

**Degrees by Independent Learning: A case study of practice at
Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand**

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies
(Adult Learning)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF APPENDICES	v
GLOSSARY	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
Chapter One: Setting the Scene	1
The Independent Learning Pathway (ILP) Approach	1
The Professional Practice Context – My Practice	2
The Institutional Context – The Evolution of Capable NZ	4
The Regulatory Context	6
The Learner Context	9
Summarising the Context	10
Chapter Two: Project Terms of Reference	11
Aims and Objectives of the Research Project	11
Anticipated Benefits of the Project	12
The Literature	13
The Value of Informal and Experienced Based Learning	15
Communities of Practice	16
Mentoring	17
The Value of Reflection	21
Transformational Learning	22
Instrumental Learning versus Transformative Learning	25
Facilitation	26
Storytelling	30
Case Studies	31
Identity	32

New Zealand Context	33
Acknowledging Māori.....	34
Chapter Three: The Research Process	38
Introduction.....	38
Interpretive Paradigm	39
Grounded Theory	42
Data Collection	44
Survey	44
In-depth Interviews	47
Learner Interviews.....	48
Facilitator Interviews.....	49
Data Analysis and Processing	54
Researcher Participation – My Role as an Insider-Researcher.....	55
Triangulation	58
Ethical Considerations.....	61
Chapter Four: Project Findings and Analysis	66
Theme 1: The ILP Approach – Coping with Programme Expectations	67
Theme 2: Perspectives on New Learning – What and Why?.....	72
Theme 3: Facilitating Learning – How Best Achieved?.....	88
Chapter Five: Towards a Model of Effective ‘Facilitation of Learning’	101
Facilitation as a Professional Activity	103
Principles for Effective Facilitation of Learning.....	106
Competency Framework	111
Elements of the Competency Framework.....	112
Overview of the Learning Process and Learning Tasks	115
Conclusion	129
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Reflections	131
Limitations of the Study	134

Areas for Future Enquiry	135
Final Reflections	136
APPENDICES.....	141
Appendix 1: The Regulatory Requirements for Degree Level Learning	141
Appendix 2: New Zealand Productivity Commission ‘New Models of Tertiary Education’ March 2017 – RPL and Capable New Zealand.....	142
Appendix 3a: Letter to Learners – pre Survey.....	144
Appendix 3b: Letter to Learners – with Survey.....	146
Appendix 3c: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form - Facilitators.....	147
Appendix 3d: Survey Questions.....	150
Appendix 4a: Interview Questions - Learners	158
Appendix 4b: Interview Questions - Facilitators	159
Appendix 5a: Initial Data Gathering	160
Appendix 5b: Coding Analysis Example.....	161
Appendix 6: Model of Effective ‘Facilitation of Learning’	162
Appendix 7a: Email from Learner Hale T. Pole (Post-assessment).....	187
Appendix 7b: Email from Hale T. Pole’s wife Joanna Campbell (Post-assessment).....	188
Appendix 8: Email from Parent of Learner	189
Appendix 9: Mercury Bay Informer – Capable NZ Graduate, Luana Tupou.....	190
Appendix 10: Capable NZ Graduate, Grant Elliot	192
Appendix 11: Capable NZ - Bachelor of Applied Management	193
List of References	195

LIST OF APPENDICES

Chapter One

Appendix 1 Regulatory Requirements for Degree Level Learning in NZ

Chapter Two

Appendix 2 New Zealand Productivity Commission 'New Models of Tertiary Education',
March 2017 – excerpts on RPL and Capable New Zealand

Chapter Three

Appendix 3a Letter to Learners – pre Survey

Appendix 3b Letter to Learners – with Survey

Appendix 3c Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form – Facilitators

Appendix 3d Survey Questions

Appendix 4a Interview Guide to Learners

Appendix 4b Interview Guide to Facilitators

Appendix 5a Initial Data Gathering

Appendix 5b Coding Analysis Example

Chapter Four

Appendix 6 Model of Effective 'Facilitation of Learning' comprising:

- Role of Facilitator;
- Overview of Learning Tasks;
- Learning Tasks 1-8;
- Competency Framework for Facilitators;
- Work Allocation Model;
- ILP (Canvas) Map

Appendix 7a Email from Learner Hale T. Pole (Post-assessment)

Appendix 7b Email from Hale T. Pole's wife Joanna Campbell (Post-assessment)

Appendix 8 Email from Parent of Learner

Appendix 9 Mercury Bay Informer Article – Capable NZ Graduate, Luana Tupou

Appendix 10 Capable NZ Graduate, Grant Elliot

Appendix 11 Capable NZ Bachelor of Applied Management

GLOSSARY

AP(E)L	Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning
APL	Assessment of Prior Learning
BAppMgt	Bachelor of Applied Management
BSS	Bachelor of Social Services
CAPL	Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning (used up to 2008 then changed to Capable NZ)
Capable NZ	Capable New Zealand
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EBL	Experience-Based Learning
ELT	Experiential Learning Theory
GDPP	Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice
ILP	Independent Learning Pathway
IT	Information Technology
MPP	Master of Professional Practice
MSF	Māori Strategic Framework
NZ	New Zealand
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
PILP	Partial Independent Learning Pathway
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission

ABSTRACT

This project constitutes a critical enquiry into the Independent Learning Pathway (ILP) approach to acquiring degrees offered by Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand. The ILP approach is for professionally experienced adults who are often poorly served by traditional taught approaches to achieving degree qualifications. These learners already have considerable degree-relevant knowledge and skill, yet this usually does not count as part of a taught degree, and these learners usually do not enrol in such degree programmes because they do not have the time to study within the typical delivery framework. The ILP approach provides equity of access for this group but is a significantly different learning process which challenges traditional conceptions of degree level learning and in turn is challenged as a valid approach by academics and regulatory agencies.

Hence this study aims both to illuminate and validate the degree level learning which occurs in the ILP and to develop a model of practice for facilitators to assure the quality of this degree level learning. In pursuit of these aims I undertook, as a participant researcher, a work-based enquiry using an interpretive approach, drawing on the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), (Strauss and Corbin 2015).

The project research phase commenced with an extensive survey sent to all (423) learners who studied with Capable NZ from 2006-2014, followed up with ten in-depth interviews with current learners, and eight interviews with facilitators of the ILP model. I captured the themes emerging from the feedback and analysis to identify clear signposts for both effective learning and effective facilitation in an independent learning context.

This study has resulted in a (grounded) model of practice for the teachers, referred to in Capable NZ as facilitators, who guide ILP learners. This model of practice includes a competency framework, successful practice guidelines and practical learning tools. The study has also resulted in guidelines and learning tools for learners, and for both facilitators and learners the 'SPRINGBOARD' tool has been developed as a reflective framework for effective facilitation and learning respectively. Another key outcome of the study is the illumination and validation of the degree level learning which occurs through the ILP process.

Chapter One: Setting the Scene

This project constitutes a critical enquiry into the Independent Learning Pathway (ILP) approach to acquiring degrees offered by Capable NZ through Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin, New Zealand. The ILP approach is for professionally experienced adults who usually are in work (paid and unpaid), and who often lack the credentials necessary to support the career directions to which they aspire. This group in society is often poorly served by the usual approaches to degree qualifications which typically are content laden and which usually do not acknowledge the learning which professionally experienced adults have already acquired. These learners frequently have considerable degree-relevant knowledge and skill which cannot credit to conventional qualifications; nor do these learners have the time to study within a taught degree delivery structure and framework. The ILP approach provides equity of access for this group but is a significantly different learning process which challenges the usual conceptions of degree level learning, and in turn has its validity challenged by traditional academics and regulatory agencies. Hence this study is important not only to illuminate and validate the degree learning which does occur but also to develop a model of practice for facilitators, which assures the quality of this degree level learning.

The Independent Learning Pathway (ILP) Approach

The Independent Learning Pathway is an alternative approach to established degree programmes, which in New Zealand are defined by the Graduate Profile (see Appendix 6, Learning Task 4, of the matrix), comprising a set of graduate outcome statements which describe what a successful graduate will know and be able to do. To achieve the degree learners, whether taught learners or ILP learners, must be assessed as having the knowledge and skills set out in the Graduate Profile. In a taught programme the various courses develop the learner's knowledge and skill, which is assessed on a course by course basis. In the ILP, this knowledge and skill is assessed against the graduate profile rather than against the learning outcomes for the individual courses.

For this study, I focus on the two most frequently undertaken ILP undergraduate programmes: the Bachelor of Applied Management (BAppMgt) and the Bachelor of Social Services (BSS). The ILP approach is, in essence, an intensely learner-centred and highly reflective process through which the learner first of all makes explicit the skills and knowledge they have acquired in their work and lives to date and which are relevant to their

chosen degree pathway. The learner then integrates that knowledge into a personal framework of practice, itself informed by the theories which underpin their chosen profession or occupation.

It is important to understand the beliefs that underpin the ILP approach, which can be summarised as follows:

- Where and how people learn is of itself not important to achieving a degree. It is the learning itself that counts.
- Well-motivated and experienced adult learners are capable of taking responsibility for and managing their own learning once expectations are made clear and the required learning skills are developed.
- Critical reflection is the driving force of independent learning, but this capability often needs to be developed, which is one of the essential roles of the facilitator.

The ILP learning process comprises a set of learning activities designed to help learners make explicit their learning from experience and to make sense of that learning. As part of the process learners identify any gaps they may have in knowledge or skill areas, for which they take responsibility to address. This may be through reading, professional discussions or attending courses or seminars.

In the ILP approach the learner compiles a portfolio which identifies relevant experience and the learnings from that experience. Also, as part of the approach, the learner prepares case studies of their practice to demonstrate how they have met the graduate outcome statements which define their chosen degree. The learner's portfolio and case studies are central to the assessment process which is undertaken by two assessors, one an academic and the other a practitioner in the field. The assessment process includes a professional conversation in which the learner articulates their knowledge and capabilities relevant to their degree.

The Professional Practice Context – My Practice

My professional practice is as a teacher/facilitator, mentor, assessor and programme leader in Capable NZ, drawing on my qualifications and experience as a career counsellor and teacher. Throughout this study, I refer to the role and practice of the facilitator, and it is important to establish that the facilitation role at Capable NZ is regarded as a higher

education teaching role, requiring of its practitioners advanced subject knowledge and thorough understandings of adult learning theory. I discuss the nature of the facilitation role in Chapter Two.

I have undertaken this study for two main reasons. First, to improve my practice and that of my colleagues in Capable NZ and through this provide a better service for learners. The second reason is to validate the ILP approach to degree acquisition, given that this approach challenges traditional conceptions of degree learning and delivery.

As a facilitator, my eleven years of practice to date in Capable NZ appears to have served me well because my learners have been successful not only in achieving their degrees, but also subsequently in their careers, often as a consequence of their study success. However, I was keen to have a much deeper understanding of the processes I facilitate and lead, and in particular to evaluate critically what and how our learners are learning. What strategies are most effective in promoting their learning and why? Is completion of this process as transformational as it appears to be? Are our learners more effective in their professional lives as a result of completing successfully the ILP journey? These are some of the bigger issues I wanted better to understand so that I could theorise my professional practice in the interests of introducing transferable changes and to create new knowledge to share with my colleagues who constitute my community of practice.

My leadership role in Capable NZ is an equally important context for this study, particularly my responsibility for the academic quality of the ILP services we provide and for the training and development of facilitators and assessors. The service we offer has grown rapidly over the last three years, with more growth anticipated, creating a need to put in place stronger quality assurance mechanisms.

As we grow, it will be important to have well-documented understandings of our practices for training and development purposes for new facilitators and assessors. We need to ensure that growth does not come at the expense of academic rigour or learner success.

Currently, ninety percent of all Capable NZ learners successfully complete their qualification and we are keen to maintain and improve on this track record.¹

¹ Researcher discussion with Sue Thompson, Director: Quality Services, Otago Polytechnic.

The ILP approach is unique to Otago Polytechnic and whilst results are excellent, we have not previously done formal research to understand why this is so.

To ensure we recruit, develop and retain effective facilitators I believe it is important that we develop an effective model of 'facilitation of learning' that clearly sets out the skills, knowledge and attitudes for facilitators. This is a key output of this study and is presented in Chapter Six.

The Institutional Context – The Evolution of Capable NZ

Capable NZ first started out in the late 1990's as CAPL – The Centre for the Assessment of Prior Learning, initially focused only on Otago Polytechnic's Bachelor of Applied Management (BAppMgt). The initial approach to recognising prior experiential learning was an assessment process concerned with gathering evidence that proved that learning had occurred and matched the expected learning outcomes of the targeted qualification.

By 2008 CAPL was renamed Capable NZ, and the BAppMgt was augmented with the Bachelor of Social Services (BSS). These two degrees are the most frequently undertaken, although the Capable NZ undergraduate programme portfolio now includes degrees in culinary arts, design, engineering and information technology (IT), as well as diplomas in business, construction management, quantity surveying, building control and tertiary education. Indeed, through Capable NZ a learner can obtain almost all of the qualifications available at Otago Polytechnic.

Capable NZ provides flexible learning opportunities enabling people to achieve qualifications which meet their needs with regard to both what is learned and how it is learned. This flexibility is consistent for learners to seek more learner-centred learning opportunities, as well as the emerging preference for people to undertake learning in their workplaces. The ILP approach is focused on the individual learner who can commence their learning at any time, working one-on-one with a facilitator who is most suited to their area of interest.

In the early years the then CAPL targeted highly experienced learners who had very few gaps in their knowledge and skills which made up their chosen degree, hence the assessment approach worked well because any gaps in knowledge which were identified were easily filled by self-study.

However, it was recognised that only assessing skills and knowledge already acquired was not realising the potential of the individual learner, and was denying opportunities for those with plenty of professional experience but with more substantial knowledge and skill gaps. It was realised more people could be helped to achieve degrees by acknowledging prior learning through a learning model rather than an assessment model. The essence of a learning model is critical reflection on experience, whereas the earlier assessment model focused almost entirely on compiling a portfolio of evidence to match against the learning outcomes of the chosen degree. Thus started the evolution of the approach which would by 2014 be known as the Independent Learning Pathway (ILP). This intensely reflective process helped learners identify the experiences that had shaped their practice, extract the learnings from those experiences and make sense of those learnings through the development of a framework of practice.

