FULL REPORT

Adult learners in the ACE context: Evaluation and review to support sustained learner success

Wairarapa REAP – Peter McNeur, Tracey Shepherd,
Central Otago REAP – Bernie Lepper,
East Bay REAP – John Chemis, Ryan Morrison
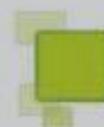Petersen Consulting – Lesley Petersen

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Introduction

"Making learning as accessible as possible." (REAP manager)

This project is about adult learners in the New Zealand Adult Community Education (ACE) environment and the central positioning of learners within this space. The project involved three Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP) centres situated in the Wairarapa, Central Otago and the Eastern Bay of Plenty. REAPs are categorised as ACE training providers alongside other tertiary education organisations, schools, and community groups. The three REAPs involved in this project were identified as benchmarking good educational practice across the thirteen REAPs and the ACE sector more broadly.

The ACE sector is described as an informal education provider and a sector that is marginalised relative to other sectors in the NZ tertiary education environment. Several participants in the project talked about the need for acknowledgement and recognition of ACE and its substantial impact and influence on communities and the people within these. This project sought to discover the meaning and value adult learners place on informal learning and what they describe as successful learning. This data would provide a means for ACE providers such as REAP to evaluate the interventions and activities they offer, and inform any practice change to ensure that their programmes and teaching strategies meet learner needs.

Project Aims

The key aim of this project was to discover how successful learning is defined by learners in the ACE sector and how this can inform the programme interventions and activities offered in this learning context.

A central feature was to determine adult learners' perceptions of the value from participating in an ACE programme and how these perceptions can be used to inform any practice change that may be required to ensure that the delivery of programmes and teaching strategies better meet learners' needs. Feedback collected from the learners via focus group interviews aimed to provide REAPs and other ACE providers with a learner-centric mechanism for ongoing evaluation and review of the interventions and activities they offer.

Methodology

The project used case study methodology and involved focus-group interviews with three participant cohorts at the three REAPs. The participant groups were:

(i) 43 ACE learners completing a range of courses and programmes;

(ii) 13 ACE tutors; and

(iii) 15 'other' stakeholders working in the ACE environment including REAP managers and supervisors, ACE coordinators, and community and social service providers.

A core focus of the learner interviews was to collect their narratives on how they define success and the value they gain from engaging in ACE programmes. The interview questions were particularly targeted at finding out about their motivations to enrol in an ACE programme, their learning goals and goals for the future, and how they perceived the REAP as supporting them in this. The interviews with the tutors and other stakeholders focused on exploring how they support learner achievement, internal and external challenges they thought had a significant influence on ACE learner achievement, and the types of professional development which were seen as important in supporting tutors.

Findings

i. Analysis of the data from the three participant groups (learners, tutors and other stakeholders) identified four key themes:

   a. Defining learning success: The learners' perspective. Participants talked about their prior learning experiences, motivations, the benefits experienced and their future aspirations. A common thread was that 'learning success' is determined by an individual's concept and experience.

   b. Learner challenges and challenges to learning. These were both internal (self-confidence, the belief that they can learn, and managing the academic requirements) and external, such as social issues, drugs and alcohol, and lack of local employment prospects.

   c. Learner support mechanisms. Examples given here included group work, one-on-one help from the tutor, different teaching and learning activities, and being given choices and options. The inclusive classroom environment which fostered a sense of 'family' and 'community' was also critical. An important point here was that the mechanisms which support learning in the ACE context, as reported by the tutors and other stakeholders, corresponded with the learners' identification of how they were supported in the three REAP environments.

d. Future pathways and plans. While most learners undertook ACE study as an avenue to employment or higher qualifications, for some learners who were unsure of their ultimate direction, attendance on the programmes became a means of decision-making and skill development as an end in itself.

ii. The three REAPs in this study already employ a range of mechanisms to help evaluate the effectiveness of ACE programmes and other strategies aimed at supporting learners, but tutor and stakeholder participants acknowledged that there was no existing bank of resources to ensure existing good practice was documented or shared more widely with the other ten REAPs across New Zealand.

iii. Collaboration between ACE providers and other community services was highlighted as a real strength of the sector, and one which had a significant influence on the learning experiences and outcomes of ACE learners.

Outcomes

The original intention was to produce a 'teaching practice model' and a 'practice change model' to guide teaching and learning practice within REAPs. However, data collected from the three REAPs identified numerous existing good practices occurring in teaching and learner support, and ongoing development of organisational systems. A significant strength of the REAPs was the effectiveness of providing learners with a wraparound service, that is, working in collaboration with other social services in the community. The project team therefore elected to move beyond the original objective, and focus instead on adding value by creating a continuous improvement method which can be used by the three REAPs and extend beyond to the wider ACE sector. While a number of evaluation matrices are readily available, and this is a well-traversed area in the literature, no models were found to have been designed specifically for the ACE sector. Accordingly, two resources have been developed:

(i) A Learner-centric Evaluation Model establishing essential learner-centric practices, and key stakeholders providing and supporting these. The model is based on a description of learning success as described by the learner participants (*refer Appendix A*);

(ii) An evaluation review process (*refer Appendix B*) as an integrated tool alongside other established ACE evaluation processes that can be used by ACE training

providers to determine alignment between programme interventions and activities and ACE learners' views of successful learning. The process encompasses three evaluation and review templates, and is underpinned by the Learner-centric Evaluation Model.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project objectives

This project aimed to provide ACE training providers with the opportunity to establish what learners deem to be successful learning thus enabling providers to evaluate and align their current ACE programmes accordingly. Three key objectives guided the design, implementation and completion of the project, including:

1. Discovering how successful learning is defined by learners in the ACE sector;
2. Identifying how this can inform the programme design, interventions and activities offered in this tertiary education context;
3. Utilising adult learners' perceptions of the value they gain from participating in ACE programmes, which in turn can then inform any practice change to ensure that the delivery of the programmes and teaching strategies better meet learners needs.

Eight questions arose from the three primary objectives, including:

1. What are the common determinants of ACE learner success documented in the literature?
2. How is successful learning defined by the ACE sector?
3. What are the challenges and/or barriers for ACE learners?
4. How can training providers best meet the needs of ACE learners in a diverse range of learner contexts such as online, distance, ESOL, workplace?
5. How can training providers involve ACE learners to influence successful learner outcomes and help inform any practice change that will better meet their needs?
6. How do training providers prepare ACE learners for future pathways such as employment, further education
7. How can training providers create quality-driven learning experiences for ACE learners?
8. What teaching and learning methods and other mechanisms best support ACE learners?

A desired outcome of the project was the design of an evaluation review process, adapted from the data gathering tools in the project participants' interviews. This review process will gather and capture learner narratives and assist the REAPs in identifying and evaluating the alignment between their programmes and activities and the learners' view of successful learning.

1.2 Background

There are 13 REAPs in New Zealand, with the remit to deliver education opportunities in rural communities in order to make a difference to the lives and long-term plans of rural

people. Working collaboratively with local partners including Iwi and Hapu is key to this outcome. All 13 REAPs specialise in core ACE work domains, coordinating and contributing to professional development and shared practice across:

- Early childhood education;
- Compulsory schooling;
- Adult and community education;
- Positive parenting;
- Brokerage and consultancy in education.

