provider of **community ACE** adult literacy and numeracy. In 2009, ACE funding enabled Literacy Aotearoa to provide free places to 466 adults through the six *poupuu* (member organisations) in the region.

There is also ACE through **ITPs, Wananga and the University sector.** For example, Unitec and Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) provide free short computer courses as part of their ACE programmes, building adults' digital literacy. About 5,000 people annually attend MIT ACE courses per year across eight community sites. Funding changes for ACE in these sectors comes into effect in 2011.

Targeted provision: the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Fund (ILNF)

The Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Fund provides learning opportunities for high-need groups: parents, seasonal workers, those unable to access learning at work and people with levels of literacy and numeracy below Level 3 in ALL. Learning is provided in meaningful contexts such as family literacy and resettlement. Programmes provide an average of 100 hours of free literacy or numeracy teaching within a 5 - 20 week period. In total, 2,340 places have been funded for 2010, involving 12 providers in Auckland (5), Manukau (6) and Waitakere (1).

\$1,270,000

investment in community education through Auckland schools

466

Aucklanders receiving community literacy support from Literacy Aotearoa

2,340

Intensive literacy places funded, 2010

It's a family issue

Parental levels of literacy and numeracy have an impact on the next generation. Children are more likely to have low literacy if their mother has low literacy. Approximately 57% of the adults in ALL Level 1 who had both very low literacy and very low numeracy had a mother with less than 3 years secondary schooling.²⁵

People with very low levels of literacy and numeracy (ALL Level 1) are more likely to have negative outcomes in life such as poor labour market experiences and prospects, poor material and financial circumstances, poor health prospects and lack of social and political participation.²⁶ About 58% of those with very low literacy in a major longitudinal study in the UK also had a mother with very low educational achievement.

Conversely, having a mother with tertiary qualifications has a positive impact on family income and children's competencies. The New Zealand longitudinal study *Competent Children, Competent Learners* found that mothers with tertiary qualifications were in families with higher incomes. Generally, students who had mothers with university qualifications had the highest scores for all the social and educational competencies measured in the study and achieved more NCEA credits than those whose mothers had no tertiary qualifications. Those students were more likely to be interested in school and more engaged with NCEA than those whose mothers had no qualifications.²⁷

Quality early childhood education helps children develop strong literacy skills. Regardless of ethnic or socio-economic background, high family expectations have very positive effects on children's literacy achievement.²⁸

Developing the literacy skills of parents helps the adults and children as well as the wider whanau.²⁹ Programmes that focus on literacy in families and on learning between generations are effective for the learner, but are hard to establish because government policy does not recognise adults and children learning in the same programme as yet.

There were over 220,000 families with children in Auckland region at the 2006 Census.

"Before I started the course, my attitude was we were here to be cleaners and factory workers. Now I have bigger plans— they are going where I am going - university."

"The course wasn't just about literacy. I learned about parenting skills and how to look after my family's health."

Family literacy programme graduates

57%

adults with very low literacy and numeracy in ALL survey who had mothers with less than 3 years secondary schooling



²⁵ Sutton, A. (2009). *Understanding the needs of adult literacy and numeracy learners with very low skills: a discussion paper*. A paper prepared for the Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Unit, Tertiary Education Commission. Auckland: Critical Insight.

²⁶ Parsons, S., & Bynner, J. (2007). *Illuminating disadvantage: profiling the experiences of adults with Entry level literacy or numeracy over the life course*. London: NRDC.

²⁷ Wylie, C., Hipkins, R., & Hodgen, E. (2009). *On the Edge of Adulthood: Young people's school and out-of-school experiences at 16*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

²⁸ Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education; Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning. A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.

²⁹ Benseman, J. (2004). *"I'm a different person now". An evaluation of the Manukau Family Literacy Programme (MFLP)* Wellington: Ministry of Education.

It's a growing issue

The population of Counties Manukau, one of the key areas of need, is growing at double the New Zealand average. Over the next 15-20 years approximately 170,000 additional people will be resident in Counties Manukau – that is the equivalent of adding Hamilton and Blenheim to the region.