This reflective process, central to the ILP, is what underpinned a different approach to degree learning from that typically undertaken in a taught degree. It is acknowledged that developing skill in critical reflection is also expected of students undertaking taught degrees, however for the ILP the learning process is based on critical reflection. Other key outcomes of degree level learning, are skills in analysis, enquiry, communication and ability to engage with the literature. All of these skills were strengthened progressively as the ILP approach was developed.

Capable NZ is strategically important to Otago Polytechnic for several reasons. Firstly, Capable NZ targets learners who are often underserved by the traditional tertiary system, which at the undergraduate level is geared to younger learners, and especially to school leavers. Capable NZ programmes are designed for experienced learners enabling them to draw on the industry, professional or community context and experience. Our approach is holistic, with learning referenced to the graduate outcome statements which are used to define NZ degrees, rather than to specific discipline content which is used in taught programmes to build the very knowledge and skills which Capable NZ learners acquire through their experience and often in the workplace.

Secondly, Capable NZ programmes are innovative – they break with the historical traditions of degree teaching and offer an alternative pathway to degree level learning which better suits many adult learners, i.e. those who are self-motivated, highly experienced and able to

learn autonomously. This alternative pathway is a 'win' for the learners, who typically achieve their degree in one year while at work, with time and financial benefits. It is also a 'win' for the Polytechnic through an enhanced reputation for innovative delivery and a wider and more diversified learner base. It is a 'win' for the organisations which may employ or sponsor the learner, through the critical reflection and upskilling that occurs; and arguably is a 'win' for the tertiary system as a whole through a more sustainable approach to learning.

Thirdly, Capable NZ is strategically important because of its singular focus on the individual learner, and in this regard spearheads the Polytechnic's strategic intent to be a learner-centred organisation². Capable NZ's learner-centred ethos and work-based learning philosophy places the learner and their work at the heart of the learning process. The learner-centred practices of Capable NZ have had a positive impact on some of the more traditional programmes delivered at Otago Polytechnic, for example, the degree in Culinary Arts.

The Regulatory Context

There has been growing interest in NZ in approaches to gaining qualifications which recognise prior experiential learning. The NZQA which approves all NZ qualifications encourages and supports prior experiential learning to be recognised and is open to alternative approaches to delivering tertiary education.

The Otago Polytechnic ILP approach is unique in the NZ context and as far as the Polytechnic can ascertain is not directly paralleled elsewhere in the world. We have not been able to find another bona fide education provider which offers learners the opportunity to achieve a defined and approved discipline focused degree based on their current learning through experience, with the expectation that any learning gaps related to the graduate profile for the degree will be covered by the learner independently. It is up to the learner as to how they choose to fill any learning gaps e.g. by reading, undertaking courses, job shadowing, accessing a mentor or through activities in their workplace.

There are many examples of degrees which learners can design for themselves, particularly through work-based learning. However, it is important to note that while the ILP approach

² Otago Polytechnic Strategic Directions (2015). <https://www.op.ac.nz/assets/our-publications/Otago-Polytechnic-Strategic-Directions-2015-2017.pdf>

is informed by work-based learning principles it is not as such a work-based learning degree of which there is ample precedent – such degrees involving learning at, through and for work. The ILP approach certainly recognises learning which has occurred through work and may include new learning related to work but this is not a prerequisite element of the pathway.

There are also precedents for degree qualifications to be achieved through recognition of prior experiential learning. Such approaches require the learner to provide evidence that the learning outcomes making up the degree have already been met. The methodology in such cases is an assessment methodology. However, the ILP approach as already explained is not an *assessment* process, but a *learning* process, one which brings about new knowledge and understandings for the learner. It is not just a process of gathering evidence to prove that learning has already taken place. Indeed, the reflective process of interpreting prior learning itself generates new learning, as this study explored.

Successful completion of a bachelor degree means that the learner has achieved at Level 7 on the NZ Qualifications Framework (NZQF). This means they have acquired specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more fields of work or study and have the following skills: ‘Analyse, generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems. Select, adapt and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study’ (Appendix 1).

It is because NZ degrees are defined through graduate profile outcomes that alternative learning pathways such as those provided through Capable NZ are possible. What is required is that the learner develops the specified ‘specialised technical or theoretical knowledge’ as well as the Level 7 generic capabilities, and there is no requirement as to how this knowledge and skills be acquired. Indeed, the NZQF specifically empowers learners to achieve “in ways most suited to their educational, work or cultural needs and aspirations.” (NZQA 2017: 3) This may include credentialing learning obtained formally or informally towards their qualification. The NZQF does not put limitations on how or where people can learn (NZQA 2017).

The ILP approach is recognised by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, (NZQA), as a bona fide learning process which addresses not only the skills and knowledge specific to a chosen degree, but also the degree level process skills such as research methodologies and

cognitive outcomes such as critical thinking, required of degree holders in New Zealand. Refer to Appendix 1 for the regulatory requirements for degree level learning in NZ, with which the ILP approach complies. Also, to the extent that the ILP approach embraces recognition of prior learning, it is fully in harmony with NZQA policy which not only encourages recognition of prior learning but also expects tertiary teaching institutions to do so.

However, the uniqueness and inherent difference of the ILP approach brings its own risks, not the least of which is the challenge to its validity from traditional academics as well as the challenge inherent in the expectations of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), which is the funder of tertiary provision in NZ. The expectations of TEC are an important context for this study. These expectations include that for a qualification to be funded it must be 'earned' by way of the learner engaging with a teaching process which leads to new learning in the subject matter of the qualification and consistent with the graduate profile of the qualification, as well as there being clear evidence that the learner has achieved the academic level required for the qualification. TEC has indicated that it will not fund that which is not 'taught'. It is important to note that TEC funding for the ILP is essential for the programme to be affordable for the learners.

Thus, the risk to the work being undertaken at Otago Polytechnic in this field is that the process being followed is seen as 'merely' an assessment process – one that only validates what has already been learned, rather than being a process leading to new learning. We believe that with the ILP model a learning process is, in fact, taking place through facilitation as another form of teaching and that our facilitation strategies are teaching strategies. Thus, it is important to develop an understanding of how the facilitation process practised by Capable NZ is a teaching process, and how we might more explicitly describe that teaching process in ways which places it within mainstream conceptions of teaching.

It is expected that this study will mitigate this risk by affirming the validity of the ILP approach, making clear the teaching processes within the approach as well as the new learning which demonstrably results for the learners.

The Learner Context

Capable NZ learners are professionally experienced adults who are highly skilled but unqualified or under-qualified for their career. Typically, they are self-starters with a high level of self-motivation and with the disposition and ability to learn independently. However, they are also not usually academically experienced and often lack academic skills. Most do not have a formal credential and if they do this would usually be at a certificate or diploma level. Those who might have a formal credential may not have studied for many years and many ILP learners have not studied formally since school, which may be up to 30 years prior. This lack of academic experience usually means they have relatively unsophisticated research/enquiry and writing skills, little knowledge of formal theory relevant to their field and under-developed critical reflection capabilities.

It is interesting to consider what it is that attracts learners to the ILP. They undertake these qualifications for a variety of reasons: to validate their life and learning experiences to date, to enhance career progression, to obtain credibility in their field, to acknowledge where they might fit on the academic scale of knowledge (certificate, diploma, degree, master's), and often to walk across the graduation stage knowing they have had a life and career worth acknowledging (leaving a legacy).

Occasional feedback through surveys and anecdotally prior to this study from those who have undertaken the ILP has revealed a range of benefits and/or consequences for the learners. Many progress onto further study, all have gained considerable satisfaction from having the learning from their experience recognised towards a qualification, most have found the learning process to be transformational and most have had validated that they are highly capable, employable and knowledgeable about their area of professional practice. Finally, but most importantly, most have found that having the opportunity to reflect on their professional practice in the field of the qualification being studied was incredibly helpful in 'lifting' their professional capability and knowledge base, i.e., they have learned more.

Also, some learners who finish their ILP learning journey with us have said that they now feel they have a professional identity which means for them an increased confidence in 'self' and a stronger sense of value and worth (self-efficacy) which is then reflected in their working lives and roles. The learners believe they can now articulate who they are, why they are,

what they do, how they know, and why they know it. However, until this doctoral study, we have not conducted well-structured research with our learners to validate benefits and outcomes. Hence, this study is intended to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the ILP approach, its impact on learners personally and professionally and the organisations they work for; and to the ILP's validity as an alternative pathway to attaining a degree.

Summarising the Context

Through Capable NZ a different conception of a degree evolved that honours the graduate profile, but which uses an approach to acquiring degree level skills and degree level knowledge appropriate for experienced adults, rather than for school leavers. What this means is that there is no need to teach basic knowledge and skill as is necessary for school leavers, because experienced people have already acquired these understandings.

Furthermore, the body of knowledge in the ILP approach remains the same as for the taught programme, relevant to the particular degree, e.g. knowledge about business, social services, culinary arts, design or IT. In the ILP the specific knowledge context is the work context or the practice context, and the body of knowledge that people engage with is the challenges that are within that work or practice context.

In this chapter, I have described the key contextual elements which underpin my enquiry: my professional practice and learner contexts as well as the institutional and regulatory contexts. Each of these contexts has informed the terms of reference for my study, which sought to illuminate the new learnings which the ILP process typically enables and the facilitator processes which best promote that new learning. It is in this new learning that the validation of the ILP model lies, with this validation being the second key rationale for the study.

In the next chapter, I set out the aims and objectives of this enquiry, which derive from the context described above and an overview of relevant literature.

Chapter Two: Project Terms of Reference

Aims and Objectives of the Research Project

This project is a critical enquiry into the Independent Learning Pathway (ILP) approach to degree acquisition at Otago Polytechnic. The ILP is considered by Otago Polytechnic to be an innovative, learner-centred, educational approach, requiring learners to manage their own learning. Learners are guided through an intensely reflective process by their teachers who are known at Otago Polytechnic as facilitators. Thus, the work that Capable NZ teachers do is referred to here as facilitation, although that should not be confused with the narrow conception of that term often used in training contexts where facilitation is a relatively straight forward technical process of guiding learners/trainees through structured training activities. Rather, facilitation in Capable NZ is a robust professional activity through which learners are challenged and guided to develop high-level reflective capabilities, strong enquiry, analytical and communication skills and advanced/degree level understandings about their discipline.

The project had three broad aims: first, to evaluate critically the ILP model with a view to illuminating the new learning which learners acquire and the teaching/facilitation strategies, the pedagogies that best promote that new learning. As part of understanding the learning which takes place, the project also investigated the impacts which the ILP learning process has for the learner and their self-identity, for their professional practice and their organisation or work context.

Second, to validate the ILP model as a bona fide approach to degree acquisition, thereby responding to the challenges made from time to time by traditional academics that the process did not involve 'real learning'; and to respond to the expectations of the New Zealand tertiary funding agency, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), that degrees would be earned through processes of teaching and learning rather than by 'merely' assessing knowledge and skills already acquired.

Third, to bring about improvements in facilitation practice in Capable NZ as a consequence of having a richer understanding of the experiences of the learner in what is an intensely personal learning process.

Whilst these three aims are directly focused on understanding and enhancing the ILP approach for Capable NZ, it also was my intention to contribute new knowledge to the field of adult education through a richer understanding of facilitation practice. Specifically, I wanted to demonstrate that facilitation is a robust educative process – a valid approach to teaching – and not simply a mechanistic process for guiding learners as is often portrayed in both the literature and in common useage.

In pursuit of these aims the project had four specific objectives:

- To establish that new learning actually occurs and the nature of that new learning in relation to the subject matter of the chosen degree, and the cognitive outcomes expected of learners at degree level
- To identify the changes which may occur as a result of the ILP process on the learner's practice and for their organisation, workplace or business (if self-employed)
- To identify specific teaching strategies which are most effective in promoting learning, self-knowledge and self-identity, and the extent to which these strategies may differ for different types of learner
- To investigate fully the role and importance of the facilitator in learners achieving successful outcomes.

Anticipated Benefits of the Project

In planning this research project, I anticipated benefits for myself as a practitioner learning facilitator and as a professional leader responsible for the quality of work of facilitator colleagues, as well as benefits for those colleagues, for our learners and Capable NZ.

- For me as a facilitator, for my colleagues who are facilitators, and therefore by extension for our learners.

I expected personally to benefit from enhanced knowledge of my practice, with enriched understandings about the learning processes used in Capable NZ. I also expected to be able to make explicit effective support strategies for assisting learners not only through their learning journey but also to prepare them for the possibility of further postgraduate study.

- For my leadership role with responsibility for the academic quality of the programmes and the training of facilitators and assessors.

I anticipated that the learnings from this project would be useful for enhancing the induction and initial training of facilitators as well as for their ongoing professional development.

- For the reputation and credibility of the ILP service we provide at Capable NZ.

I expected to gather evidence to strengthen positive perceptions of the rigour of the ILP learning process, held by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA), and the wider Polytechnic and general community. I anticipated being able to demonstrate that what is done at Capable NZ is a valid form of degree level teaching and that new learning occurs which is directly related to the graduate profile, learning outcomes and cognitive levels of the relevant qualifications.

Specific benefits from the project are embedded in the outputs, as follows:

- A model of practice for facilitators in Capable NZ, inclusive of an appropriate conceptualisation of facilitation and a competency framework for facilitators
- A set of practice guidelines for facilitators and learners, which include useful and valuable strategies, tools and understandings for more effective facilitation and learning respectively
- A set of training and development processes and guidelines for facilitators who work in this field and for Capable NZ in particular.

The Literature

As noted in Chapter One, part of the purpose of this study was to gain a rich understanding of how learning occurred in the context of the ILP approach and in particular the role of the Capable NZ facilitators in supporting that learning. I was keen to identify the factors which contribute to successful learning by independent learners who are responsible for managing their own learning, albeit with the support of a facilitator. I wanted to identify the skills, knowledge and attitudes which facilitators needed to best support learning and to shape these understandings into a model for effective 'facilitation of learning'. At this point it will be helpful for me to indicate what I mean by 'effective' – as I use the term 'effective facilitator' and 'effective facilitation' throughout this report.