REAP Aotearoa New Zealand (REAPANZ) is the national body which represents the thirteen REAPs. One of REAPANZ's core functions is to keep up to date on emerging issues related to rural communities and policy changes which may impact education.

1.3 Participant profiles

The participant groups involved in this project included ACE learners, REAP tutors, and a range of other REAP and ACE stakeholders across the three regions (Wairarapa, Central Otago and Eastern Bay of Plenty). Table 1 provides a general profile of REAPs and more specific profiles of each participant group.

Table 1   Participant Profiles

Participants	Profile Description
REAPs	• Training providers alongside other tertiary education organisations, schools, and community groups; • Provide ACE programmes which actively promote and support lifelong learning in rural communities.
Wairarapa REAP	• Rural community with an approximate population of 45,000; • The region covers four Territorial Local Authorities (Councils) including South Wairarapa, Carterton, Masterton, and Tararua; • ACE courses run with approximately 800 adult students annually, delivering over 13,000 learner hours; • Courses range from Work and Living Skills which include topics such as cooking, sewing, budgeting, CV preparation, and driver licensing, to digital literacy, English Language, Sign Language, Te Reo and tikanga.
Central Otago REAP	• Rural community with an approximate population of 22,000 • ACE courses run with between 360 - 420 adult students annually; • Courses range from one-to-one literacy, numeracy, digital and careers courses to group programmes in Intensive Literacy and Numeracy courses (Choices) and embedded literacy courses based on Lifeskills including budgeting, home skills and cooking.
East Bay REAP	• Rural community with a population of 47,000 (45% of which identify as Maori). Youth make up approximately 17%, of which around 20% are classified as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET);

	• Each year Eastbay REAP supports between 500 and 700 learners in the ACE space (of which more than 80% have historically identified as Maori); • ACE courses are targeted by community, with a focus to address levels of low adult literacy across the region, as well as to increase confidence, skills attainment, and social cohesion generally. A large component of this is identifying learners' Record of Learning on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and embedding Levels 1 and 2 unit standards to help progress pathways; • Courses include small group intensive literacy activities designed with learners, and topical activities that build language, digital, and study skills that improve opportunities for further study (level 3+), industry-focused employment, and community engagement.
ACE Learners	• Adult learners • Age range between 16 and 70 years • High percentage with minimal previous educational success
REAP tutors	• Strong commitment to working in the adult community context • Combination of content-specific qualified teachers and ACE learners who have become tutors within the REAP
Other stakeholders	• REAP managers, REAP supervisors, ACE coordinators, community service providers (Budget Advisory Services, Literacy Aotearoa, regional councils)

1.4 Methodology

Case study methodology was used to collect and analyse the data. The data collection methods included:

i) A review of the literature on the ACE sector and learner engagement and success in this context;

ii) Baseline data analysis of the three REAPs;

iii) Learner focus group meetings in the three REAPs involved in the project, gathering the learners' narratives;

iv) Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders at the three participating REAPs including tutors, coordinators and managers;

An initial conceptual framework provided the platform for the data collection approach. The framework identified three levels within the ACE context where learner success is debated and is relevant to this project:

1. The individual ACE learner;

2. REAPs as ACE training providers;

3. Government.

Narrative research and analysis placed the learners at the centre of the project and acknowledged that learners can actively locate themselves in their own understanding and meaning of successful learning through the stories they tell.

2. Literature review

Adult and community education (ACE) promotes and facilitates the engagement of adults in lifelong learning. The ACE sector offers a range of community-based education activities and programmes that are flexible in nature and responsive to the learning needs of communities and to individual learners. ACE activities complement the formal education system, providing adult New Zealanders with accessible and affordable learning opportunities. ACE provision includes programmes and activities focused on:

- Adult literacy and numeracy;
- English language and social support for speakers of other languages;
- The revitalisation and extension of Te Reo and tikanga Māori (Māori language and culture);
- Personal development (e.g. parenting skills, computing skills, music, foreign languages, arts and crafts, recreation and fitness activities);
- Community development (e.g. capacity building of community groups, training community volunteer workers); and
- Promotion of a civil society (e.g. workshops on the Treaty of Waitangi and submission making to government). (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008)

This project is about adult learners in the ACE environment and the central positioning of learners within this space. It is about discovering the meaning and value adult learners place on informal learning and what they describe as successful learning for themselves. McGivney (1999) talks about informal learning as a vehicle to start people on a continuing learning path by helping them become confident and successful learners. She emphasises how although educational progression is an important outcome of informal learning, first-step learning should also be valued for itself.

Adult learning and education in New Zealand encompasses all forms of adult learning from formal, degree and post-graduate study at universities through to non-formal adult and community education and foundation learning. Community education is described as providing non-formal learning where enrolments are typically limited in hours, short courses, and where programmes don't lead to a qualification. Some ACE programmes and activities are formal in nature, offering adults the opportunity to gain recognised unit standards within

the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and providing the first step to ongoing learning. Others are more informal, enabling learners to determine what and how they learn (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008). An important part of the ACE context is taking learning to the learner. ACE activities take place in a wide variety of settings including, community halls, church buildings, marae, in people's homes and schools and other education institutions.

ACE Aotearoa is a lead body of adult and community educators and enablers, its mission to actively promote and support the diversity of lifelong learning in New Zealand, to foster collaboration and co-operation, and to build ACE sector capability based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi. REAP Aotearoa/New Zealand (REAPANZ) is the umbrella body for the thirteen REAPs throughout New Zealand (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008).

Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAP) are categorised as ACE training providers alongside other tertiary education organisations, schools, and community groups. Thirteen REAPs across New Zealand provide lifelong learning support to their communities through multiple work streams, including early childhood, working with schools and adult and community education. REAPs aim to change learner thinking and behaviours and are often described holistically as a change-process model (Morrison, 2016). Much of the work in REAPs is of a facilitative and developmental nature, working together with other community/local providers (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008).

Two significant pieces of research have recently been completed by ACE Aotearoa in New Zealand including 'Maori Success as Maori' (2014a) and 'Pasifika Success as Pasifika' (2014b). These research projects position learner success as central to the learner rather than the ACE sector as a programme provider and reflect the philosophy and approach of this project which has a broader focus on all learners within ACE settings. There is minimal literature available on how REAPs operate in the ACE space, or how adult learners perceive the value of participating in REAP ACE programmes, and what they view as successful learning.

Griffin (2014) asks what the common determinants of learner success in the literature are, positing that success to one individual may be perceived as failure to another individual. A report completed by Price Waterhouse Cooper in 2008, which examined the social and economic impact of the NZ ACE sector, talked of learner benefits rather than learner success. However, the report summarised a range of participant feedback which they (the participants) described as successful life changes, such as increased self-esteem and confidence, improved communication skills, increased literacy and numeracy skills, and an intention to progress on to future study.

Golding, Brown and Foley (2009) in their research on informal learning in the Australian adult community education context contend that the unstructured, organic quality of informal learning works to disempower a range of adult stakeholders. They also contend that this type of learning diminishes its value as a meaningful educational pursuit in a system that values highly structured, systematised, outcomes-driven learning approaches. For this reason, "serious research into adult community education is critically important" (p. 53). This project takes up such a challenge through uncovering the deeper tacit levels of both individual and collective meanings attributed to successful learning and adults' reasons for engaging in informal learning.