The literacy and numeracy challenge faced by Auckland Council will grow as the region's population grows.

Demand for literacy and numeracy skills also grows as the nature of employment changes. Technology developments mean that even low-skill jobs become more complex. Jobs in the knowledge and service sectors, where growth is anticipated, require greater literacy, numeracy and communication skills than ever before.

**Counties-Manukau
will grow the
equivalent of
Hamilton and
Blenheim in the next
15 – 20 years**

What is the government doing about literacy and numeracy?

The Government has given prominence to literacy and numeracy in the Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015 (TES), with priorities including:

- Increasing the number of Maori and Pasifika students achieving at higher levels (who are over-represented among those with low literacy and numeracy)
- Improving literacy, language and numeracy and skills outcomes from NQF level one to three study (where adults with low literacy and numeracy enrol)
- Enabling local access to appropriate tertiary education (which includes access for adults with low literacy and numeracy)
- Supporting students with lower literacy, language and numeracy skills to improve those skills and progress to higher levels of learning.

These priorities are particularly relevant to Auckland Council because of the large numbers of Maori, Pasifika and migrants in the region.

‘Embedded literacy and numeracy’ has become a major strategy for improving literacy and numeracy within low level tertiary education programmes. Embedding literacy and numeracy means building a learner’s literacy and numeracy skills at the same time as developing their skills in another subject or content area. Tertiary education institutions have begun embedding literacy and numeracy into NQF Levels 1-3 vocational courses (e.g. developing the literacy and numeracy required to successfully complete a certificate in automotive skills, boat building or health care). The vocational course provides the meaningful context and motivation for the student to participate and the embedded literacy and numeracy ensures learners acquire meaningful skills related specifically to the context in which they are learning.

In 2010, less than 1,000 EFTs were allocated to embedding projects across Auckland. By 2011, tertiary education institutions are expected to have built literacy and numeracy delivery into their core business. Assuming all students in Levels 1-3 courses have their literacy levels raised as part of their vocational course, approximately 29,000 students across Auckland will benefit each year. See Appendix Table 8

Embedded literacy alone is unlikely to be sufficient for those with very low skills who will need access to specialised literacy services and support in addition to their vocational programme.

Targeted funding for specific provision is the other major strategy for building literacy and numeracy. Targeted provision focuses on specific learners or contexts: the workplace, the unemployed, youth and those with intensive literacy needs. See Appendix Table 9

Are we unlocking Auckland's potential?

5%

Aucklanders with low skill who can access focused literacy learning

440,000 Aucklanders have low document literacy skills.

There are **21,000 learning places** specifically for developing literacy and numeracy for adults in Auckland region at present.

Even with an increase in embedded literacy and numeracy, current provision will meet less than 15% of existing need.

The literacy and numeracy system across Auckland needs to be strengthened

- There needs to be greater investment allocated to Level 1-3 courses across Auckland to make headway into the local demand that already exists³⁰
- Additional investment is needed to meet demands from population growth and the increasing diversity of the new city
- More community-based programmes in a variety of forms are required to meet the needs of very low level learners who will not enrol in formal tertiary education. In particular, there need to be more learning opportunities to meet the intensive and long-term needs of ESOL learners
- On-going skills development of the literacy, English language and numeracy workforce will be required to maintain, let alone grow, staffing levels. The literacy teaching workforce is made up of vocational teachers who are developing additional literacy and numeracy teaching expertise in addition to their subject expertise and also literacy and numeracy specialists. The literacy and numeracy specialist workforce is small, there is high staff turnover and many teachers are on short-term contracts.

³⁰ See Appendix Table 10 for details of the national investment in literacy and numeracy.

An Auckland Council response to low literacy and numeracy

The current action and investment in adult literacy and numeracy will not be sufficient to unlock Auckland's potential.

Auckland Council needs to:

- **Lead from the front**
- **Set targets**
- **Be inclusive**
- **Encourage local action**
- **Invest in a flagship project**
- **Look for value for money**

Government action alone will not be enough to unlock the door to Auckland's future. It will take a whole-of-community effort to change Auckland's literacy and numeracy skills profile.