Throughout this study 'effective' is about getting the desired results or achieving the desired outcomes and in the case of the ILP this is about learning. 'Effective facilitators' have a positive impact on learning. Their actions make it easier for learning to take place and help the learner to gain deeper and broader and different understandings about themselves, their practice and the discipline which underpins their chosen degree. 'Effective facilitation' is a broader concept than effective facilitators, which results in more productive learning processes and better learning outcomes. It is a consequence of what facilitators do as well as how the programme is structured and the learning tasks with which the learners engage to develop their understandings.

Consequently, to support the development of this model, I undertook a wide-ranging review of adult learning literature, with the intention of identifying relevant theories against which I could test the findings of this research. While there is significant adult learning theory that provides context for this study, and which is helpful in a general sense for the professional development of facilitators, the literature speaking directly to the development of the facilitation model I had in mind was relatively sparse. Consequently, I also explored career development literature given the facilitative role which typically underpins career practice. I have explored adult learning and career development literature covering experience-based learning, work-based learning, recognition of prior learning and informal learning. I have looked at how adults learn and how that learning can be supported and guided.

Also, part of the purpose of this study was my aim to validate the ILP approach to degree acquisition. To this end, I have sourced a snapshot of the literature that affirms the inherent value of learning through experience and which supports the learning and teaching methods which make up the ILP approach.

The literature in this area specifically is sparse. I have searched for relevant New Zealand literature knowing that there is little precedent, other than at Otago Polytechnic, for degree level learning of the nature associated with the ILP approach. There is some literature about initial thinking and implementation of recognition of prior learning in NZ in the 1990's, and some WBL studies undertaken as part of a Capable NZ pilot in 2011-2012. By fulfilling the aims and objectives of this project, I expect to contribute in a significant way to the understandings of alternative learning pathways and pedagogies.

It is important therefore to look more broadly at the surrounding literature. In this section, I identify the literature which is relevant to and which has shaped my study, including adult learning theory, facilitation (teaching) theory, career development theory, and work-based learning understandings. First, it is important to establish the value of informal and experienced-based learning.

The Value of Informal and Experienced Based Learning

Houle (1980: 11) defines learning as “the process by which people gain knowledge, sensitiveness, or mastery of skills through experience or study”. Formal learning may take place in institutions or professional organisations and lead to certificates, diplomas, and other credentials for learners. Eraut (2004, 2007) discussed learning as occurring on a continuum, with formal learning on one end of the scale and informal learning on the other.

Underpinning the ILP approach is the belief held in Capable NZ that the learning that occurs outside of the classroom is as valid as that which occurs from within. In Capable NZ we acknowledge and encourage learners to reflect on ways they have learned in their past experiences, which can be about sharing incidents, critical moments, areas of new learning, and mistakes made. It can also be about what they learned by reading, discussing strategies, listening to people speak and engaging at symposia, conferences and workshops. Often it is a keynote speaker who has a message to share, for others it is an article they read about something that mattered to them in their work, for others it might be about engaging in workplace discussions on challenges in their area of practice.

There is considerable support for this informal learning in the literature, for example, Jarvis and Parker (2007) make the obvious but important point that “learning is regarded as a phenomenon that takes place everywhere, every day of human life” (Jarvis, et al. 2007: xiv). Learning is, in reality, a “major part of the incidentality of everyday life and of being human”. This view supports the validity of learning that takes place outside of academic constructs and places emphasis on the seamless nature of learning. Billett (2001) and Costley (2001) both believe and argue that so-called ‘informal learning’ that is done in the workplace should have recognition equal to that done in academic environments, i.e. formal learning.

However, the constructs of formal and informal learning overlap with each other, and as Malcolm, et al. (2003: 315) asserted, there are significant elements of formal learning in

informal learning contexts and vice versa. They further argued: "It is important not to see informal and formal attributes as somehow separate, waiting to be integrated ... for informal and formal attributes are present and interrelated". It is essential, therefore, to recognise and identify the different components of informal and formal learning to better understand their influences on learners, organisations, learning contexts, and outcomes.

Evans also supports the parity of formal and informal learning, in his compilation of country case studies of experiential learning and recognition of prior learning. He noted that "learning matters whatever, however, it takes place?" (2000: 19). Evans discussed the relationship between the knowledge revealed through AP(E)L and knowledge as understood by traditional academic institutions, and noted the valuable contribution in the early to mid-1990's about the importance of 'skilled advisors' as an essential part of any AP(E)L programme.

Informal learning is frequently regarded as "the natural accompaniment to everyday life" (Colley, Hodkinson and Malcolm 2003: 8), in that people participate in learning activities through their everyday undertakings and may not even be cognisant of their learning. Cervero (1992: 91) promoted the idea of real-world learning embedded in Continuing Professional Education programmes and models, asserting that "popular wisdom among practising professionals is that the knowledge they acquire from practice (informal learning) is far more useful than what they acquire from formal forms of education". Further, Sandlin, Wright and Clark (2011) believe that informal learning spaces and public pedagogies inform learning and identity development outside of formal learning contexts.

As well as the validity of informal learning (i.e. knowledge and skills, which occurs outside of academia), there is considerable literature supporting learning processes that do not involve typical teacher-student interactions which are usually part of the institutional educational experience. Two informal learning processes are addressed in the literature: communities of practice and mentoring.

Communities of Practice

Lave and Wenger (1991) argue for the concept of situated learning in "communities of practice", which comprise of people who share an interest and who engage together over time. Lave and Wenger defined a community of practice in general terms as "a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential

and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98) but left it “largely as an intuitive notion, (which) requires a more rigorous treatment” (p. 42).

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in the process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger 2006). Learning takes place through our participation in multiple social practices, practices which are formed through pursuing any kind of enterprise over time.

In transferring these concepts into the context of the current research, there is no doubt that many Capable NZ learners have benefitted from engagement in communities of practice in their professional contexts.

Mentoring

Eraut (2004, 2007) asserted that mentoring may be considered informal learning and encouraged novices, mentors and managers to understand the variety of ways people can learn in workplaces, discuss learning needs, and “recognise and attend to the factors which enhance or hinder individual learning” (p. 420). Learning in mentoring relationships is more than a transfer of knowledge. Enriched mentoring relationships include mentors coaching mentees through career-related issues, supporting mentees in professional education settings, or assigning challenging work tasks to mentees to complete and to reflect upon for their learning, growth and development. As Cervero (1992) has contended, the richest and most meaningful source of knowledge that professionals acquire is through everyday work life and reflections on tasks. Mentoring relationships may foster many different types of learning, including critical reflection and critical co-constructing of knowledge.

Crow (2012: 231) has described learning from a critical-constructivist perspective, contending that learning “does not simply involve a transmission of knowledge It involves the social construction of knowledge, in which knowledge is co-constructed through the social negotiation process of relationship”.

Through honest and open dialogue, mentoring relationships have the potential to transform into a more balanced liaison, with both mentor and mentee sharing power to engage in social and political negotiations where knowledge and learning are reciprocal.

Using a mentoring approach both parties develop their own personal and professional growth and development, by collaboratively planning ways to share knowledge and engage in experiential learning activities. Knowledge is co-constructed among mentor and mentee.

Interestingly, we see the power of situated learning with regard to Capable NZ facilitators who themselves comprise a 'community of practice'. They share a passion for what they do, and by interacting and sharing on a regular basis, their skill and knowledge continually develops. What is seen to happen in our Capable NZ 'community of practice' are the shifts and changes that are made which are brought about by the diversity of skills, knowledge and practices that the facilitators bring, which evokes action, i.e. new ideas, changes, thoughts, practices rather than one of conforming and a sense of 'sameness' in the work.

Other situated learning theorists agree and assert that knowledge cannot be taught in an abstract manner - for example, by memorising facts to pass exams. Maddux, Johnson and Willis (1997) stress that for knowledge to be useful it must be situated in a relevant or "authentic" context.

Similarly, Durning and Artino tell us that the environment (context) and social (community) factors are crucial in understanding how adults approach the gaining of knowledge, thinking and learning. Self-directed learning emphasises both autonomy and individual freedom in learning and acknowledges the complexity of learning in different environments. They term this "Situativity Theory" and factor in three main assumptions:

- Learning and thinking are both social activities
- Learning and thinking are developed by the resources available in specific situations
- The setting in which the learning takes place influences the thinking (2011: 188-199).

Knowles' (1984) work adds further weight to the validity of learning outside the classroom. His theory of andragogy posited a different approach for adult learning compared to that of learning in children. For adults, their maturity and experiences meant that their "existing skills, knowledge and worldview needed to be taken into account" and programmes of learning should, therefore, ensure more learner autonomy.

Whilst Knowles' work has often been applied to drive more learner-centred teaching strategies in traditional programmes of adult learning; it nonetheless provides theoretical support for programmes such as the ILP, which are very much at the learner-centred end of the teacher-centred – learner-centred continuum.

Further validation of the learning which underpins the ILP approach is provided in the work of Andresen, Boud and Cohen (1995), who state:

... much of the impetus for experience-based learning (EBL) has been a reaction against a didactic, teacher-driven, discipline-focused transmission of knowledge, into supporting a participative, learner-centred approach, with the emphasis on personal experience, rich learning events and the construction of meaning by the learner (Andresen, et al. as cited in Foley 1995: 1).

In the analysis of my findings, there was considerable feedback as to why learners were energised by this ILP approach; they had not always been successful in their early attempts in traditionally taught programmes. They favoured the independent learning concept and found the study to be enriching and successful, especially being able to integrate all of their 'self' into the learning.

An integral part of the ILP programme is the identification of learning from experience and the sense-making of that learning as the learners develop a framework of practice. Therefore the role of facilitator of learning is in guiding the learners' critical approaches to learning, and is where their work should begin (Eraut 2008). Boud (2008) also agrees and argues that the tutor is there to facilitate the learner in their learning through critical reflection. In the ILP approach amongst the first learning tasks is a reflective exercise to stimulate learner reflection.

There is a rich literature addressing experience-based learning, with Kolb (1984) providing a basic and widely used model. More sophisticated theories around experienced-based learning have since been developed by the likes of Schön, Boud, Cohen and others, discussed below. Kolb's experiential four-stage learning cycle was developed for use with adults in higher education, and involves four adaptive learning processes: a) concrete experience, b) observation of and reflection of that experience, c) the formation of abstract concepts based

on the reflection and d) the testing of the abstract concepts gained in new experience (Kolb and Fry 1975 cited in Cooper 1985).

In the ILP programme at Capable NZ, we have found that for many of our learners new to higher education the third stage is often the most challenging but completion of that stage brings about noticeable results.

Additionally, Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1993) are strong advocates of experience-based learning (EBL), arguing for learning as an holistic process with experience as the basis of and the catalyst for learning. They also support the view that learning is socially and culturally constructed. The literature around EBL provides a strong theoretical underpinning for the ILP approach.

Others who provide further support for EBL and identify the role of facilitation in the learning process are Andresen, Boud and Cohen (1995). They note that typically EBL has an equality of relationship between learner and facilitator and that the learner enjoys significant autonomy and control over both the substance and process of learning. They further characterise EBL as:

- Acknowledging that learning occurs in a variety of ways and involves the whole 'self,' i.e., the recognition and reflection of all of the life and work experiences, which transforms into deeper understandings and intentionality; and
- Ensuring the assessment of graduate outcomes are congruent with the learner experience (negotiated learning plans, critical reflection and discussions, reflective journals, reading logs, peer and self-assessment), and that which includes modes of presentation other than writing to enable the holistic content and complexity of the learning to be evidenced (Andresen, et al. cited in Foley 1995: 2-3).

The ILP process is congruent with this characterisation, i.e. it acknowledges the learning from the learner's work and life which is transformed into new understandings, it provides for the learner to drive the assessment process and positions the facilitator in a critical role yet respecting the independence and autonomy which the learner needs in order to be in control of their learning processes.

The literature discussed here demonstrates the value of informal and experienced based learning, and now I focus on the importance and value of reflection in this type of learning.

The Value of Reflection

At the heart of the ILP approach is the reflective process undertaken by the learners to develop and make sense of their framework of practice. The literature highlights the pivotal role that critical reflection plays in adult learning: see, for example, the works of Kolb (1984), Schön (1983), Boud, et al. (1985), Mezirow (1997), Moon (1999), McDrury and Alterio (2002), and Helyer (2016). My study highlights the importance of critical reflection in the ILP approach. Critical reflection is:

A social learning process involving a great deal of peer learning ... People come to a better understanding of their own assumptions and develop the ability to judge their accuracy and validity only if they involve peers as critically reflective mirrors who provide them with images of how their practice looks to others (Brookfield 2009: 133).

Cranton (2009: 185) asserts that critical reflection is to “expose individuals to alternative perspectives” through discussions and activities designed to encourage self-reflection and reflection within the group.

Cooper, (in Helyer 2016: 5) reinforces the significance of understanding learning from experience and places importance on an active rather than a passive engagement in the learning, and notes that “learning is the product of students’ efforts to interpret, and translate what they experience to make meaning of it,” (Cooper, et al. 2010: 62). For students to gain recognition of learning from experience they need to be skilful in their ability to reflect critically. Supporting learners to develop the skill of critical reflection is a vital part of the facilitator’s role in the ILP.

Highly relevant to this project is the work of Schön (1991) who was strongly influential in the development of theory around reflective practice and its application in adult learning. He believes that in order for a learner to learn more effectively they must reflect on past experiences which in turn will prepare them to reflect on future practices and experiences. Schön distinguishes reflection “in action”, i.e. during the experience from reflection “on

action”, i.e. after the experience, the former being the more advanced skill. Schön’s ideas help us to understand the construction of professional knowledge, including how professionals use intuitive abilities to reconceptualise situations or reframe dilemmas. In the ILP approach at Capable NZ, we start by helping learners develop their reflection on action and frequently see their skills growing to include reflection in action in relation to their current practice. Consistent with Schön’s recommendations a key process in the ILP approach is the use of a reflective diary or journal which we have noted learners take beyond their study into their work places as their confidence grows.