3. Findings

Several findings resulted from this project in relation to the learners' definition of success and the value they perceive from enrolling in ACE programmes. Feedback across the three participant groups highlighted how a range of mechanisms are in place to help evaluate the effectiveness of REAP programmes and other strategies aimed at supporting learners.

The tutors identified a range of views, experiences and practices about what ACE learners need to support their learning success and how they as tutors can provide this. The learners across the three REAPs emphasised the differences between prior learning and their current learning experiences in ACE programmes, and willingly talked about the challenges they face in their learning and how the tutors help them manage these.

The managers, supervisors and coordinators interviewed in the three REAPs provided extensive feedback on how they support learners through several avenues including programme processes and provision of tutor professional development. Community and social service providers who work closely with the REAPs also provided their perspective of what supports ACE learners and how they contribute to this. This latter group's inclusion in the present study is due to the strong connection of REAP providers, and the ACE sector in general, with their communities, and is a feature of this project, echoing the findings by the two previous studies mentioned previously, which focussed on Māori and Pasifika learners (ACE Aotearoa, 2014a; 2014b). The participant voices across these three groups are reported under the following four key themes which resulted from the findings:

(i)   Defining learning success: The learners' perspective;

(ii)   Learner challenges and challenges to learning;

(i)   Learner support mechanisms;

(ii)   Future pathways and plans

The first theme, 'Defining learning success', reports on the feedback received from the learners across the three REAPs. Findings within the remaining three themes are presented first from the learners' voice, followed by the feedback received from the tutors and other stakeholders, supplementing and reflecting the learners' perspective, as well as providing additional viewpoints and therefore considerations of the data.

3.1 Defining learning success: The learners' perspective

"I've always felt dumb and believed no-one would be interested in me. I've come out of my shell, I'm straight up now." (Learner)

ACE programmes are available to people at all ages, with the central aim to provide opportunities for people to learn and develop personal and life skills as well as achieve academically through completing unit standards. This project was undertaken with an underlying supposition that 'learning success' is determined by an individual's concept and experience. The interview questions acknowledged this by asking the learners about their reasons for engaging in a learning programme, what learning meant to them, and the positive experiences they had had in their learning within REAP.

When the learners were asked why they had enrolled in their course or programme, they identified several reasons which highlighted the diversity of programme offerings within REAP. Personal reasons were apparent as well as several learners having a goal to complete a qualification, given they had not achieved NCEA credits whilst at school:

To complete unit standards. I didn't finish NCEA at school, so this furthers my pathway in learning

Get a qualification for a more out-there job

Advance on to do Bachelor's degree

Learn to speak English

To be doing something constructive in between work

Build my confidence

Helps me a lot with my anxiety

So that I can learn how to cook properly

The social aspect

How to parent our children

Gives me confidence working in a kitchen and it also teaches us about nutrition

Space away from distractions

Provides me with an understanding of academic reading and writing

When asked a follow-on question about what learning means for them, the learners' feedback offered a range of personal and academic descriptions. Whilst some learners emphasised learning as a way to further their skills and knowledge, leading to more opportunities for employment, others mentioned confidence-building, expanding their thinking and challenging themselves. As one of the mature learners said, "*I am challenging myself every day, especially at my age. I am doing things I never thought I could or would do*".

Reflective of the type of course or programme they were completing, several learners talked about how learning for them meant gaining practical knowledge and skills in a particular field such as cooking, sewing, art, and learning a new language: "*I am learning the Maori language and how to use this in the kitchen. I am also learning about sustainable practices and transferring these in to my home environment*".

When describing what learning meant to them, the learners also talked about the benefits they were gaining from being involved in the ACE environment and commented on their experiences in the REAP courses. Having choice in how and what they learn, being treated as an adult, and having the opportunity to learn with other adults were identified as benefits and examples of their positive learning experiences. Additional comments are included below:

> *I am doing and learning new skills. I can show and help others learn what I have learned*
>
> *We have a lot of fun learning*
>
> *Meeting other people and learning from each other I felt straight away there was no judgement about me (given my background) and I was immediately accepted and became part of the group*
>
> *The programme is very flexible. You can make your own pathway which means I can work around my home life*
>
> *All the tutors are really really knowledgeable; this is uplifting*
>
> *There is the option to take work home or I can bring my tamariki to class*
>
> *The tutor is so helpful – explains, clarifies that what I am saying and doing is on the right track*
>
> *I've learned more than I have in the pas*
>
> *The tutor describes what we are doing and makes us look forward to it*
>
> *I have made a lot of friendships*
>
> *It's not like school at all, where you are always told what to do. We have a huge say in what we do learn*
>
> *I am becoming more involved in the community*
>
> *The tutors take our feedback and make it happen – it's all from our own input*

I am joining up for more courses – I have an increased willingness to, my kids are allowed, and there is no cost

There are different opportunities that you wouldn't think of doing

You can choose your own pathway in ACE, something you want to do not have to do

Everyone is very accepting of each other. Age is no barrier, we are all treated as equal

It has changed my whole situation. Help is there if you want it; I never wanted help at school

It's a very positive environment. No answer is wrong, it's your perspective

There is a lot of support if you are struggling, and it will stay in the classroom

It's a family environment, a tight-knit community – no-one judges you. Everyone takes you under their wing

3.1.1 Indicators of success

"I am meeting people in the community who understand me. I don't rely on the tutor for this anymore." (Learner)

Learners offered a range of feedback when asked how they know they are doing okay and succeeding in their learning. Several learners talked about personal growth and change as indicators of their learning success whilst others highlighted achievements they were realising academically. For example:

I am talking more, coming out of my shell

I am becoming self-sufficient

I can teach others about my culture now

I know how to do the task. I started the course not knowing at all

I can evaluate against my achievement of the units and objectives. I know I am doing well because I am achieving credits

Knowing I gained more credits here than I did at school

I am able to replicate the learning at home

Some learners also talked about the actions of the tutors as a means to evaluate their learning success. As one learner said, *"Feedback from the tutors tells me how I am going – their praise and compliments when they see an improvement in me"*. Assessment results, tutor monitoring, and the tutor's responses in the marking were also mentioned as indicators of their learning progress.

3.2　Learner challenges and challenges to learning

*"It can be overwhelming at times but everyone is helping you here.
I didn't get any help at school."* (Learner)

The learners referred to a range of challenges to their learning, talking about internal (self) challenges as well as external barriers that inhibit their learning. The tutors and other stakeholders also referred to barriers they perceived as influencing learner success. These latter participant groups were additionally asked to comment on what they thought would improve the quality of learning for ACE learners.

What the learners said

Common challenges identified by the learners focused on self-confidence and the belief that they can learn, and managing the academic requirements. These and other statements of learning challenges included:

Trying out things you are not confident in

When I first arrived, it was difficult opening up but I am more confident now

Learning a new language (English)

Reading and writing is difficult

Listening and paying attention

Learning a new skill

Actual spelling

Understanding the questions, understanding what is required in the learning

Distractions – noise from other classes; my mates coming in

Time management skills. You know, when you are having a hard time with completing unit standards and managing life needs

Putting things in my own words

Adding to this part of the interview, a comment was freely made by one learner who stated, *"I don't find anything difficult anymore, I'm happy to give it a go. This is so different to how I used to find learning"*. This led to a follow-on question asking the learners to talk about how they handle their learning challenges. Support from the tutor and family, as well as the support they gave each other, were identified as key ways to handle difficulties in the learning. Several learners also talked about their self-drive to achieve and succeed. One learner stated, *"I am making a conscious decision every day that I want to do this and I am now getting to do it"* whilst another said, *"You never know until you do it; I sure didn't and now I am"*.