1. Lead from the front: the Mayor, Councillors, and the Social Policy Forum

Auckland Council has every reason to support skills development in the city – it is central to wellbeing. The Auckland Council can become the pivot point for government and local community efforts to improve literacy outcomes, by using the **Social Policy Forum**. The forum is the Cabinet response to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance for a better connection between central government social spending and the social context of Auckland. The Forum will have both Ministerial and Mayoral leadership.

This Forum should shape an **Auckland Social Action Agreement** which outlines the manner in which central government resources and the Council's resources can be used to best effect. This agreement should include details of how the Council and government will work together to promote skills growth in Auckland.

Leadership means that the Mayor and Councillors visibly take action – that is, identify literacy and numeracy skills as a city priority in social and economic planning; advocate for these skills in the community, with business, and with government; be the face of community projects and programmes that address literacy and numeracy skill needs; and set aside resources that leverage government spending.

2. Work on simple, measurable targets

Large-scale change requires deliberate acts of leadership around simple, measurable outcomes targets.³¹ Effective targets for literacy and numeracy across the region should be set collaboratively, collaboratively addressed, vigorously pursued, and resourced effectively.

The **Auckland Social Policy Forum** and its supportive **Auckland Social Action Agreement** will be key mechanisms for effective target-setting. Those targets will help ensure alignment between government policies and Council priorities. They will also provide a concrete focus to sustain the effort through changes in political leadership.

To change Auckland's long-term skills profile, attention must be paid to school-leaver attributes. What should we be requiring of schools to support whole-of-system performance?

³¹ Fullan, Michael (2010). *Motion Leadership: The Skinny on becoming change savvy*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin; Levin, Ben, (2009). *How to change 5000 schools*. Cambridge MA: Harvard Education Press.

3. Skills action must recognise that different communities have distinct needs

The need for skills growth is greatest in the south and west and includes meeting the needs of migrant and refugee communities and English language learning. Resources are scarce. Local responses and local leadership is needed.

Auckland Local Boards, once they are established, must pay attention to the skills of their community. They will be well placed to identify local targets for change. With clearer local targets, TEC funds can become better aligned to community needs.

4. Maori aspirations for education need to be driven at the community level

Auckland Council must have structures that will back Maori community aspirations. Whanau participation in learning can be shaped through innovative partnerships that may sit alongside institutional and private providers of services. The pipeline of funding from government agencies, particularly the TEC, may be more effective in outcomes for Maori if it is linked to the community development resources of Auckland Council and iwi.

5. Pacific communities must be directly engaged in skills growth

The analysis here reinforces what is already known about literacy and numeracy skills among Pacific people in Auckland. Efforts to target Pasifika learners will require local leadership and innovative ways of working together.

6. Tackle numeracy through a community campaign owned by all of Auckland

Numeracy is a vital skill and impacts on both productivity and financial literacy levels. Numeracy suffers from a leadership vacuum. A community-led approach to numeracy could become a flagship project for the government and the mayor. A city-led campaign, shaped by input from communities and in partnership with key stakeholder groups could raise the awareness and expectations of Aucklanders about maths in work and everyday life. Such a campaign, innovatively resourced through a collaboration that included government, council, philanthropic, community and business partners, would have powerful potential to change numeracy levels in Auckland.

7. Obtain best value for money from the government, community, and philanthropic spend on literacy through collaborative or co-ordinated action

In a time of economic restraint, value for money should be a key driver for any city and national action. Value for money is best achieved through collaborative efforts that leverage resources from partners towards a single goal.