McDrury and Alterio (2002), two New Zealand academics, also write about the key role reflection plays in higher education and argue for encouraging students to learn about themselves and their areas of study by engaging in reflective activities. The life experiences students bring to formal learning environments enable educators to make worthwhile links between theory and practice. Haigh (2005) supports the view that reflective processes become more productive when others (teachers) are involved, and maintains that questioning is central to productive reflection:

When such questioning is facilitative, it prompts practitioners to go beyond their first thoughts and taken for granted ideas about situations, experiences and their actions (or inactions), to examine underpinning beliefs, assumptions and values critically, and to generate and evaluate their solutions to their problems (2005: 92).

The literature is persuasive about the central role of critical reflection. It is the process that triggers significant new learning which can often be transformational for the learners themselves.

Transformational Learning

Informal feedback from learners before this study commenced indicated that the ILP programme has a transformative impact on the learners who complete, and as we will see this has been borne out in the findings. Consequently, I was keen to explore literature around transformative learning.

Transformative learning is learning that has a profound impact on an individual's life. It changes the way they see themselves and it changes the way they continue to learn and construe new meanings about the world (Mezirow 1991a). The impact of the transformation can come from the ongoing and expanding difference between how a person used to think and act and were seen by those around them, and how they *now* think and act and are seen by those around them, following the transformation. This can be significant as to whether or not a person continues with the transformative learning process, if the differences get too severe, or impacts on other aspects of their life.

Transformative learning is about learners undergoing a significant change in their understanding of a topic, world view, through a particular learning experience or activity, that is, it is not just learning by rote, but involves a "eureka or aha moment that may be uncomfortable for the learner at first as it takes people out of their current comfort zone," (Mezirow 1991a: 42-75).

Transformative Learning is "The process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action," (Mezirow 1996: 162).

Transformative learning is about adult learning that differentiates between learners as repositories of knowledge versus learners who are actively engaged in critical reflection and dialogue to question assumptions, expectations, and context to achieve deeper meaning and new perspectives to guide their actions.

Mezirow's Ten Phases of Transformative Learning, first articulated by Jack Mezirow in 1978 after researching factors relating to the success, or lack of, of women's re-entry to community college programmes in the 1970's, with the resulting conclusion that a key factor was perspective transformation. He described a ten phase transformation process which emerged as common to many of the women who successfully re-entered community college. Mezirow was influenced by the work of several researchers in the development of his transformative learning theory including Thomas Kuhn's 1962 work on paradigm shifts, Paulo Freire's 1970 theory of conscientization, and Jurgen Habermas' 1971 work on domains of learning.

Mezirow (1991a: 49) stated that there are four ways to learn:

1. Refining or elaborating our meaning schemes (existing frames of reference)
2. Learning new meaning schemes (new frames of reference)
3. Transforming meaning schemes (habits of mind)
4. Transforming meaning perspectives (points of view).

Reflection of content and process pertain to all, reflection of premises transforms meaning perspectives only. Premise reflection is a less common and more significant learning experience," (Mezirow 2000: 3-34). Mezirow emphasises that "learning is profoundly social," (1994: 230).

Mezirow argued that transformations often follow some variation of the following phases of meaning becoming clarified:

1. A disorienting dilemma. *(A person experiences a genuine and vastly different worldview to his or her own and becomes confused about their own beliefs and life choices)*
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame. *(This new worldview generates feelings that arise from an uncomfortable, perhaps confusing consideration of previous ways of looking at the world that seemed very clear)*
3. A critical assessment of assumptions. *(The person critically reflects some of their underlying ideas and views as a consequence of the scrutiny of the previous step)*
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared. *(The person engages in dialogue with friends, colleagues or family and discovers that the new worldview is not unfamiliar or unusual to other people, as they too had had similar reactions to new learning in their lives and understand the disruption of the disorienting dilemma)*
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions. *(Dialogue and discussion is used to work through possible pathways to move forward with close friends, facilitators, mentors or colleagues)*

6. Planning a course of action. (*The person plans a way forward that will resonate with their new worldview*)
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan. (*The person engages with different types of learning to gain specific knowledge and skills to follow their plan, such as training in new capabilities, or getting a new job, or enhancing the one they have*)
8. Provisional trying of new roles. (*The person experiments with new roles to see what happens, and to adapt and modify the roles as required*)
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships. (*The person continues to practice their new roles with greater confidence and a wider range of situations such as trying a new job or continuing with new work in their existing job*)
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspectives. (*The person integrates the new responses to life, and the new skills and abilities with those that matter, in such a way as to be respectful of the newly-acquired developed, and more flexible worldview*)

Instrumental Learning versus Transformative Learning

A key proposition of transformative learning theory recognises the validity of Habermas' (1984) fundamental distinction between instructional and communicative learning.

Instrumental learning is the acquisition of skills and knowledge (mastering tasks, problem solving, manipulating the environment - - - the "how" and the "what"). In contrast, transformative learning is perspective transformation, a paradigm shift, whereby we critically examine our prior interpretations and assumptions to form new meaning - - - the "why." This perspective transformation is achieved through (1) disorienting dilemmas, (2) critical reflection, (3) rational dialogue, and (4) action. (Mezirow 2003: 58-63).

There is no doubt that for many of the learners who contributed to this study that their ILP experience was transformative, in the sense discussed above. The challenge for facilitators

of the ILP is to engage with the learner in such a way as to help bring about this transformation. This challenge was only partially addressed in my findings and is certainly an area for future enquiry.

Facilitation

Given that the key outcome of this study is a model for effective 'facilitation of learning', the literature on facilitation is particularly important. What is facilitation? Raelin (2008) writes that facilitating means to "ease, support, enable and assist; when applied to learning it means that rather than providing content, the tutor uses a constructive dialogue and their questioning and listening skills" (Raelin 2008 as cited in Helyer 2016: 42). Raelin encourages learners to use reflection to question the assumptions we take for granted and which often prevent us from questioning the way things have always been done.

Joyce, Calhoun, and Hopkins (1998) consider the differing characteristics of facilitation and what is required to be an effective facilitator. A good facilitator has many interconnected, paradoxical roles:

Simultaneously we [teachers] are managers of learning, curriculum designers, facilitators, counsellors, evaluators and, reluctantly, disciplinarians. To the best of our ability, we modulate across roles according to individual and group needs as we select and create learning experiences for all our students (1998: 118).

This characterisation of facilitation sums up clearly the many roles that Capable NZ facilitators adopt in their practice; the skill is in knowing when to be what.

According to Costley and Dickerdem (2011: 38), the facilitator works "alongside the student to develop rather than direct the students' understanding". When considering facilitation, at a philosophical level it is difficult to go past the work of Freire and his emancipatory view of transformation (1973, 1988, 2000, 2004). He sees the teacher not as someone who provides answers to problems, but as someone who helps learners gain a form of critical thinking about the situation. He called this 'conscientization'. Conscientization (or conscious-raising) enables an understanding that the world is not fixed and is open to transformation, thereby empowering learners to see their place in the world in a different way. In so doing, it is possible then to imagine a new and different reality. Freire's approach to transformational learning was advanced by Mezirow (1991, 2000) as they both believed

that knowledge was generated as a consequence of different interpretations brought about by reflecting on new experiences. However, Mezirow recognized the importance of the social context and concentrated on the cognitive aspects which included critical reflection and meaning making as fundamental to being human.

The role Freire espouses for teachers is the role of facilitator in the ILP. Furthermore, he advocates for a relationship of trust and communication between teacher and pupil, based on mutual respect and humility, which in turn means the teacher also learns and the learner also teaches. Thus learning and teaching become a collective activity, a 'dialogue' between the parties, rather than the traditional transfer of knowledge from teacher to learner. Again, this captures the very essence of the facilitator-learner relationship in the ILP programme.

Freire and Mezirow both support the notion of facilitator as a teacher, or teacher as a facilitator, depending on the starting perspective. Helyer and Workman see the teacher as a facilitator when considering work-based learning. Cited in Helyer (2016: 42) they discuss how the subject-based content of work-based learning cannot be taught due to the diversity of work environments. They comment that "the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning, offering tools, techniques and support for inquiring within a work-based environment". Thus, there is strong support for the conceptualisation of teaching as facilitation.

As a career practitioner, I see a strong similarity between the learning facilitators and career counsellors' roles. I have therefore drawn from the career literature to identify skills, knowledge and attitudes which I believe point to that of an effective learning facilitator. The works of Carpenter (2010), Hall (2002) and Amundson (2003a, 2009) to name but a few provide invaluable insights into the skills needed of a facilitator in a higher education context. These are the skills necessary for developing a trusting, respectful and collaborative relationship, as well as the ability to elicit the learning that the learners reflect on, analyse and critique to the level required for a degree. The authors discuss developing relationships (Hall 2002), demonstrating a climate of "mattering" and active engagement (Amundson 2003a, 2009), and lastly, the capacity to support and guide clients to develop robust capabilities for positive futures for the 21st century workforce (Carpenter 2010).

Similarly, Hall (2002: 147) believes the relationship between a facilitator and a learner needs to be one of intentional collaboration, focused on developing the learner's capabilities through dialogue and reflection. He states that it is about the "ability to provide relatively

intimate relationships, transmit stories and perspectives derived from the capacity to listen carefully and question at the deeper level of self.” This concept of “deeper level of self” is important in the ILP process, which purposefully guides the learner towards establishing their professional identity and framework of practice.

Hall (2002) believes one of the most important metacompetencies that a learner can acquire is identity development, i.e. the ability to learn about oneself, to seek and hear personal feedback and to ask questions about oneself. This is about critically reflecting on oneself with a view to changing one’s sense of identity to fit with changes in one’s skills and experiences. One of the ways of developing this metacompetency of identity awareness is through engaging in reflection about oneself (p. 267-268). This involves a relatively deep level of inquiry and will require different levels of questions starting with more basic questions of fact moving through to deeper questions of self, i.e. where there is personal meaning of the experience. Siebert and Daudelin (1999: 79) developed the Ladder of Inference which demonstrates moving from shallow questions of fact (around data and information inquiries) through to questions of function (how something works), questions of approach (what options are available), questions of purpose (why something is the way it is or why something should be done) and progressing to the most deepest level about questions around ‘self’ which is the personal meaning of the experience.

Hall (2002: 267) asserts that when a person is capable of examining and revising their own sense of self the more open and able they are to face change processes as opposed to simply reacting to each environmental demand without having a compass to keep heading in the direction of their own ‘path with a heart’.

This self-reflection is the path to identity growth which is often supported by a highly professional facilitator who has the skills to encourage a learner to purposefully reflect on their ‘self’ at a deep level. This is where transformation often happens, i.e. when a learner is fully exposed to themselves, being vulnerable about their own understandings of themselves, and their personal meaning from experiences.

It is part of the role of facilitator to question, challenge and guide the learner to deep understanding of self through critical reflection. However there are dangers for the facilitators and risks for the learner. When a learner transgresses into areas of their lives that have been traumatic and they start to behave as if the facilitator is their counsellor,

then the facilitator must be able to draw the boundaries, and to ensure strategies are in place to 'hold them in that space' as they reveal past events and trauma, and move into turning those moments into learning moments. All of the facilitators are skilled in knowing how to move the learner on and forward, using counselling techniques of empathy, effective listening and understanding, as well as encouraging the learner to turn these events into changes for the future.

For example, we had a learner who had been bullied in her work place and when writing her case study of a work role and challenges slipped into the 'victim' of who did what, said what, and so on. The facilitator asked her, 'looking back on that event, what has changed for you in your new role?' to which the learner responded that she has a much clearer focus on what bullying is and how to go about ensuring it doesn't happen again, both for herself and for her staff. The facilitator asked her about what she did to learn more about workplace bullying. The learner said she had read the Health and Safety Policy that the organisation had developed and learned a great deal about the symptoms and strategies to deal with it. The facilitator had a few references she had collected and offered to send her some to read. One was on 'horizontal violence' and the next time they met the learner thanked the facilitator for giving her some insightful reading in addition to what she knew already. She was already implementing some additions to the Health and Safety Policy in her workplace. The facilitator also encouraged the learner to set up a peer support group where she and her colleagues could get together to share strategies and ideas for improving workplace safety. The process of identity development I discuss further, later in this chapter.

Amundson (2003a, 2009), has developed an "active engagement approach" for career counsellors which in my experience is also applicable to learning facilitators. He urges counsellors to be aware of one's underlying assumptions when working with others, and to adopt a climate of "mattering". He believes the emphasis should be solely on relationship and confidence building, positive emotions, and the role of the facilitator should be to encourage flexibility, imagination, and creativity. Amundson is a strong believer in the importance and influence of stories as a natural way to share experiences, which in turn invites emotional and cognitive engagement and is a way to help us remember and integrate information. By doing so, the influences on the participant's self-esteem will then provide the impetus to move to action.

Storytelling

One of the facilitation techniques which Capable NZ facilitators currently use is storytelling. Stories not only allow us to share experiences, but they also express who we are and how we think. Bird (2007) adds “stories not only help us make sense of the actions of others; they serve to shape our own identities” (p. 316). This resonates with what is observed in the independent learning approach; as learners write and, or articulate their stories, they make sense of them, thus gaining an understanding of ‘self’. They can also start to see patterns and themes emerging as the story becomes clearer.

Everyone has a story to tell, indeed, our lives are composed of stories. Career counsellors, and in this case facilitators are fortunate to be able to listen to the stories of their learners and to engage with them to help them create a preferred future (Peavy 1997). As in career counselling, facilitators listen for the learner’s ‘self-organizing processes’ i.e. how the learner interprets events to author a story that has sense, cohesion and viability. Counsellors then can collaborate with clients to create stories featuring possible future selves, which increases the likelihood of client development and transformation. Similar is the role of the facilitator in the ILP. By using the cyclical nature of the reflective process, ILP learners start to grow and develop knowing they can reframe their learning into their future framework of practice.