What the tutors said

"A lot of students didn't like and didn't succeed at school. They've learned to adapt.
It's about tapping in to this strength." (ACE Tutor)

When asked to describe what they thought were the main challenges for ACE learners and barriers that therefore needed to be addressed, there were commonalities in the feedback across the three REAPs. For example, the learners' past negative experiences in school was mentioned several times, as well as social issues such as drugs and alcohol. These and other challenges and barriers to learning are evidenced in the comments below:

They have busy lives

Struggling financially - the cost of the course, and family needs on top

Changing and putting new learning in to practice takes time

The curriculum needs to be reviewed as circumstances continually change

Setting SMART goals can be quite hard for them - how to work out their goals specifically

A lot of it is confidence, the learners' confidence in their own abilities - They come thinking they are dumb or too old to learn. These are labels they have been given

They have experienced negative learning in the past

Lack of social services available in the region

Social issues – drugs, alcohol, life generally

There is no stop and start to the programme. It would be good to have more concrete milestones

Lack of resources. A resource budget is needed

Lack of transport

How to build literacy and numeracy into the programme. Tutors have the connectivity with learners, not necessarily the specific expertise (LLN)

A significant challenge also identified was the limited opportunities for employment in the respective regions. This was discussed particularly in relation to the ACE learners being based in semi-rural and rural regions and a subsequent challenge for REAPs, that is, preparing and supporting people for employment in such regional areas. A comment made by one tutor emphasised how this reality influences the learners' engagement in learning, *"They don't have the confidence and drive that you have if you are working"*.

The tutors were also asked what they thought would improve the quality of learning for ACE learners. Their feedback included suggestions at an individual level, that is, what they could do as tutors, and at the organisational (REAP) level.

We need to accept that they learn at their own pace and manage the course content accordingly

Build up a community of learners where they are supporting each other

Good linking in with other learning and support services. It's about connecting with other trustworthy services and working together

Hooking up learners with a whole lot of community activities and people/providers

Being the link between the learner and the next step – other service provider such as polytechnic, university, wananga

Have very professional staff. We need to make sure tutors are of quality and provide professional development for tutors

There needs to be more evidence collection, for example, summary reports; individual learning plans; and they need to be more structured and precise

We work out of our wharekura where the learners are

What the managers and other stakeholders said

"We need to challenge ourselves to make a difference for the learners." (ACE Manager)

Reflective of the feedback received from the tutors, the REAP managers, supervisors and coordinators identified the geography, that is, a rural region, as a key challenge for ACE learners. The distances for some learners to travel to REAP sites and/or not owning a driver's licence were mentioned as key inhibitors, as well as catering to high learning needs of a diverse learner group. As one manager said, *"A real challenge is having enough staff to provide one-to-one support when required. Unless you have a team, how can you cater to high needs?"*

Individual learner support was mentioned again as a barrier to learning, particularly the need for literacy and numeracy support. One of the coordinators talked about how government policy advocates one-to-one support in this area but doesn't fund it. They added that the ACE sector is bound by policy so there is not a lot of room to shift; time allocation per learner is dictated by policy. The REAP stakeholders were also asked to describe what they thought were the main challenges for the REAP (themselves and their team) in supporting the learning achievement of ACE learners. This question heralded extensive feedback, represented in the comments below:

Pathway planning and staircasing in a rural region where there is no provision of tertiary education providers.

We offer self-directed learning options but our learners are not self-directing

ACE is not recognised as a legitimate education provider. We are seen as informal

The learners' attitudes to learning and realising own worth

Helping learners recognise what they can gain and get value out of - the 'hard to reach' learners

We need to have open enrolment but this presents challenges with planning

How do we know we are meeting our learners' needs? We need more in-depth knowledge of this - are we doing all we can?

Understanding that people won't always go from A to B quickly – it might take two years

Changing tutor practice and supporting them in making these changes happen. Some tutors can't move on

There is nowhere to share these stories. We are not recognised by others such as the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

A lack of communication between ACE and the Ministry for Social Development (MSD), and a lack of collaboration with other providers: competitive model still operating.

Having trained staff in rural areas and having enough funds to employ and keep them. We can only manage so much professional development for the tutors given these challenges

Clearly there are a multitude of challenges for the three participant groups whose voices are represented here. Some barriers are endemic, related to geographic, socio-economic, lifestyle and logistics factors. Others relate to internal factors: attitudes, assumptions, experience and expectation; others still to resourcing, a need for training and skill development. The following section includes a number of mechanisms and interventions already occurring, which are having a positive impact; the outcomes from this project also include a way forward to mitigate a good number of these issues, through a planned, systematic and holistic evaluation and review process to focus on continued improvement.

3.3   Learner Support Mechanisms

"Caring, listening, patient, humble people" (Learner)

To gain a whole picture of how the learners perceived being supported in their learning endeavours, a series of questions were asked which encompassed the learning environment and activities, and how the tutors supported them. A wide range of feedback was received.

What the learners said

Groupwork, spending one-on-one time with the tutor, and having opportunities to share experiences and learn from each other were predominant themes in the learners' comments about how they learned best in the REAP environment. Other strategies which they perceived as supporting their learning were described as:

Helping each other if we hit a brick wall, without pressure

Open class, open discussion

Working with the tutor one on one as often as possible. The tutor explains without telling you the answer

It's okay to get something wrong

It helps that everyone in the group wants to learn. You stay focused in this sort of environment

Hands-on learning. Practising makes it easier and builds confidence

When asked what was the best way for them to learn a new idea, several learners again talked about needing one-on-one help from the tutor, and working as a group. There was mention of different teaching and learning activities, such as brainstorming, mind-mapping, conversations each morning on check learning progress, and being given choices and options. One learner stated how they preferred to read on their own *"over and over until I get it; I need to avoid distractions"*. There was also reference to relevancy of the learning and being *"given a voice"*.

Throughout this section of the focus group interviews, there was a significant emphasis on the concept of 'family' and 'community' within the REAP and classroom environments. Comments such as *"There's a real sense of community"* and *"We're like family here"* indicated that the learners appreciated being in an inclusive environment where there was care and respect of each other.

Feedback on how the tutors supported the learners was extensive, with commonalities across the three REAPs. The feedback identified tutor pedagogy and ways in which the environment supported learning, as well as tutor attributes which the learners viewed as having a significant influence on their learning experiences. Phrases such as *"They are awesome"* and *"They go above and beyond for us"* were prominent in the learner responses. Further comments are included below:

The tutor finds and brings in resources for us. She is everywhere trying to help everyone

They keep you on task.