APPENDIX: Additional data

Table 3 – ALL Level I Numeracy for Auckland region by ethnicity, ALL 2006

Ethnicity	Number in Level I	% of population group in Level I numeracy	Auckland region adults over 15 years, 2006
European	58,700	10%	563,907
Maori	26,800	30%	90,570
Pasifika	58,800	51%	116,161
Asian	66,700	36%	184,158
TOTAL	201,100	21%	954,796

Table 4 –Level I, Auckland region by employment, ALL 2006

Labour force status	Prose literacy	Document literacy	Numeracy
Total number in ALL Level I	147,200	140,400	201,100
Employed	81,200	79,600	113,400
% in employment	55%	57%	56%

Table 5 –Levels I & 2 Auckland region by ethnicity, ALL 2006

Ethnicity	Prose literacy	Document literacy	Numeracy
European	177,000	171,400	216,700
Maori	46,600	46,800	56,300
Pasifika	81,000	78,100	88,000
Asian	155,800	131,100	140,100
Totals	441,100	410,400	478,900

Table 6 - Residents born overseas in non-English speaking countries with no qualifications by Auckland TLA, Census 2006

Birthplace	Pacific Islands	Europe (excl. UK & Ireland)	Asia	Other	Totals TLA
Rodney District	162	162	189	279	792
North Shore City	726	270	1,935	717	3,648
Waitakere City	3,495	474	1,818	735	6,522
Auckland City	7,794	537	5,292	1338	14,961
Manukau City	13,017	288	5,598	1605	20,508
Papakura District	423	75	294	222	1,014
Franklin District	249	102	288	225	864
Totals	25,866	1,908	15,414	5121	48,309

Table 7 – Auckland region Year 11 students reaching Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements, 2009

Territorial Authority	% Year 11 students passing NCEA Level 1	% achieving NCEA Level 1 literacy standard	% achieving NCEA Level 1 numeracy standard
Auckland	59%	71%	76%
Franklin	58%	74%	81%
Manukau	52%	72%	80%
Papakura	39%	58%	67%
North Shore	72%	82%	86%
Rodney	73%	84%	90%
Waitakere	58%	79%	88%
Auckland region	63%	76%	84%

Table 8 – Students, Levels 1-3 Auckland region by provider, 2009

Subsector	Provider	Students
Universities	University of Auckland	162
	Auckland University of Technology	1,926
	Total	2,088
ITPs	Aoraki Polytechnic	278
	Unitec New Zealand	3,946
	Manukau Institute of Technology	6,296
	Nelson Marlborough Inst of Technology	201
	Whitireia Community Polytechnic	224
	Waikato Institute of Technology	29
	Tai Poutini Polytechnic	1,179
	Total	12,094
Wananga	Te Wananga O Aotearoa	6,516
	Te Whare Wananga O Awanuiarangi	123
	Total	6,635
Private training establishments	57 providers	9,724
TOTAL		29,705

Table 9 - Summary of literacy and numeracy places, Auckland region 2010

Funding stream	Learning places/students	Context and parameters
Intensive Literacy Fund	2,430	100 hours teaching over 5-20 weeks. In contexts meaningful to the learner
Workplace Literacy Fund	2,653	Expected to be at least 40 hours per learner over 10-40 weeks for workplace related literacy and numeracy; sponsored by employer usually during work time.
Workplace (employee-focused) Literacy Fund	372	Literacy Aotearoa and English Language Partners provide up to 24 hours of workplace-focused coaching per learner
Literacy Aotearoa	466	Works on demand with community-based learners 1:1 or in small groups. Not time-limited
	37	Modern Apprentices are eligible for up to 30 hours 1:1 coaching to support the apprentice achieve vocational qualifications
English Language Partners	2,020	Community based language support and group tutoring. Most part time in small groups. Provision not time-limited. An additional 1,282 places self-resourced through fundraising.
School-based Adult & Community Education (ACE)	10,463	Each place is intended to provide 16 hours tuition per learner. ACE courses may be contextualised but with a literacy, numeracy or language focus. One learner may enrol in more than one place during a year
Training Opportunity/Youth Training	393	MSD-funded programme for the unemployed. 30 hours per week
Youth Guarantee	810	Places specifically for 16-18 year olds to achieve both vocational qualifications and improved literacy and numeracy
English for Migrants	675	Places pre-purchased by migrants to be used on arrival in New Zealand. Funds frequently not drawn down by migrants.
Total	20,319	