An influential career counselling theorist is Savickas, who is well-known for his work in using story to elicit the themes in a client’s career, asking counsellors to listen “... not for the facts but for the glue that holds the facts together as they try to hear the themes that make a whole of that life” (2005: 42-70). Savickas goes on to say that people can live their lives and careers as stories but forget to notice the themes, anxieties and aspirations that are driving that story forward, thereby authoring “who we are and whom we will become”. Hence the role of the ILP facilitator is one of listening deeply and helping the learner to make sense of ‘self’ as a practitioner in the field for which they are seeking a degree credential.

Storytelling is a tool for making learning explicit. It is important that facilitators listen carefully to the learners stories in these early stages. To do so forges an effective relationship based on trust and less time is needed later, as the facilitator will already have heard many aspects of the learner’s life and work history. If the facilitator has heard and understands the learner’s story they can become more focussed on the pieces of the story that will best demonstrate alignment with the graduate profile. Hence facilitators become

'connectors', helping learners to integrate their disparate pieces of skill and knowledge into a larger 'whole'.

McDrury and Alterio (2002) sum up well the value of stories. They write that "as we tell stories we create opportunities to express views, reveal emotions and present aspects of our personal and professional lives". This stimulates imagination and enhances memory and visualisation skills which will often lead to transcend learners' own frameworks and take on wider perspectives. The authors go on to write about:

this emergence of a reflective paradigm over the last two decades having advanced storytelling's acceptance as a learning tool, using storytelling to stimulate students' critical thinking skills, encouraging self-review and conveying practice realities (p. 10).

Case Studies

A further important element of the ILP approach is the preparation of case studies through which learners demonstrate that their learning aligns with the graduate profile of their degree. Biggs (1989) makes a strong case for the use of case study by emphasising four elements which enhance deeper elaborative learning, and skill development:

1. Motivational context, learning activity, interaction with others, and well-structured knowledge base. Motivational context "addressed through the use of real-world scenarios as the basis of study, providing a dimension of realism that is often lacking in traditional structured learning approaches" (p. 44),
2. Learning activity, "cases encourage active involvement in the learning process; they promote the use of judgment in resolving uncertainty, thereby generating deeper understanding" (p. 45),
3. Interaction with others, "cases provide opportunities for active and interactive consideration and discussion of issues" (p. 45), and
4. Well-structured knowledge base, "cases move the focus from procedures and practice to concepts and issues" (p. 45).

These case studies are part of the learner's portfolio of evidence, and as such are the workplace practices that demonstrate the rich learning and capability growth.

Identity

A key outcome for ILP learners is the learning which leads to a new sense of 'self' and often for the first time a professional identity. According to Slay and Smith (2011) a professional identity is the image an individual has of themselves as a professional, being the combination of those individual defining factors that are their attributes, beliefs, values, motives, skills, knowledge, attitudes and experiences. It is this professional identity that provides the platform for their career development post completion of their chosen degree.

Several writers discuss the importance of identity. Those individuals who identify strongly with a profession can gain the benefits of a positive work identity (Dutton, Roberts and Bednar 2010). Professional norms and values impact upon job attitudes and shape behaviour (Bunderson 2001). Ibarra (1999) asserts that individuals' role of professional identity provides behavioural guidance in the workplace. Furthermore, Leavitt, et al. (2012) found that individuals' professional identities impacted their moral decision-making and behaviour. Role identities are linked to a sense of efficacy and esteem (Ervin and Stryker, 2001). As such, recognising one's professional self can be a major source of well-being, self-respect, personal validation and pride.

British sociologist Giddens (1991), writes about the importance of self-identity to individuals making life choices and engaging in life planning. He introduced the concept of social reflexivity which "examines how societal transformations influence an individual's view of self in new contexts. From a more holistic constructivist view, they learn to use information to construct their lives". Giddens believed this reflexivity helps people write their biographies, tell their stories, live with uncertainty, and manage constant change.

When facilitating learning in the ILP we find powerful examples of the strengthening and recreation of identity with new visions of self and new practices emerging. These new visions may include enhanced career confidence, a clearer understanding of skills and their transferability, and an enthusiasm to continue learning.

Carpenter (2010: 22) talks about one's identity as being their compass. With self-knowledge and self-awareness, or identity knowledge - you have "the 'compass' that points you in the right direction, that helps you know which direction is right for you".

Hall also captures these concepts:

In a constantly changing organisation, [the individual] must have a clear sense of personal identity, to provide an internal 'compass,' keeping him or her headed on the 'path with a heart' in the midst of all the turbulence. (Hall 2002: 24).

Carpenter further states that "examining your career identity is a process that clarifies your career strengths and adds to your self-knowledge. The more we know about ourselves, and believe in that knowledge, the greater ability we have to face difficult times and decisions." (ibid: 22).

Identity is a significant concept for a programme such as the ILP which is learner-centred in its process and which validates a construction of knowledge which whilst situated within a broad discipline (such as management, social services) is about the learner and the learner's practice. Such knowledge inevitably is intertwined with the learner's sense of identity and as we will see a typical outcome of the ILP is a new or significantly revised sense of identity which brings with it significant implications for the learner's career.

New Zealand Context

As noted earlier, there is very little NZ literature that directly relates to the ILP approach, although there is some contextual commentary on recognition of prior learning and work-based learning. For example, Day and Devjee (2000) provide a background for this project and its current relevance. They describe how the emergence in 1999 of CAPL, (now Capable NZ) was significant and were looking forward to the continued growth of CAPL given that new and flexible approaches to gaining qualifications were gaining acceptance in industry and the polytechnic sector.

More recently, Vaughan, O'Neil and Cameron in a report commissioned by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) examined learning in the workplace and how it can be done successfully. They noted that while work-based learning until this point had been "under-recognised and under-researched" in New Zealand, it was a growing trend (Vaughan, O'Neil and Cameron 2011).

The current thinking on this can be found in 'New Models of Education' (2017), a report carried out by an independent Crown Entity, the NZ Productivity Commission (Te Kōmihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa), which highlights Capable NZ as an important and growing example of successful "disruptive innovation" in education. Refer Appendix 2 for relevant excerpts. Thus, the outcomes of my research project will contribute to the literature about learning from experience and alternative pathways to credentials.

Acknowledging Māori

In New Zealand we embrace a diversity of cultures, with a special place for Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi. Our indigenous Māori learners frequently are more comfortable operating in an oral culture. Therefore any learning models developed and facilitated by Capable NZ must be effective cross-culturally, and in so doing we acknowledge Māori knowledge and its value, Māori andragogy, Māori partnership, and Kaupapa Māori (Māori ways of working). Otago Polytechnic's 'Māori Strategic Framework 2016-2018'³ guides the work of Capable NZ with regard to Māori learners (2016: 5).

A Kaupapa Māori researcher, Bishop (1996), suggests that by acknowledging and integrating the principles of Kaupapa Māori theory and practice in tertiary educational settings, for example by references to Māori history and educational initiatives, the benefits will be for all learners. I believe it is essential here, as Bishop asserts, to ensure commitment and engagement that we "acknowledge our connectedness with the other participants to promote a means of knowing in a way that denies distance and separation" (1996: 23). I was particularly drawn to Bishop's work noting the emphasis placed on narrative and storytelling, which is a feature of the ILP. Facilitators must be able to work in different cultural contexts and therefore need tools and techniques that enable learners to give their best, whether that be in writing or orally.

The Capable NZ ILP approach is inherently enabling, affirming and empowering of Māori, evidenced by the significant number of Māori learners who undertake the programme, and also by the support of the local iwi (tribe) – Ngai Tahu – who have endorsed the programme and sponsor a cohort each year of up to twenty learners at any one time.

³ Otago Polytechnic Māori Strategic Framework <https://www.op.ac.nz/assets/Māori-Strategic-Framework/Māori-Strategic-Framework-2016-2018.pdf>

Why is the ILP so attractive to Māori? First, the approach places the learner at the centre, and is explicitly designed to validate the skills and knowledge of the individual as well as the context of the learning that has taken place.

Thus, Māori ways of working and being are valued as an integral part of the process, and Māori worldviews are affirmed as vital elements of the Māori learner's model of practice which is the capstone of the ILP approach.

Also, whilst the ILP approach is centred on the individual, independent learning does not prevent nor discourage learning with and through others in cohorts or communities of practice, which I discuss earlier in this chapter. Whanau (extended family) based learning is common in the Māori tradition, and is the approach taken by the Ngai Tahu learners mentioned above.

Further, the ILP approach does not impose or predefine frameworks or models, which means that Māori frameworks and models can come to the fore – which they frequently do. Thus, the ILP encompasses Kaupapa Māori approaches: Graham Smith (1997) describes Kaupapa Māori as “the philosophy and practice of being and acting Māori”. As Bishop (1999) describes, this “assumes the taken for granted social, political, historical, intellectual and cultural legitimacy of Māori people, in that it is a position with Māori language, culture, knowledge and values are accepted in their own right”.

That the ILP approach is inherently kaupapa Māori is well captured in this quote from one of our Māori learners, Marewa Karetai:

My journey through my education as a learner and as a teacher has given me some of the best experiences of my life to date. By my nature, it is through experiencing new things that I feel the strongest emotions and the depth of learning seems to be governed by the depth of emotion. When I started my Capable Bachelor of Applied Management, the first part of the process was a deep introspection – at times a brutal introspection. But as I came to the end of it, I felt so liberated, so free of weights that belonged to others.

In Te Ao Māori we have a proverb:

Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei!

Seek the treasure you value most dearly: if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain!

My introspection brought me to a place where I could lift my head and I will never bow my head again, except from respect, ever again.

Learning in a traditional tertiary environment would never give a taura (student) the opportunity to experience the same sort of transformation or evolution I experienced in my life as a direct result of the BAppMgt process. As I went through it, in trying to understand it, the process started making me think of Te Whāriki, and then I realised why it worked so well. The ILP pathway engages the “whole” student and the whole life we have lived. Now, as a teacher, I apply this same methodology to my own practice.

Te Whāriki (the woven mat) is a metaphor for both the learner and for the curriculum in early childhood education. It is a needs-based, inclusive approach to teaching that engages the whole learner, not just the part of them we think of as “the student” and at its core are self-review followed by action. Te Whāriki as a model provides us with a sociocultural approach to learning/teaching. It requires us as educators to deliver their program in a holistic way. It asks us to remember that we all receive information through many layers of experiences, social and cultural identity, language, health, learning difficulties and many other barriers to learning. It also asks us to take into account the challenges to the learner when one part of themselves is not in balance.

I always thought this approach to learning was the domain of Māori and I could not understand why it was not found in more educational environments. I was so happy to experience it as an adult student through my now three qualifications with Capable New Zealand, and my students also benefit from it in my teaching practice now. My students are international ESOL students who are taking a business course in New Zealand. Having never taught ESOL students before, I had no clear idea of how the classroom would run. From our first day it became clear that success for us, in our teaching/learning/teaching relationship would require

a holistic approach for all of us to the process. Te Whāriki naturally appeared in our classroom and it is on the whāriki we all stand together.

Mawera Karetai

What does this all mean for my study? In short, facilitators must be able to work within different cultural contexts, but especially within Māori contexts, and they, therefore, need tools and techniques that enable learners to give their best, whether that be in writing or orally. This was at the front of my mind as I developed my model of effective facilitation of learning, the key output of this study.

In this chapter, I have set out the aims and objectives of my enquiry and the benefits which I expect to flow from the enquiry. I have provided a high-level overview of the literature which has informed my thinking as well as my interpretation of the findings from my engagement with Capable NZ learners and facilitators.

The purpose underpinning my enquiry required a research process which enabled me to get close to the main players in the ILP i.e. learners and facilitators, to ensure I gained rich understandings of their experiences thereby enabling me to develop sound theory to help improve practice within Capable NZ, and hopefully more widely. Chapter Three which follows sets out my research approach, design, methodology and challenges.

Chapter Three: The Research Process

Approach, Design, Methodology and Challenges

Introduction

The nature and scope of this project was reasonably clear from the outset. The ILP approach was proving to be a very popular programme within Capable NZ. It was enjoying rapid growth and high success rates, and we were facing pressure in hiring suitable facilitators to support the programme. Several facilitators who had been taken on proved to be quite unsuitable, and it was clear that we could easily compromise our standards and success rates if facilitators did not have the necessary capabilities. Whilst we had a sense of what these capabilities were, they had not been clearly articulated and nor did we have a framework as a reference point for the professional development of facilitators. At the same time, the success of the programme was attracting considerable attention and questions were being asked about the validity of what we were doing. Thus, from the outset, the broader aims of my project as set out in Chapter Two were reasonably clear, and have remained consistent throughout the project.

It was also timely to undertake this project as there has been little research into the particular approach to degree acquisition which characterises the ILP. We were unable to identify other institutions anywhere in the world offering a similar degree pathway i.e. an individualised approach to achieve a defined undergraduate degree with pre-determined graduate outcomes. This meant we did not have a comparable programme to benchmark against and given that the ILP approach had not previously been evaluated, this project was an opportunity to take stock of what was working well and to identify areas for improvement. This project provided an opportunity to receive feedback from the learners who had completed the ILP, as well as the staff in Capable NZ who facilitated the process.

Thus, this study is an enquiry into the Individual Learning Pathway (ILP) approach offered by Capable NZ, Otago Polytechnic. The epistemological basis of my study is constructivism, as I subscribe to the view that knowledge is not waiting to be discovered but is constructed from our experiences, conventions and perceptions. Accordingly, I have undertaken the enquiry within an interpretive paradigm, and have embraced grounded theory as the means for making sense of the data which my enquiry has generated.

I have used qualitative research tools to generate my data and to triangulate my findings. I have also addressed the issue of data integrity through 'member checks', both of the data and the data conclusions. A range of ethical issues have been considered and responded to, including my role as an insider/practitioner-researcher.

This enquiry included an extensive survey of learners and a more intensive engagement with a subset of more recent learners to achieve greater understandings of their learning experiences and outcomes. In my engagement with these learners I came to understand the extent to which they viewed the process they went through as a 'learning process', and what it is that they consider to be 'new learning' – enhanced self-knowledge and/or new discipline knowledge, and also the extent to which they recognised in themselves enhanced cognitive capabilities. The enquiry identified the prompts and learning tasks which learners found to be effective in helping them to learn.