Strong, knowledgeable

It's not instructional-only

Welcome you in to the environment

They give examples of what to do but don't give you the answer; you have to find that out for yourself

We are lucky, we have a Pakeha academic and Maori culture embedded in the other tutor

They help you read and understand the assessment criteria

They don't tell you that you are wrong

It's not as intimidating as a classroom set-up (desks in a row)

Sense of humour, there's always laughter. They make learning fun

They pace the learning

When stressing out, they talk to you and listen

They encourage us to finish

Compassion is the biggest thing

She is always helping us to understand

They understand that you have a disability and they encourage you to "give it a go"

Create an environment where we all work together as well as working individually

Make us feel comfortable in the class, smiling all the time

They lead us to where we can find more information

She helps us get the whole idea, puts it into words for us

The tutor checks in on our progress and how we are feeling

They show interest in us and share things about themselves

She asks us how we learned as well as what we learned

The tutor acknowledges that you learned a long time ago and you are almost starting again

They encourage us to share our culture and ourselves with each other

When asked what they would suggest to make the programme better, the main response was to extend the options of classes to attend, such as evening classes, courses available in other regions, and more options of adult learning courses. One learner also said, *"Our tutors couldn't do more than they are already"* whilst one of the participant groups stated, *"I think we are pretty spoilt with what we have"*.

What the tutors said

"I think tutors in ACE need to be mentors and facilitators." (Tutor)

The tutors were asked several questions to discover how they supported ACE learners, including how they find out learning preferences and needs, what approaches they use consistently and deliberately to support learners in their learning, and what they do to create an inclusive learning environment. Collectively, the tutors described a range of pedagogical practices which they use consistently, as well as identifying numerous interpersonal attributes which they considered had an influence on the learners' experiences and outcomes, as shown below:

Variety in teaching and learning approach; build on previous learning

Find out how they are feeling. Listening, talking with them

Consistency, repetition. Use a lot of reflective questioning and plenty of 'doing'

Get feedback at the end of each session on achievement of objectives

Tolerance for difference. Empathy for others. Non-judgemental. People haven't necessarily chosen where they are at

Feedback (verbal and written), modelling, prompts, use questions. Discussion; self-evaluation

Find out their constraints, skills and skill gaps

Use of stories. Use of humour. Make it fun and interesting

Career planning

Flexible and adaptable. Small group work and one-to-ones when required

A lot of them need to take charge of their own learning and the learning environment. I try to enable this to happen

I don't see myself as the expert – I share myself and what I know

A lot of our learners struggle with bookwork. I give them time to decode

People who walk through the door see you as a positive role model. Authenticity as a tutor. Mine is about empowerment

I try to organise the environment to be as least like a classroom as possible

Whakawhanaunga - getting to know each other. Find out what space they are in when they come in to learn. The first session helps them get comfortable with the environment and the group. Create a non-threatening environment. Lot of warm-up activities and introductions. You can get a sense of their literacy from this.

A lot of them learn best through repetition, plus learning about themselves.

Be really clear with my teaching – explain content. Always offer the opportunity to ask me questions, get feedback

Use of activities to reinforce the learning point/focus.

Help them develop discipline around things they can change, e.g., diet, sleep

Be interested in them. Get to know them at a personal level

Flexible with course material – scaffold due to different levels of ability in the group

Asking for the personal learning stories, their journeys so far

Observe; I don't hover. I wander around [I'm new to this, have had no formal tutor training]

Plan the class carefully and reflect on previous sessions

Compassion and respect for the person regardless of where they come from

We treat them as adults. They decide their needs

I judge my success by the most vulnerable learner I have

We use Learner Journals provided by REAP and review these at the end of the course

Involving the family in the learners' journey was also a prevalent theme in the tutors' feedback across the three REAPs. The terms 'holistic' and 'whole person' were used

regularly to describe their concept of what learning means in the ACE context and how they approach the learner, the learning environment, and the learning purpose and process. This was evidenced in comments such as:

> *We do programme planning around the curriculum. It's knowing about the whole person before they can learn. They come in with mana and integrity*
>
> *Visit them at home when they first start. This involves them, their family. Enable me to see what they have now plus what is required*
>
> *Use them, their family and their background*
>
> *Kereru Koreru – an initial introduction of the learner from the whanau*

Some of the tutors also emphasised the importance of the learner's initiation into REAP and a new programme of learning. They talked about using formal and informal diagnostic testing to gauge literacy and numeracy levels, using learner self-assessment activities and a formal interview process: *"There is an intensive interview at the start, getting to know them, talking about how we will work together. This is motivational for the learners too."*

Across the three REAPs, the tutors collectively referred to how the early stages in the learner's journey provided numerous opportunities to *"set the scene"* for the duration of the programme. As one tutor summarised, *"We welcome them. This is the most important part of the whole course, so we plan the first half of the first session dong this – getting to know them; the learners getting to know each other (which is the key to success); find out what they hope to get out of the course."*

Responses to how they create and sustain an inclusive learning environment where the learners' cultural, learning and other needs are met produced a range of approaches and strategies from the tutors. These included:

> *Some will do their mihi, sharing of their culture about themselves*
>
> *They are given a task about their culture, so I become the student and they are the teacher*
>
> *I make sure everyone has the opportunity to contribute*
>
> *Creating spaces in the group which reflect different cultures*
>
> *I am introducing Te Reo and prayer before eating together*
>
> *Creating a space where they see themselves as learners*
>
> *I am engaging in my own professional development for this, learning the Pasifika culture*

What the managers and other stakeholders said

"We (REAP) are proactive in making connection and working alongside other providers,
with the learner as the central focus." (ACE Coordinator)

Extensive feedback was received from the managers, supervisors and coordinators when asked what mechanisms are in place to support student learning. The answers focused predominantly on what REAP as an organisation and the ACE sector as a larger educational context provide learners to ensure successful learning experiences and outcomes. A summary of the various mechanisms in place is provided in Table 7.

Regularly question why we are doing something, for example, why we offer the programmes

Connection with other organisations, for example, Literacy Aotearoa, polytechnics, ITOs

Conduct one-to-one interviews to work out individual learning plans

Use tutors from within the community as much as possible

Ascertain cultural relevance. This helps determine tutor allocation Be alongside the learners in the community context

Brokerage for iwi-driven programmes which helps with identifying baseline requirements for funding

Building relationships – need to understand the learner's context, who they are, what they need

The learners complete the ALNAT; the pre-progressions enable us to get a snapshot of their learning knowledge and decide "Where to from here?"

Try to have good information-sharing about learners across the ACE sector, therefore maximise on each other's strengths. In this way, we can pathway the learner more effectively

Co-construct learning and pathways with the learner

Being proactive in making connections with and working alongside other providers, with the learner as the central focus

Conduct evaluations

Work with community leaders

All our courses are based around relationships and are goal-focused

Meeting and working with the learners in places where they are comfortable; the Community House for example

The significance and importance of the ACE sector working collaboratively with other education and social service providers was stressed by all stakeholders. Ensuring that the learner was and remained central to this inter-connecting of providers was paramount. As one coordinator said, *"ACE walk alongside providers and share responsibilities at the learner interview stage. We all ask them what their (the learner) world is. That is, we help unpack their worldview and find out why they are enrolling in the programme."* They added that a

change from a competitive model to a collaborative model is occurring, which is a *"big message from TEC*, *however the competitive model is still operating"*.

One of the literacy and numeracy coordinators outlined three key steps that establish a formal process for the learner experience and journey from the beginning of their study. These include:

1. Create an individual learning plan (ILP): The learner identifies goals for their learning;
2. Complete a pathway plan: Once the learning is contextualised;
3. Complete a vocational plan: This captures everyday lifelong learning goals.