Table 10 - TEC National investment in adult literacy and numeracy 2009-2012³²

Grant Funding	2009/10 \$	2010/11 \$	2011/12 \$	3 year investment
Intensive Literacy and Numeracy				
Intensive Literacy and Numeracy	17,268,000	15,174,000	15,174,000	47,616,000
Workplace Literacy Fund	20,313,000	19,656,000	15,156,000	55,125,000
Embedded Literacy and Numeracy				
SAC 'top up' in ITPs and Wananga	6,800,000	7,400,000	7,400,000	21,600,000
ITO Embedded literacy	9,107,000	8,507,000	8,507,000	26,121,000
Adult Literacy Educator Grants[4]	2,078,000	656,000	456,000	3,190,000
ITP and Wananga TEOC capability funding	5,905,000	2,000,000	0	7,905,000
Capability, infrastructure and professional development				
Capability, infrastructure & professional development	7,050,000	6,450,000	6,100,000	19,600,000
Learning Representatives (CTU)	800,000	300,000	300,000	1,400,000
Adult Literacy Assessment Tool (Opex only)	2,758,000	633,000	1,100,000	4,491,000
Total investment	\$72,079,000	\$60,776,000	\$54,193,000	\$ 187,048,000

³² Presentation by TEC to ITF Workplace Literacy Forum, June 10, 2010 <http://www.itf.org.nz/literacy-forum-2010.html>

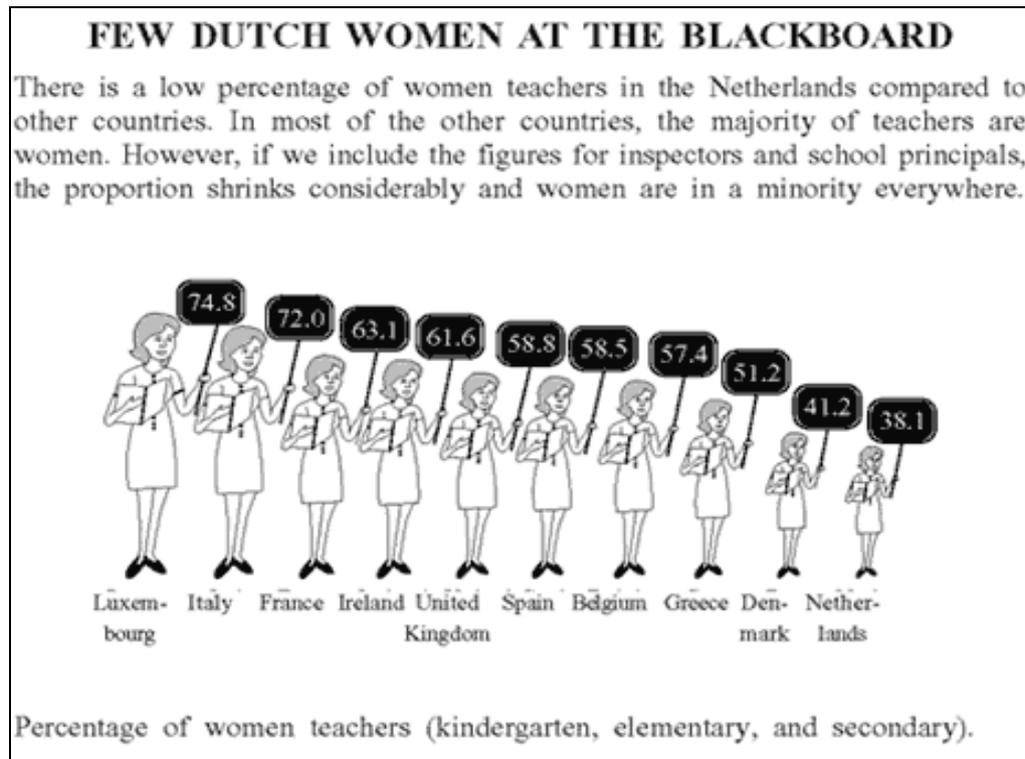
Sample questions, ALL Survey 2006

Question 6. Here is a photograph of Coca Cola bottles.

6. In total, how many bottles are in the two full cases?



Level 1 numeracy question, ALL 2006



What is the percentage of women in the teaching profession in Greece?

Level 1 literacy question, ALL 2006

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