I also engaged with other facilitators who work in Capable NZ to capture their perspectives about the strategies which have proved helpful for them and their learners, for promoting learning, gaining valuable insights into their beliefs about the process they undertake with their learners. I particularly wanted to understand their views about facilitation as a teaching process. As with the learners, I have explored what the facilitators recognise as 'new learning' and the extent to which this is congruent with the learner perspective.

Interpretive Paradigm

In planning my approach to this enquiry, I decided to conduct my study from within the interpretive paradigm. I saw this as the most suitable theoretical perspective for my enquiry because my concern was to understand the experience of the participants who were involved in the learning process. The interpretive paradigm allows the search for meaning from the particular actions and situations that the participants were experiencing.

The interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual and the central endeavour is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To preserve the integrity of the phenomena being explored, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. This reveals the viewpoint of the actor directly involved, as opposed to the viewpoint of the observer.

Interpretive approaches focus on action i.e. behaviour-with-meaning, which is purposeful behaviour and as such is future oriented. Actions are only meaningful to us in so far as we are able to determine the intentions of actors to share their experiences. A large number of our everyday interactions with one another rely on such shared experiences.

Interpretive researchers begin with the individual/s and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be 'grounded' in data generated by the research (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Theory should not precede research but follow it.

Researchers must work directly with experience and understanding to build their theory on them. The data generated will include the meanings and purposes of those people who are their source. Further, the theory so generated must make sense to those to whom it applies. The aim of the interpretive researcher is to understand how this glossing of reality goes on at one time and in one place, and compare it with what goes on in different times and places. Theory becomes sets of meanings which generate insight and understanding of people's behaviour. Hence multi-faceted images of human behaviour are as varied as the situations and contexts supporting them. (Cohen, et al. 2011: 17-18).

A critical question with an interpretive approach which Hughes (1980) raises is, "how do we judge what is the right account of the experience of the participants?" Hughes answers his own question: "... it would seem, almost certainly, that the actors themselves must play some part in that judgment ..." (1980: 114). Thus, the choice was made to operate within a research paradigm that gives a full role to the participants in a quest to build an understanding of the experiences of ILP learners and ILP facilitators and to build theory from that understanding.

In this study, I use qualitative research methods to gather information about the experiences, views and reflections of the sample groups to examine the ILP learning process and in particular to illustrate the new learning and the role of facilitation in that process. With qualitative research the researcher is examining things in their usual settings in an "...attempt to interpret or make sense of, phenomena regarding the meanings people bring to them" Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 3).

A particular advantage of qualitative research methods is the flexibility which they bring, allowing for ideas to be revised and additional areas of enquiry to be opened up as the research proceeds.

Qualitative research also acknowledges the role that the researcher plays in the research, given that research is a social process which can be influenced significantly by the decisions which the researcher makes as the research progresses (Cassell and Symon 1994). Buchanan and Bryman (2009: 12) expand on the researcher's role:

“Researchers commonly study topics in which they have a personal interest, using methods in which they are trained and competent, and with which they feel comfortable”.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggest qualitative approaches that use a range of different methods, which is what I have done in this study, e.g. interviews, observations, personal experiences, life stories.

When researching within an interpretive paradigm the researcher's values are inherent in all stages of the research process, and thus understandings of “reality” and “truth claims” are illuminated via dialogue. In this project fostering a dialogue between myself as a researcher and the various respondents was critical for me to give consideration to both pragmatic and moral concerns. In this way any knowledge or findings would generate a more informed understanding of the world and the issues I was investigating.

Interpretive approaches rely heavily on real-life methods such as the interviewing I carried out with both learners and facilitators, and the observations I made during those meetings and conversations. In using these methods I hoped to ensure an adequate dialogue between myself, the learners and facilitators to construct layered and reliable accounts of practices and the meanings given to these.

I am aware that I bring my values to this work and appreciate that when I reflect on the data generated in the study, my own experiences will shape my interpretations. I have worked in this area of recognition or assessment of prior learning since the mid-1990s and I have significant personal experiences of how people learn by doing, through their insightful

experiences, and by the way they view their world. However, I see my experiences as enhancing the study, not detracting from it.

Grounded Theory

Consistent with my beliefs about constructivism and having embraced an interpretive theoretical perspective I adopted grounded theory as my methodological approach. Grounded theory is based on the principles developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) with the intent of constructing theory (Creswell 2013). According to Strauss and Corbin in the fourth edition of their seminal text (2014), grounded theory is:

a theory that is derived from the study of the phenomena it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data about that phenomenon. (1990 2nd ed.: 23).

What attracted me to grounded theory is that it is the building of theory from the realities of how people experience the world and it captures the complexity and interconnectedness of everyday actions. As Glaser (1996) points out, grounded theory captures what is going on, and Flick (1998: 41) writes that “the aim is to increase complexity by including context” rather than reduce complexity by breaking it down into variables.

This method sees people as having an active role in responding to the events that occur in their lives, by way of action and interaction (Corbin and Strauss 2014). The grounded theory method does not seek the 'truth' but rather to conceptualise what is going on by using empirical research. As Alvesson and Sköldbberg put it:

In the reflective mode, empirical research starts from the belief that the study of suitable and well thought out excerpts from reality can provide a substantial basis for a generation of knowledge that opens up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes 'truths.' (2011: 9).

For this enquiry I did not begin with theories which I sought to prove but with an area of enquiry, i.e. 'facilitation of learning' and allowed what was relevant to this field to emerge. My goal, as expressed by Strauss and Corbin (2014: 24) was to build a theory that faithfully

represents my particular field of practice. One of the unique factors of grounded theory is the concepts are derived from data obtained during the data gathering process (Creswell 2013).

According to Strauss and Corbin (2014), there are four interrelated properties to sound grounded theory: fit, understanding, generality and control. First, grounded theory must fit the area of practice in which it will be used; which means the theory must correspond to the data. Second, the theory must make sense and be readily understandable by the key people who are concerned with the area - in this case, facilitators, assessors and administrators in Capable NZ. Third, the theory must be sufficiently general to be flexible; i.e. to make different or changing situations understandable. It must also be flexible enough to be adapted to those practical situations when it does not work. Finally the theory must enable facilitators as the users of the model in this case, to have sufficient control over its application to take into account changing conditions.

Whilst I have based my approach to grounded theory on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (2014), I acknowledge that their conceptions of grounded theory have been challenged. Charmaz (2008) challenges Glaser, (1978, 1992, 1998) as objectivist, with roots in mid-20th century positivism. According to Charmaz (2008) objectivist grounded theorists aim to address “why” questions and “seek explanation and prediction at a general level, separated and abstracted from the specific research sight and process” (Glaser 1998, 2001).

Charmaz is critical of objectivist grounded theory as having a tendency to oversimplify, ignore differences and to take a neutral stance throughout an enquiry. Instead, she argues for a social constructionist approach which also attends to what and how questions as well as why. She asserts that a social constructionist approach “encourages innovation; researchers can develop new understandings and novel theoretical interpretations of studied life” (Charmaz 2000: 509-535). However, she does concede that the value of social constructionism for grounded theory is in its early stages.

I am sympathetic to Charmaz’ views which allow for grounded theorists to be innovative and adaptable as their enquiry progresses, both in terms of method and analysis.

Her constructivist approach makes several assumptions:

1. Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed – but constructed under particular conditions;
2. The research process emerges from interaction;
3. It takes into account the researcher's positionality, as well as that of the research participants;
4. The researcher and researched co-construct the data – data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it. Researchers are part of the research situation, and their positions, privileges, perspectives, and interactions affect it (Charmaz 2000, 2006; Clarke 2005, 2006).

Reflecting on my own enquiry I can see that I was adaptable in my methods, responding to that which had gone before; and also adaptable in my analysis as the significant themes within my findings morphed into new sets, as my understanding from what was very rich data themselves developed and deepened.

The theory which emerges from this study, as a model and guidelines for practice, is charged with how to implement an effective 'facilitation of learning' model for experienced and mature learners in the workplace, in such a way that it is useful for these learners given their context. Such a theory requires a conceptualisation of 'facilitation of learning' which is appropriate to the work of Capable NZ facilitators. It also requires identification and explanation of the attributes and conditions of the 'facilitation of learning' process that is necessary to engage facilitators in enhancing their professional practice and to heighten and strengthen their development in light of this learning.

Data Collection

My approach to this study utilises an assortment of methods and techniques to get at meaning to describe and interpret social action. Consequently, in this study, use was made of the following specific data collection techniques: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis.

Survey

My initial project design provided for in-depth interviews of learners who had completed the programme and current facilitators in the programme.

However, in my oral interview at the end of Paper DPS 4561, the panel challenged me to consider conducting a survey of past learners to begin the project. Their argument was that having an initial set of quantitative data would provide me with a clearer direction when it came to the interviews and would provide an initial sense of the strength of learner perspectives on the two key focus areas of the project, i.e. what learning had occurred and what was it that had supported that learning. I rose to the panel's challenge and developed an initial survey instrument which I tested with several learners who were also now working in Capable NZ. Thus the initial questionnaire design had the benefit of both a learner and a facilitator perspective.

The survey (refer to Appendices 3 and 4) turned out to be a most appropriate starting point for the study as it generated significant data relevant to the aims of my project – not only a wide range of viewpoints but also a clear indication of commonly held views. I was pleasantly surprised at the high rate of survey returns, having anticipated that the alumni database of previous learners may not be up-to-date and would contain many old and no-longer-used email addresses. The survey completion rate was thirty-eight per cent or 161 learners out of the 423 possible respondents which is a very good response rate. The Otago Polytechnic Organisational Researcher who assisted with the survey advised that an eighteen per cent rate would have provided reliable data, so the thirty-eight per cent response rate which was achieved gave me confidence that I had a strong basis for the theory which I hoped to develop from this study.

The high completion rate resulted in a pleasing amount of very rich data – over 250 pages of comments to augment the quantitative results. The sheer volume of commentary was initially overwhelming but fortunately my supervisor and a supportive colleague helped me to find a suitable structure to extract meaningful themes from this data as discussed below.

My initial engagement with the survey data prompted me to think about whether or not there were immediate improvements to the facilitation process that could be implemented. I recall having many conversations with my colleagues about the role of the facilitator given the data now available. Clear in that data was the need for more structure to the ILP approach which I then set about to provide. I prepared an overview of the learning process and designed a set of learning tasks which facilitators could use at their discretion to guide learners through the various stages of the ILP.

Thus, the initial survey of learners became a catalyst for significant improvement in the ILP process. On balance, the survey worked well although in the analysis of the data there were some obvious gaps in the questions I had asked, e.g. the survey implicitly assumed the learner was in employment which meant that those surveyed who were self-employed did not provide helpful responses to some questions but likely would have done so had I acknowledged the possibility of self-employment. Also, I did not provide sufficient definition or context for some questions and assumed that the learners surveyed would have the same understanding as I had with the meanings of words used, e.g. the meaning of the term 'new learning'. Several indicated that there had been no new learning for them, yet in their comments clearly described new learning that had taken place. The explanation was that they were not acknowledging as new learning new perspectives on things they already knew.

Surveys are designed to elicit the feelings, beliefs, experiences or activities of respondents. They may be structured and, or unstructured as the situation demands. The chief advantage of the survey is undoubtedly its economy, especially of time, in the case of this enquiry. Surveys tend to have disadvantages regarding generating deep data: the shape of the data is very much determined by the researcher. As well, they have a potential problem in that participants do not always respond, which means that the researcher must follow up with reminders. However, these disadvantages were not significant for this study, for the reasons which follow.

First, the survey was not the only data collection method for this enquiry and nor did it seek to explore all of the issues in which I had an interest. Its purpose was to provide me with an overview of learner attitudes and opinions about the learning process, the learning itself and the impact of gaining the qualification on a learner's personal and professional identity. It acted as a benchmark, and for this purpose it was a suitable method.

Second, it is important to appreciate the context in which this survey was administered i.e. that this was the first time that these learners had an opportunity to voice their opinions about their ILP experience and where improvements could be made. Therefore this was intended to serve as an initial opportunity to promote critical reflection; given that interviews were to take place after this overall survey.

Third, while the survey was primarily concerned with generating quantitative data, it did contain prompts for the participants to record additional comments or perspectives. Thus, the design of the survey still allowed for more insightful data to be generated.

Finally, the survey was a part of a triangulation strategy. After administering the survey I engaged in depth with a sample of learners and facilitators, and to this end, sampling was purposive or purposeful (Morse 1989; Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Glaser and Strauss 1967).

In-depth Interviews

Interviews were a logical, methodological choice for this study, given the overarching interpretive approach I had resolved to take. An interview is “a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the [life-world] of the interviewee” (Kvale 1996: 174) - precisely what this study was seeking to do.

Interviews are more compelling than questionnaires in securing narrative data from people sharing their views in greater depth (Kvale 1996, 2003). Similarly, Cohen, et al. (2007: 29) note that interviewing is “a valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting.”

“The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton 1990: 278). However, both “out there” (in the world) and “in here” (in the mind) are not a mirror relationship in the sense that language does not “reflect” inner or outer realities as such. These have to be filtered, re-contextualised, made “unfamiliar”, put through the interpretive mill, the reflexive cogitations of the researchers before they can be “one option” in the rich and multiple interpretations of that “saying”. In short, the microphone or the transcript does not automatically yield the “fact” or “data”. There are layers to be uncovered by using different interpretive lenses and contextual givens.

In preparation for the interviews, I had to make two sampling decisions: which staff and which learners to choose to interview. The selection ultimately came down to choosing colleagues and learners whom I considered would make a meaningful contribution to the aims of the study - purposeful sampling as outlined earlier. A ‘good’ informant in this study was one who was willing and able to share his/her reflective perceptions with me, the researcher.

Learner Interviews

For the next stage of the project (March-December 2016), I conducted face-to-face interviews with ten more recent learners, each of whom completed their qualifications after the improvements to structure had been made. These interviews were designed to explore all of the issues canvassed in the survey in more depth and were an opportunity to gain perspectives on matters which were inadequately covered or omitted in the survey. For example, the issue of 'new' learning outlined above was able to be fully explored.