Having this clear process in place guarantees that the learning pathway is determined by the learner, in conjunction with an ACE provider. Also, as commented on by the literacy and numeracy coordinator, *"This helps us recognise and know the barriers to people participating, accessing and achieving. We can create barriers when we don't consider and find out their perspective."* Although employment outcomes for the learners is a principle goal of the ACE sector, it was described as not necessarily being a priority outcome. As one ACE coordinator stated,

> *"Participating in society and the local community is a better outcome. Some of our learners don't have life ability to complete qualifications. Often their life is in turmoil, they can't manage themselves or their family situation. Acknowledging the diverse learner-group we have in ACE ensures that we work to meet a range of needs."*

The stakeholders openly admitted that there are more processes and support strategies which need to be put in place in the ACE context to further enhance the learning experience and outcomes for ACE learners. As one manager commented, *"We need to take learners to another stage where we can mentor them in to work. At present, we build up their confidence, help them get a qualification, they finish the course, but then they are on their own."* Another manager made a similar statement, reinforcing this point:

> *"We don't join the dots very well, that is, the follow-on and follow-through with the learners. We need to get better at helping them map out their future for themselves and their families, and then help them develop pathways in to what they want/need to do to achieve this."*

3.3.1 The ACE Tutor: Expectations, essential qualities, and professional development

The pivotal role of the tutor was a frequent focus of the stakeholders' feedback during the interviews. Discussion about the expectations of tutors, their interpersonal qualities, and how

the REAPs support them in their professional development invoked a range of perspectives. For example, the tutor's capabilities as contributing to the quality of learning for ACE learners was highlighted, with such comments as:

We need tutors who live and breathe the area

We work hard at getting the right tutors in front of the learners - need someone who can quickly move between pathways; can identify and contextualise connection with the students' interests – helps make the learning fit their world quickly

The tutor is able to help the learner unpack their skills and qualities, contextualise their reality and capabilities and give them a framework

It's about having conversations that guides the learning provided (what we do) and is meaningful for the learner

Knowledge of how adults learn. Our tutors need more of this

Make sure we have tutors who can relate to people

A wide range of tutor qualities were also identified, considerably reflective of the qualities mentioned by the tutors. Across the three REAPs, the stakeholders emphasised the following tutor qualities needed to effectively and positively impact on the learners' experiences and outcomes in ACE programmes:

o   Total respect for the individual
o   Recognising the mana everyone comes with
o   Hook into cultural capital - the skills learners have already
o   Have presence
o   Be real; communicate with integrity
o   Passionate about their world. They can unpack their passion and relate it to the learning process
o   People who are not frightening, they put learners at ease, and use cultural values to make connections (Māoridom)
o   Skilled and invest in their own learning
o   Relationship-building and empathy
o   Caring and sit alongside the learner
o   Give learners opportunities and skills to improve their lives
o   Flexibility is huge – take a responsive approach and help students build their learning
o   Humility
o   Patience
o   Non-judgemental
o   Subject-matter expertise
o   Able to create, build and maintain trust
o   Ability to relate – they don't talk down
o   Form positive relationships

Given these expectations of tutor practice and attributes, what professional development (PD) is provided for tutors in the REAPs and how are they supported in implementing new

learning in their teaching? This question was asked of the stakeholders, to which they identified numerous internal and external examples:

External

National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education (NCALE) – "Although this is not required in the ACE sector"

Full-time tutors attend conferences – "Where they find out how well they are doing and learn new things"

Adult learning, facilitation skills – "We need to do more of this"

Dyslexia programmes

Allied mental health courses

Celebrate in the ACE Adult Learners Week

NCALE Level 5 Educator

Assessor-moderator training – "So they can deliver and unpack unit standards, and create content and learning tasks related to the learner's world"

Be familiar with Pathways Awarua and help learners use this

Use the ALNAT online assessment tool – Youth, Maori and the Adult Learner versions

Able to use the NZ Careers site

Internal

Support with writing learning outcomes – "This helps them turn their language in to education speak"

Embedding literacy and numeracy in the programmes

I get all tutors together twice a year to celebrate Matariki and December Xmas

Reciprocal teaching observations

Informal collaboration and sharing across the team

Bi-monthly huis to collaborate and coordinate: being learner-centric. Working together as educational providers across levels

I meet once a month with the tutors where we share stories, check-in, identify own needs and student needs

Having ongoing conversations with the tutors: How do they know what student needs are/where the student is at/ how they got there?

New tutor induction and orientation: policies and procedures, meet and greet, regular check-ins

Encourage self-review: What worked well? Changes to make? How to make the course better?

Allow autonomy plus some direction of expectation

It was evident from the feedback that a great deal of support for tutors is provided by the coordinators and managers themselves, with an emphasis on an 'open door policy': *"They can contact me and talk things through; no-one is alone"*, and encouragement of team collaboration and support: *"Staff get together at beginning of the year plus regular meetings to check-in, debrief, help change things, build teaching capabilities."* One of the managers mentioned that there was potential to provide more support for tutors in the areas of tutor observations by managers, and peer observation and review, stating that there is no formal process for this sort of intervention at this stage.

A manager summarised the value of supporting professional development as a strategic priority in his statement, *"Professional development for ourselves and our tutors is very important. Our philosophy is that learning makes the difference, so we emulate this by tutor professional development as well."*

3.4   Future pathways and plans

"I have a great sense of satisfaction from achieving something. I've now got my restricted licence with help from REAP." (Learner)

The final two questions in the focus group interviews asked the learners what changes they hoped to make by completing the programme, and what they planned to do in the future. The feedback on changes they hoped to make predominantly highlighted changes they were already making as a consequence of attending REAP and completing an ACE programme. For example:

I've changed drastically – I have come out of my shell, I couldn't talk to anyone

I am making changes to how I would normally manage things

I am approaching life decisions differently

Learning new skills and transferring these in to our own life/home environment

I want to achieve and do something better than I have been doing – be independent

REAP has helped us learn skills which we can pass on to our children

I am making very different choices and decisions now

Future plans and goals of the learners across the three REAPs ranged from continuing on to higher level studies to enrolling in another ACE programme through REAP. For some of the learners, their comments indicated that they remained unsure about what they wanted to do, seeing the ACE programmes as a means to help with this decision and/or continue developing their skills. Gaining employment and/or becoming self-employed were common features of the feedback.

Further higher level study:

Enrol in a Bachelor of Applied Media Art

I want to put my study in to work, become a teacher, and specialise in special needs/diverse learners

This programme is a stepping stone for me to go in to social work

Next year I aim to complete a certificate in bi-cultural social services

Enrol in more ACE programmes:

Do another course at REAP to gain more confidence and keep working on this

See if I can get in to another course and keep improving

Keep coming here to learn new things

Move on to other courses which keep developing my skills

I want to be a helicopter pilot. I needed Level 2 to do this, so I am now enrolled in a course where I can complete this

Uncertain future pathway:

Carry on, not give up

I'm still not sure. I am coming back next year and hopefully will figure it out by then

I hope this course will help me figure out what I want to do

Future employment:

I want to run my own business

Be an art tutor one day

Eventually buy my own equipment so that I can keep practising, working, and learning at home

Getting my certificate; this will help me to get a job

4. Summary and Conclusion

The ACE sector promotes and facilitates the engagement of adults in lifelong learning. It offers a range of community-based education activities and programmes that are flexible in nature and responsive to the learning needs of communities and to individual learners. This project has collected feedback from learners enrolled in ACE programmes in three New Zealand REAPs to discover what they perceive is successful learning and how their learning experience and outcomes are supported by the REAP.