The sample of learners who were interviewed was drawn from those who had completed the Capable NZ monthly learner feedback survey and who had indicated in that survey their interest to participate in an interview. I then made the decision not to select any learners with whom I had worked, and subsequently selected ten learners to ensure I had a diverse age range, different ethnicity groups, a variety of differing occupations, geographically spread across NZ, and at different stages in their career development. Thus, the sample participants were selected for their diversity, based on variables that I believed would ensure a range of perspectives. An information sheet and request to interview were sent out and meetings were set up accordingly (Appendix 3c).

This sampling was seen as the most appropriate basis on which to proceed given that it was not practical to include in the study all of the learners to date. The value of such purposeful sampling is in the selection of "information-rich cases" as is described by Patton (1990: 169).

On reflection I was pleased with the learner interview phase and thrilled with the extensive and rich data which came out of the interviews. I think my choice of a semi-structured interview combined with allowing the interview to flow as a dialogue combined to ensure that the learner stories were told in full and there were no examples where I was left with a strong desire to go back and ask more questions. On the contrary, I have an enormous amount of data from the interviews which is not directly related to the aims of this particular project but which may well be the basis for future analysis and reporting. For example, I have rich data about the impacts on the careers of the learners as a consequence of completing the ILP degree.

Facilitator Interviews

My final data gathering exercise took place at the end of 2016 through to early 2017, in the form of one-on-one interviews with facilitators of ILP learners. These interviews canvassed the same issues as had been raised with learners with the intention of triangulating the learner perspectives. Once again, the sample of facilitators was purposeful. It was not practical to interview all of the facilitators who worked in Capable NZ, therefore I chose first of all from those of my colleagues who were willing to be interviewed and who were prepared to look critically at their actions, beliefs and experiences and to share these with me. This sample ensured I tapped into a diversity of experience and capability from those who had facilitated only a few learners in the ILP programme to those who had worked with many learners across the full range of Capable NZ programmes, not just the ILP. I also ensured a gender and cultural balance.

I saw this phase of the research as potentially more challenging for me given that I was to be interviewing colleagues who were not only my professional peers but for whom I had a supervisory responsibility. I had some initial anxiety about whether or not I would get the necessary cross section of facilitators agreeing to be interviewed – especially across the range of experience and capability. I did want to interview recently appointed and relatively inexperienced facilitators as well as some of my long practicing colleagues. I was also concerned that I might not get the frankness of response that I was looking for. My worst fear was that I would be told what people thought I wanted to hear. As it turned out my fears were unfounded. I had more than eight facilitators volunteering to be interviewed so got to choose and the richness of the responses to my questions speak for themselves. I have explained later in this chapter the steps I took to mitigate the possibility that the facilitators interviewed would be less than forthcoming.

From the above it can be seen that the data gathering aspects of this project went very well. There were no major process issues and I am privileged with an enormous amount of data which speaks specifically to the aims and objectives of the project and also provides potential for future analysis and reporting. What was the more challenging was the data analysis especially given the huge volume of data that I generated.

I employed an open-ended semi-structured interview format (as distinct from a fixed response interview) as the key method of data collection for this study.

Open-ended interviews enable the researcher to engage with an individual in a personal exchange and to understand the person being interviewed as well as the topic under discussion. In other words, they enable interviewees to “speak in their voice and express their thoughts and feelings” (Berg 2007: 96), which can then be subjected to the researcher’s multiple questionings and contextualisations.

Finally, open-ended interviews were used in the study in such a way that each interview can be looked at individually and also topics can be examined across the whole range of interviewees. This allows for a “pooling of meaning” (Marton and Saljo 1984: 39).

Patton (1990) discusses three approaches to open-ended interviews: the informal, conversational interview, the general interview guide approach and the standardised open-ended interview, which differ in the extent to which questions are set and standardised before the interview is conducted.

I selected the general interview guide approach which strikes a balance between the other two methods. According to Gubrium and Holstein, this interviewing:

allows for greater flexibility and freedom to be offered to the interviewer and the interviewee, as to planning, implementing and organising the interview content and questions (2002: 35).

The interview guides (Appendices 4a and 4b) comprise a set of prompt questions which served as a checklist during the interview, to make sure that all topics which I perceived as being relevant were covered.

Patton (1990) and Berg (2007) identify some strengths for the interview guide approach: more comprehensive data than with a standardised interview and more systematic data collection compared with an open interview. According to Berg, the advantage of a guide is that it:

“allows for in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out by the aim of the study” (2007: 39).

Using a guide still allows for a more conversational approach and leaves scope to anticipate and close gaps in the data. According to Dörnyei (2007: 140):

“a ‘good’ qualitative interview has two key features: (a) it flows naturally, and (b) it is rich in detail”.

On the other hand, this approach has some potential drawbacks: relevant topics may be inadvertently omitted, and the different ways in which the interviewer may pose or sequence questions can lead to quite different responses from interviewees, thereby reducing the comparability of replies.

A third drawback, one common to any form of a structured interview, is the potential to restrict dialogue to topics which are relevant to the researcher and thereby to miss out on matters important to the interviewee.

I was conscious of these drawbacks before conducting the interviews and was therefore, alert to omissions and to the possibility that respondents might answer questions from different perspectives. These drawbacks were at least partly counteracted by having questions in the guide that covered the same ground. For example, the two questions in the interview guide, “Tell me about the new things you learned in the course of your study?” and “Can you identify critical times or points in your learning journey where new learning did occur?” could both prompt the participant to reflect on the connection between learning and ‘new’ learning and about context-specific learning, and about learning about self.

To overcome the potential problem that only my topics as the researcher would be discussed, each interview concluded with an invitation to the participant to suggest any improvements Capable NZ could make moving forward. This gave them the opportunity to raise or explore any matter about ‘facilitation of learning’ that they wished to tell me about. As well, each interview was allowed to take its course, with reference being made to the guide only when the interviewee appeared to have exhausted talking about a particular aspect of his/her experience. I made it clear to each participant that the guidelines were no more than guidelines and that my interests were in learning about the full range of the respondent’s experiences and feelings.

Before leaving this discussion of the interview method used in this study, it is appropriate to outline some of the processes utilised in the course of the interview. After all, as Patton reminds would-be interviewers, the depth and quality of information greatly depends on the interviewer's skills in eliciting it.

One of the key factors for successful interviewing is the quality of the personal relationships developed during the interview process, as stressed by Nisbet and Watt:

Inevitably you will be part of the 'living experience' you study, and your personal skills within that social environment will be crucial, both in allowing you access to the data you want and subsequently in giving validity to your findings (1978: 20).

The relationship between myself as the researcher with the participants in this study was of high quality, built on trust, and involving mutual reciprocity, genuineness, and empathy. These are the same attributes I use when working with any person in my professional roles as a facilitator of learning, a career practitioner, coach, or supervisor. In his seminal works, Amundson, (2003a, 2009) coins the term "active engagement" where he urges career counsellors to be aware of their underlying assumptions when working with others and that the emphasis should be solely on relationship building. Amundson's worldviews can equally relate to facilitators of learning.

A copy of the interview guide was provided to each participant well in advance, and each was given a chance to be interviewed face to face or by phone or Skype (due to some people living in different geographical locations throughout NZ). Most were happy to be interviewed on phone or Skype, and where possible, the local participants met in my office (by their choice). All of the interviews were audiotaped with participant consent.

I was very much aware that I might be told things in the course of the interview that the participants probably would not have intended to say; and that I would be told sensitive and confidential information. Consequently, unequivocal assurances were given to the participants about their anonymity and the confidentiality of what they disclosed. They were assured they could edit out any comments from the transcript of their interview if, on

reflection, this was what they wanted to do. As it turned out, some wanted to add more to their transcripts to clarify the points they had been making.

Obtaining reliable and valid data using interviews requires the interviewer to recognise some potential pitfalls such as researcher bias and researcher boundaries, well explained in the research methodology literature: e.g., by Gordon (1969), McCracken (1988), Cohen and Manion (1989) and Patton (1990). I was cognisant of the boundaries I needed to observe as an interviewer and researcher.

Before conducting the interviews, I familiarised myself with the potential pitfalls and consciously thought about my interviewing skills. I did a trial interview with a couple of colleagues and then critically analysed for both bias and poor technique. For the interviews proper the following processes were employed to maintain flexibility and consistency and to ensure good quality data was generated.

As the interviews proceeded, brief notes were made of other questions to ask and, at several points in the interview; 'mental' checks were made to see whether any additional questioning was required. The objective here was to try to ensure that each participant was questioned on the same aspects of facilitation of learning to enable comparison during the data analysis stage, even though the questions were not necessarily asked in the same way. Thus, the interviews were a mixture of broad, open-ended questions and 'probing' questions.

As Costley, et al. (2010: 94) note, such interviews "... require a high level of skill on the part of the interviewer." As it happens, the skills required of a career counsellor are similar to those of the interviewer i.e. to be fully present, sincere, listening actively and displaying accurate understanding, warmth, and genuineness. Participants chose the setting and the times convenient for them, and I aimed for a relaxed, informal approach, taking the role mostly as a prompter and listener, occasionally summarising an experience to check out the accuracy of my perceptions.

I utilised a range of practices to facilitate communication, such as outlining the purpose of the interview; motivating the participants with the altruistic notion that information from this study could become a resource to bring about change in the 'facilitation of learning' process. I acknowledged the participants' 'positions' and empathised with them on

occasions, and created a climate for interviewing where respondents felt they could express themselves in the manner best for them. Thus, by addressing these factors and showing a genuine interest in the experiences of each participant, the communication between myself and the participants was made as efficient as possible, and this provided me with a richer set of data for analysis.

Good qualitative research designs are fluid and provide for researcher choices throughout what should be an iterative process. The interview questions were sent out beforehand as a reminder of the key themes for exploration.

The interview was carried out and transcribed and I then read the interview data against the template prepared for analysis, making notes about each participant relating to each theme. As new and different data became more relevant, I revised my analysis. I found it became more enjoyable to let the process unfold instead of trying to keep to a rigid framework.

Data Analysis and Processing

Qualitative research has three major components: data, analytic or interpretive procedures and written or verbal reports (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Analysis of the data is undertaken so as to categorise and order the information to make sense of it with a view to producing an accurate report. The broad approach I followed in the study was the coding process recommended by Strauss and Corbin (*ibid*).

The survey data was analysed with the open responses coded initially to the four themes mentioned above (Appendix 5a). These themes were subsequently changed as I engaged with data from the individual interviews.

As a result of the initial categorisation process, it was clear that some topics needed to be explored in more depth, for example, the extent to which learners understood the ILP process and their responsibilities in that process. Thus, the in-depth individual interviews were constructed to enable me to explore more deeply topics and issues which were unclear from the survey results, or which became 'obvious' by their absence as I sought to understand the survey results.

Exploration of the interviews resulted in a refinement of themes. As soon as practicable after each interview, the audiotapes were played back with me taking brief notes about ideas or issues that were interesting or insightful. This 'debriefing' process provided insights into the nature of the data and facilitated the gaining of a broader perspective of 'what was going on'. Again the data was coded in a way which was consistent with the initial themes though they had emerged as different headings, i.e. *the ILP process, perspectives on new learning, the framework or model of practice, the role of facilitator*.

The coding process described above is referred to as open-coding (Strauss and Corbin (ibid)), which employs two basic procedures: making comparisons and asking questions. I made comparisons of each aspect of the data (each question of the transcripts) with categorisation already made and with the literature.

As each paragraph of a transcript was studied, it was colour coded into a theme, but sometimes data had dimensions pertinent to two or three themes. In these cases, coding was multi-themed which subsequently proved helpful when identifying linkages and relationships. The open coding process was interwoven with a process which involved searching for connections amongst the initial themes and with the literature. This process is referred to as axial coding (Strauss and Corbin (ibid)) and resulted in the emergence of a new set of themes.

The final task was to attempt to integrate the coded data into a grounded theory, a process referenced by Strauss and Corbin (ibid) as selective coding, involving similar activities to those undertaken with axial coding, but at a higher, more abstract level of analysis. As this task proceeded, it became clear that I did not need four themes. The identification of a third theme around frameworks of practice was artificial i.e. all of the findings about this theme were really about transformation and new learning. I therefore made the decision to merge themes two and three (Appendix 5b). The final result is three themes which provide the structure for the presentation of the research findings and the key output of this study – the model for effective 'facilitation of learning'.

Researcher Participation – My Role as an Insider-Researcher

It is important that the nature of my role and involvement in this research study is declared. My involvement with Capable NZ started in 2005 as a contractor working primarily with

interviewing potential learners who wished to gain the BAppMgt qualification. I soon found myself facilitating learners of my own, and by 2013 I held a leadership role, being given responsibility for the undergraduate programmes in Capable NZ as well as the lead facilitator for the training and development of facilitation staff.

I became responsible for academic quality and for the professional development of the facilitation team. I have held these responsibilities throughout the duration of this study. I believe my involvement with Capable NZ has been advantageous to this research as will be explained below. However, researcher participation does have potential dangers which must be taken into account, also explained below.

Patton regards researcher participation as advantageous in the sense that the experiences and insights of the researcher "... are an important part of the enquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon" (1990: 40). This has been the case in this study. My involvement has provided a knowledge base about the 'facilitation of learning' process and the values, beliefs and philosophies which underpinned the implementation of the ILP approach. As well, my prior knowledge made it easy to locate and obtain documentation which was relevant to the study, and I have considerable experience with the complexities that surround this work including organisational policy and NZQA expectations.

My concurrent employment and leadership role in Capable NZ also brought other advantages – an empathy with the participants and an understanding of the environment. I had also undertaken the qualification myself, as a means to better understand and appreciate the learning process. Also, I spoke the same language as both the facilitator and learner participants. I also believe that my background in career counselling enabled me to engender a high level of trust with participants so they would give honest and open feedback.

I am aware that being an insider-researcher could influence my interpretation of the findings of this study. However, this is where Costley, et al. (2010) argue that context and situated knowledge is important. They believe that the "unique perspective of the researcher inevitably makes a difference to the research, along with the specific issues that often arise for them, such as the need for sensitivity towards colleagues".