4.1 Learner Success

This project has confirmed a wider application of what other studies in the ACE sector have previously established within particular learner groups – Māori and Pasifika - that successful learning is a concept determined by an individual's perception and conception (ACE Aotearoa, 2014a; 2014b). Feedback from the learners highlighted several different notions of learning success within personal and academic achievement domains. Whilst some learners emphasised key accomplishments of enrolling in a programme of learning and gaining credits which will help them find employment in the future, others talked about "*coming out of their shell*" and becoming self-sufficient. Transferring and using the learning in their home and community environments was a strong theme across the three REAPs.

Defining learning success had many guises in the learners' feedback, as they talked about their experiences and the benefits they were gaining from being enrolled in an ACE programme. For some, the programme had "*changed their whole situation*" and they were anticipating getting a job, something they had thought was unachievable. Other learners highlighted how much they were enjoying developing friendships and being "*part of a family environment and a tight-knit community*".

4.2 Learner Support

The tutors featured extensively in the learners' view of their learning experiences and outcomes. 'Helpful', 'accepting', 'knowledgeable' and 'uplifting' were just a few of the terms used to describe how the tutors supported and cared about the learners. Pedagogical knowledge and practices of the tutors were also identified by the learners as these supported them. For example, creating a welcoming environment, encouraging learners to share their culture and themselves with the group, and asking for their personal stories. Similar attributes and approaches were identified by the tutors, as they talked about the importance of feedback, staircasing the learning, building rapport with the learners, and creating a non-threatening environment. Whakawhanaunga – getting to know each other – was a collective method used by the tutors across the three REAPs.

Additionally, the REAP setting was depicted as a positive environment where there are different opportunities available and where "*everyone takes you under their wing*". There was a real sense of acceptance of the learner as a unique individual and regarding them as adults, in contrast to their previous experiences at school.

Challenges for REAPs and other ACE providers in supporting ACE learners were predominantly either external, politically-driven factors or driven by the diverse needs of the learner cohort. The dictates of government funding for the ACE sector not being recognised

as a legitimate education provider given their informal education status was frequently mentioned by the tutors, managers and ACE coordinators. Pathway planning and staircasing in a rural region where there is minimal or no provision of tertiary education was also highlighted as a challenge. Learner characteristics and needs which presented challenges for the REAPs included lack of self-direction, lack of self-confidence, social issues such as drugs, alcohol and financial struggles, and low literacy and numeracy skills.

4.3 The Strengths of the ACE Sector

In addition to the formal interview questions, the tutors and 'other' stakeholders made comments about the strengths of the ACE sector. These comments provided a complementary summary of the feedback that had been received across the three participant groups in the three REAPs. For example, they talked about how the ACE environment is conducive to non-confident learners: *"The informal nature of REAP is much more reassuring for some learners. They don't feel threatened to ask questions"*. Remarks about the tutors reinforced how these staff are recognised as pivotal in the learners' journey and achievement of learning outcomes. For example, *"The tutors are competent and confident, in particular in group settings. They take an active role in facilitation in teaching"*, and *"The tutors are adaptable and flexible. This is much more important in the ACE space where we have a number of vulnerable learners"*.

Leadership of the REAP as well as having the right people working in this context were emphasised as key to the success of achieving their mandate to support and enhance learner success. As one coordinator said, "*Having a great leader who is flexible and relaxed, whose guidance is valued, and there are no hidden agendas. This trickles down to the coordinators passing leadership on to and into your team*". One of the tutors reflected this thinking in their comment,

> *"We have a leader who directs this REAP in order to deliver to the community. People who work here are from here, they know their world. This place is inclusive of all staff."*

A prevalent statement made across the stakeholder group was the need for more in-depth knowledge of whether learners' needs are being met by REAP and more broadly by the ACE sector. This was evidenced in comments such as "*How do we know we are meeting learner needs? That we are doing all we can?*" and "*There needs to be more evidence collection, for example summary reports and results of individual learning plans*". An 'ACE Learner Journal' has recently been developed as a tool for learners to record their learning as they progress

through a course or programme. REAPs are increasingly using the Journal in their programmes, as it encourages learners to establish their learning goals and future plans, as well as prompt self-assessment on their progress and/or achievement of these. Regular formative and summative learner evaluations are also conducted as an integral ACE programme process. These mechanisms of evaluation subsequently provide a benchmarking strategy for REAPs.

4.4 Outcomes

The project's original intention was to produce a 'teaching practice model' and a 'practice change model' to guide shifts in teaching and learning practice within REAPs and promote effective programme delivery. However, the data collected from the three REAPs and the findings outlined in this report, attest to the strength of the provision already in place, and the learners', tutors', and stakeholders' appreciation of existing systems and approaches. Bearing such evidence and testimony in mind, the project team instead elected to move beyond the original objective, and focus instead on adding value by developing a sector-specific evaluation and review method and resources. The threefold contribution here is (1) to address a gap in the literature and availability of frameworks and templates designed for the ACE sector; (2) to provide a tool for the three REAPs to capture the good practices described and ensure these are not lost to the organisations over time, and that new teachers have a guideline to follow, and (3) to support external colleagues and extend local success beyond the participating REAPS to the wider REAPANZ and ACE network.

4.4.1 Learner-centric Evaluation Model

A model positioning the learner as central to all REAP and ACE sector activities has been developed, establishing essential learner-centric practices and stakeholders that collectively facilitate the evaluation of learner success (*refer Appendix A*). This is based on two of the core concepts underpinning the project: firstly, that the learners themselves are the centre and source of educational success, since they define their own success; and secondly, that a hallmark of the ACE sector is its strong connections with community stakeholders. Consequently, the second layer features primary support people and networks inherent in the learner's world including their whanau/family and the community they live in surround the learner. The third layer identifies different mechanisms operating within the REAP context which enable planned and incidental learning to be captured through different evaluation strategies by the stakeholders integral to the learner (the fourth layer), including the learners themselves. The outer layer of the model indicates a further level of influencing factors on

the learner's learning experience and outcomes, including Governmental policies and funding, and professional capabilities of practitioners in the ACE context.

An evaluation and review process has been designed to assist REAPs in implementing the principles and embodying the philosophy of the model. Together with this evaluation review process, the learner-centric model guides information-gathering processes which can be used by REAPs and other ACE providers to determine their current effectiveness as well as future programme planning and practitioner development.

4.4.2 Evaluation Review Process

Given the frequent reference to the need for more evaluation of how ACE programmes and REAPs as an ACE provider are supporting and meeting the needs of their learners, an evaluation and review process has been designed (*refer Appendix B*). The process is comprised of three evaluation review templates for use at different levels in the learner-centric evaluation model to encourage a culture of continuous reflection and review, based on similar pedagogical principles to Brookfield's (2013) Critical Incident Questionnaire.

The templates have been modelled on the original interview schedules used as data collection methods in this project, and informed by the extensive feedback received from the ACE learners, REAP managers, REAP tutors, REAP supervisors and ACE coordinators who participated. The evaluation and review process provides an additional means of determining the value and effectiveness of interventions used to support ACE learners' success.

Learner Evaluation and Review Template

The learner evaluation and review template gives learners a voice in what is helping or hindering their learning at regular stages in the programme. The template is designed to be flexible in its use, for example the frequency with which the questions are asked, the number of questions asked at any one time, and the selection of questions as relevant to the learning session or programme.

Tutor Evaluation and Review Template

The tutor evaluation and review template is a reflective tool designed to encourage tutors to think deeply about their practice and how they influence the learners' experience and contribute to the success of learner outcomes. Self-assessment questions are included, prompting the tutor to determine how they know their teaching is effective, and identify what

professional development they need to support and enhance their practice. The template also proposes that the tutor consider actions they can take in response to their answers.
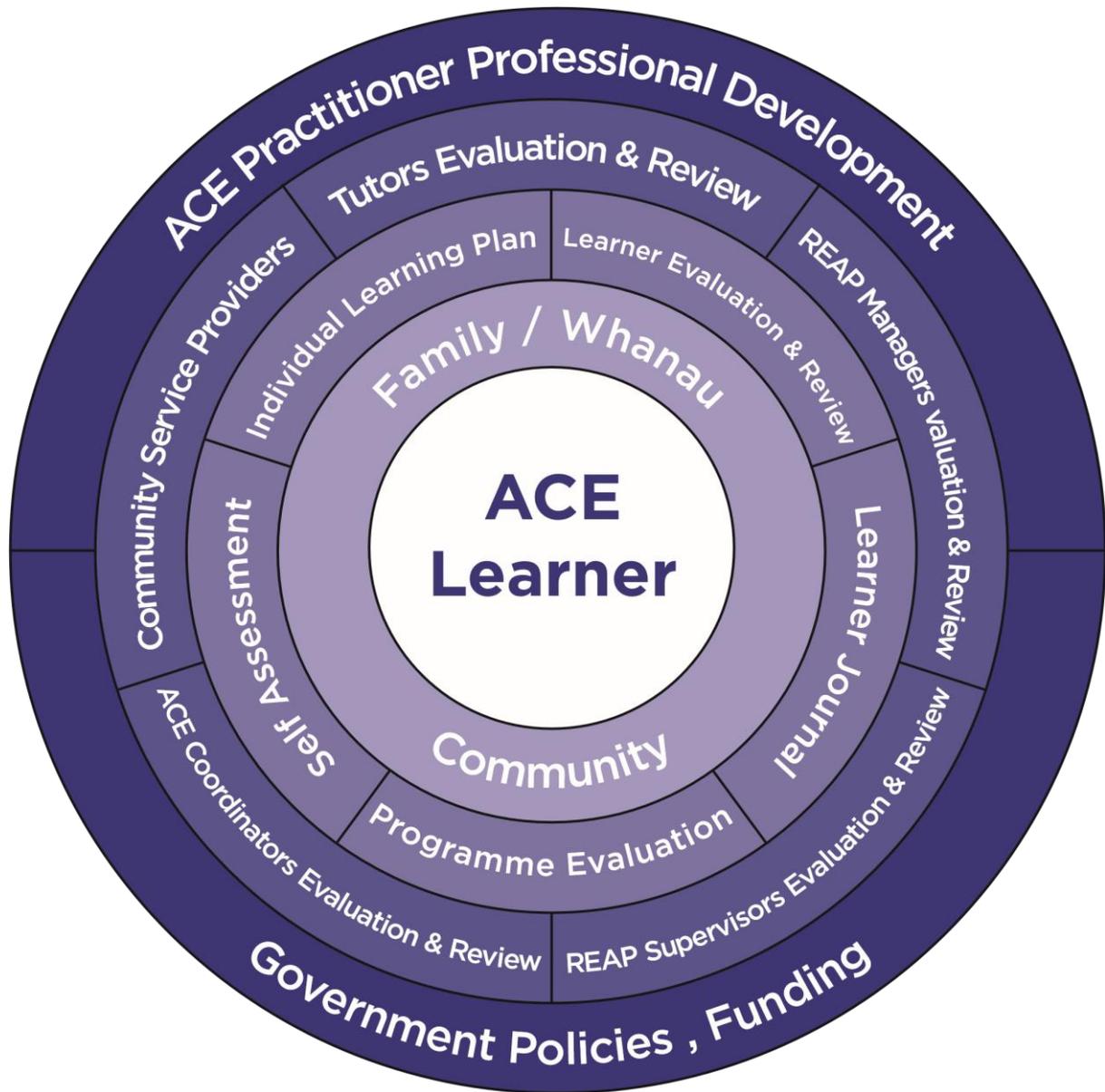
Organisation Evaluation and Review Template

This template aims to engage REAPs and other ACE providers in discussions about how they as an organisation are influential in supporting the learning achievement of ACE learners. An integral component of such discussion is the development of tutors, and how this can be supported internally and externally.

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Appendix A: Learner-centric Model of Evaluation

A concentric circle diagram centered on "ACE Learner". The surrounding rings contain: Family / Whanau, Community, Individual Learning Plan, Self Assessment, Learner Journal, Programme Evaluation, Learner Evaluation & Review, Tutors Evaluation & Review, Community Service Providers, ACE Coordinators Evaluation & Review, REAP Supervisors Evaluation & Review, REAP Managers Evaluation & Review. The outer rings read "ACE Practitioner Professional Development" and "Government Policies , Funding".

Appendix B: Evaluation and Review Process

Learner Evaluation and Review Template

Question	Response	Required Action	Who
What is working well for you in this programme?			
How do you know you are doing okay in the programme?			
What is the best way for you to learn something or grasp a new idea?			
What type of learning activities support you in your learning?			
Describe a good learning environment which supports you in your learning.			
What things are you finding most difficult in your learning?			
How are you handling those things?			
What are some positive experiences of your learning?			
How do your tutors support you in your learning?			
What else could your tutors do to support you?			
Do you have an individual learning plan? A pathway plan? A vocational plan? Do you discuss these with your tutor?			
How would you make this programme better for you?			

Tutor Evaluation and Review Template

Question	Response	Required Action
How do I create a safe, welcoming environment for the learners?		
How do I decide what teaching and learning methods are appropriate to use with ACE learners?		
What type of learning activities are supporting the learners?		
What approaches do I consistently and deliberately use to support students and their learning?		
What do I do to make sure all learners are included and their cultural, learning and other needs are met?		
Does each learner have an individual learning plan? A pathway plan? A vocational plan? Do you discuss these with your learners on a regular basis?		
How do I know the learner is doing okay in the programme?		
What else could I do to support the learner?		
How do I identify if my teaching is effective?		
What professional development will support my teaching practice?		

Organisation Evaluation and Review Template

Question	Response	Required Action	Who
SUPPORTING LEARNERS			
What mechanisms are in place to support student learning?			
What mechanisms are in place to support the quality of learning for learners in the classroom environment?			
What else would improve the quality of learning for your learners?			
SUPPORTING TUTORS			
What are important qualities and attributes of ACE tutors?			
How do you identify professional development needs of your tutors?			
What support and professional development is most effective for your tutors?			
What support is available to your tutors to assist them with implementing improvements in their teaching?			
STRENGTHS and AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT			
What are the main strengths of your organisation?			
What strategies are in place to improve the learning support provided for your learners?			
How else could you and your team do to support the learning achievement of your learners?			