As Nixon (2008) comments, “engaging in reflection at work and undertaking insider-led research can make significant contributions to work practices”.

I believe this has been the case and as this study has progressed I have made many contributions to Capable NZ practices directly as a consequence of what I have learned as a researcher. Researcher participation does have potential drawbacks, not the least of which is a potential for bias such as collecting data to justify prior actions or interpreting events. There is a risk of too close an identification with the participants, and in particular, a tendency for interviewees to tell me what they think I want to hear. However, this does not appear to have been the case.

The facilitators who were involved in the study chose to participate because they saw this project as one through which they could contribute to new processes, ideas and strategies that would enhance their own effectiveness and more importantly learner participation and success. They suggested that these interviews gave them an opportunity to be reflective about their own practice and when they were invited for those thoughts to be part of an integrated model of effective ‘facilitation of learning’, they willingly did so.

My engagement with my facilitator colleagues can be seen as reflexive. As Boud, et al. (2006) express:

Reflexivity has recently been advocated as a way to be both reflective about one’s practice, a common learning technique in the field of professional practice, and to understand one’s position and the position of others in the research.

Insider-researchers fall into the category of being able to identify their “authority that comes from the experience of having studied, reflected and paid attention to the reflection of others” (Sprague and Kobrynowicz 2004: 92).

Another potential drawback of being an insider-researcher arises when interpreting the data and facing a possible tendency to see what I hoped to see, rather than what was there. However, in this regard, I was mindful of the phenomenological term - the Epoche Process which means to suspend judgment. So, rather than simply accepting an interviewee’s opinion in and of itself, I would strive logically to deduce valid ideas based on the questions

asked, the literature and on the themes that arose. I believed in this way I would be more interested in learning and discovery than in defending any possible self-serving prejudices, preconceived notions or theories.

As a participant researcher the most important potential drawback lies with my leadership and supervisory management responsibilities. There are the potential problems of power imbalance and my colleagues not answering my questions truthfully. I did not interview my own learners so that potential 'power over' issue was not a problem with regard to them.

Having recognised these potential dangers, I took actions to minimise these risks becoming realities. Regarding the interview itself, considerable efforts were made to challenge the participants to think critically about the 'facilitation of learning' process and its structure and impact. I avoided imposing my views and declared my role in the purpose of the project and what I intended to gain from the results and make it clear to participants that my views had evolved significantly over the ten years I had been involved in Capable NZ.

The ethical issues related to my supervisory role in Capable NZ are more fully discussed in the section on Ethical Considerations below.

Triangulation

From the commencement of this study, I have been mindful of the need to ensure the integrity of the research data and the findings, and as Mathison argues "good research practice obligates the researcher to triangulate" (1988: 13). The issue of credibility includes the need to ensure data integrity, i.e. data validity and reliability, and to ensure that the data is interpreted transparently.

To ensure data integrity, I planned and implemented a strategy of triangulation which broadly can be defined as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Patton 1999; Denzin 1978). Triangulation compares information to determine corroboration and is thus a process of qualitative cross-validation (Wiersma 2000). Triangulation is based on the principle that a range of viewpoints allow for greater accuracy and researchers can improve the accuracy of their judgments by collecting different kinds of data on the same subject matter (Jick 1979). However, when dealing with qualitative data complete convergence does not necessarily occur, but with triangulation, the researcher is

presented with a range of possible conclusions that includes the actual answer. This is called the defining range and is known as 'bracketing' (Mark and Shotland 1987).

For data triangulation, I collected data from learners by way of two primary sources –survey and interviews. The survey was sent out to all learners who had undertaken a study with Capable NZ since 2006 and resulted in a diverse set of respondents. The sample for the interviews contained learners who had recently finished the ILP programme in the last year. These learners were geographically spread throughout NZ, were from different cultures, age/stage and had worked with a range of different facilitators from Capable NZ.

I also collected data from facilitators who came from a range of locations in NZ, were between 49-68 years old, and had worked in Capable NZ from eighteen months to six years and were on the developing, competent or advanced scale of professional capability.

Finally, the concept of data triangulation can be expanded to include time and space (Denzin 1978). Thus, in this study, the individuals who were interviewed after the survey were questioned with a more deliberate focus on the learning process and the role of facilitation, and about their experiences and attitudes, more recently. Again, the data from this exercise was compared with the data generated in the previous survey.

As well as data triangulation I used methodological triangulation, which involves multiple procedures for data collection and analysis, which inevitably exposes different features of empirical reality. Methodological triangulation makes use of either two or more data collection approaches within the same method or study (Denzin 1978). In this study, as explained earlier, I used open-ended interviews, document analysis, questionnaires and reflection on professional development workshops with facilitators. The point is that each method generates data which can be interpreted in light of the information already gathered. This was in fact done, with me using the same coding-analysis procedure for each set of data which was gathered. This coding-analysis process is shown in Appendix 5b.

Data and methodological triangulation were also supported by theoretical triangulation, which draws upon alternative or competing theories rather than considering one viewpoint only. It is a way of widening the theoretical framework when trying to interpret the phenomena under study.

Denzin argues that researchers ought to be aware of different theories that may be relevant to a particular situation if they are to make good quality interpretations of the data that they gather. Theory triangulation simply "... asks the researcher to be aware of multiple ways in which the phenomena can be interpreted" (1978: 246). For this study, I conducted a wide ranging literature review encompassing diverse theoretical perspectives on learning from experience, reflection on learning, transformative learning, the role of facilitator and effective facilitation. There is no doubt that this review 'sensitised' me to different ways of interpreting the data.

It is important to understand what the triangulation strategy outlined above set out to achieve. First, to guard against any bias on my part and to ensure the validity and reliability of the project data. Second, to contribute to an enriched understanding of 'facilitation of learning'. This is because it is the possibility of divergent or even contradictory outcomes from the triangulation process that can lead to an enhanced construction of meanings. Triangulation, as Jick explains

"... can also capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study" (1979: 603).

Implementing a triangulation strategy can uncover some unique variance or can suggest conclusions that a single method might not uncover. Mathison (1988: 15) notes

"... it is a technique which provides more and better evidence from which researchers can construct meaningful propositions about the social world".

This view captures the essence of social research: not concerned simply with uncovering what is happening, but with making sense of it, which was, of course, the aim of this study. There is arguably more potential for sense-making the more data, perspectives and theories one has to work with.

The credibility of the findings of this study was also enhanced by 'member checks' which is the process of recycling description and emerging analysis and conclusions back through the participants in the study, and refining these findings in the light of the reactions of the participants.

Member checking was undertaken at four stages of the investigation. The first checks were made upon completing the analysis of the interviews. The check was simply to give the participants the opportunity to validate what they answered in the interviews: did they say what they wanted to say? Did they mean what they said? The second stage of checking was at the stage that tentative conclusions about individual perceptions of facilitation of learning were being drawn by myself, the researcher. This checking took the form of discussions with the individual participant about what I believed the participant's experiences and attitudes meant. This proved a useful clarifying exercise. The third stage of checking was at the stage that tentative conclusions were being drawn about the overall effectiveness of facilitation of learning. The fourth stage of checking occurred at the stage that I was forming a tentative model of 'facilitation of learning' for development. This check involved discussions with staff in Capable NZ who were also involved in the process. With regard to the tentative model of 'facilitation of learning' most of the facilitation staff were involved and had some input and discussion into this.

Ethical Considerations

These considerations include protocol, confidentiality and negotiation. Adelman, et al., (ibid) argue that case study research, as involving real life situations, is likely to expose participants in the research to critical analysis, judgment or blame. The case study researcher, therefore, must acknowledge that others have to live with the consequences of his/her findings.

In thinking about the ethical considerations of this study, I was attracted to and guided by four principles articulated by Gellerman, et al. (1990: 24):

- Serve the good of the whole
- Treat others as we would like them to treat us
- Always treat people as ends, never only as means; respect their being and never use them for their ability to do; treat people as individuals and never as objects
- Act as though we do not increase power by more influential stakeholders over less powerful.

I also declared and bound myself to the principles which follow, which were developed with the benefit of the advice in the literature of a number of qualitative researchers; e.g. Lather (1986), Patton (1990), Strauss and Corbin (1990), as well as the ethical guidelines used by Otago Polytechnic.

First, to respect those who participate in the research as autonomous people. This required due consideration of their needs, feelings and privacy, as well as respect for their views. It required that I did not attempt to impose my views or values on them. It required that they not be treated as 'objects' of study but as participants in the study. Most importantly, this principle required the participants' informed consent. This was achieved by providing them with information sheets which explained the nature and purpose of the study and the methodology and the intended outcomes (Appendices 3 and 4).

It is important to note that all of the learners who participated in this project had completed their qualification, so there was not an issue of power imbalance as can be the case when teachers are engaging with their current learners for research purposes. Thus, a key mitigation strategy was to assure the learners of anonymity and that this project was to enhance the practice of Capable NZ facilitators going forward, which in turn will better support potential learners.

Second, to respect the rights of those who participate in the study. There are several fundamental rights of participants which were acknowledged and honoured:

- The right to refuse to provide answers to questions
- The right to discontinue participation in the study, without explanation
- The right to obtain further explanations or information about the study
- The right to confidentiality
- The right to anonymity
- The right to see the results of the research, which includes the right to review and correct any 'findings' made as a result of my dialogue with the participants.

This latter right is particularly important in an enquiry of this nature where the whole focus is on the experience and understandings of the participants. On the one hand this concept of 'member checks' is essentially common sense for ensuring data credibility, but there is an ethical dimension in so far as those whose meanings are being reported are entitled to the opportunity to attest to their accuracy, if only because of the imperfections of language.

Third, to respect the interests of the participants. This means that if in the course of the study I became privy to information that could be harmful to a participant, that I acted so as to avoid or minimise that harm; i.e. the research may not result in harm to those who have participated.

I identified earlier that there was an important ethical consideration arising from my supervisory role in Capable NZ, i.e. I interviewed work colleagues who may well have felt compromised in sharing their insights with me because of the power imbalance inherent in my supervisory role. This I mitigated in part by being clear as to my commitment to the ethical guidelines that have framed this project and to protecting their anonymity. However, there was still the risk of not getting honest feedback, which I sought to mitigate by emphasising that my enquiry was about enhancing our learners' learning as well as our practice as facilitators and that my project was an opportunity to reflect on what we could as a group do better if we had the resources to do it. Thus, I emphasised the value that would be returned to facilitators as a group, including those who do not participate, as ideally, we all benefit if the findings of my research, reflection and study led to a more effective set of strategies, tools and understandings which support new learners and facilitators alike.

As well as the ethical issues arising from my supervisory role there are the issues associated with being a practitioner–researcher. Costley, et al. (2010) write about the growing body of literature that focuses on the practitioner–researcher and the advantages and disadvantages associated with this. It would be disingenuous to argue that it is unproblematic to be an 'insider but outsider' to my colleagues (facilitators) just for the purposes of this study. Consequently, I needed to draw on the same ethical principles of mutuality and trust as with other participants of the study, so as to avoid risks of manipulation or intimidation. I believe I was open and honest about my project, its aims and objectives, from its conception, sharing with my colleagues at all stages and inviting participation and feedback.

The feedback from my colleagues was sent back to them for verification and amendment if required, before being signed off, and they were fully aware of what was to be done with the information that they provided. As part of my commitment to transparency, I presented my anonymised findings to the Capable NZ team for general discussion, which itself helped me to interpret the data. Feedback from the team suggested they were interested, felt included, and believed their role as facilitators was acknowledged by both the learners and their colleagues.

Thus, I consciously took on board guidance from Costley, et al. (2010: 33) who pointed out:

as an insider-researcher, you may not be able, or may not wish, to distance yourself from the research, so there may be a subjectivity which you share with colleagues who are involved in the project, accepting that people construct reality in different ways.

In this chapter, I have explained the approach I have taken to this study – an interpretive approach using case study method with a view to building grounded theory. I have acknowledged my role as an insider-researcher/practitioner-researcher and have canvassed the advantages and disadvantages of that status. I have also acknowledged that I have been an insider-researcher with supervisory responsibilities with regard to the facilitators, bringing particular ethical issues which I have had to mitigate, along with the ethical issues which more typically pertain to a study of this nature.

I have outlined above the main stages of this project and have identified where the challenges lay. I would now like to highlight that this project has had a very strong ‘action research’ element to it. At each stage of the project from initial planning through to this final report I have had frequent dialogue with my colleagues, some of it based on the findings which I have shared, and some of it based on the conclusions I have reached. I have also shared and discussed the model of practice and competency framework as these have been developed.

Consequently, this project has shaped practice within Capable NZ over the last three years and in that sense has been a moving feast. Whilst I have been working with data that represents accounts of the experiences of learners and facilitators over a specific period of time, the experiences of the learners who came later are different as are the more recent experiences of the facilitators. Thus, the real value of this project for Capable NZ lies not in what I am now reporting but in the understandings that have emerged as I have shared this project journey with my colleagues. Practices in the ILP programme specifically and Capable NZ generally, are significantly different today from what they were in 2014 when I commenced this project.

This can be seen as vindication of the methodology I chose, i.e. to build grounded theory through an interpretive research framework.

I am pleased that I did not set out with pre-conceived theories in mind and then seek to make my study fit the theories. Grounded theory emerged instinctively into my thinking and methodology. As Costley, et al. (ibid) explain: "the aim is to produce meaning and interpretation that has value in the context being studied" (2010: 88). This project has produced the meaning and value to which Costley refers.

Chapter Four: Project Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the project for each participant group analysed and interpreted by theme, taking into account relevant literature.

The participant groups are:

- Learners Surveyed – 161 responses from 423 contacted
- Learners Interviewed - 10
- Facilitators Interviewed – 8.

The three themes are:

- Theme 1** The ILP Approach - coping with programme expectations (understanding the nature of independent learning)
- Theme 2** Perspectives of New Learning – what and why? (nature of new learning, reflective practice, framework of practice, transformation)
- Theme 3** Facilitating Learning – how best achieved (the role of the facilitator, structure for learners)

I have reported the findings mostly in the words of the participants themselves, intending to convey their experiences of the learners and facilitators, thereby hoping to touch a familiar chord with potential readers of this study. Representative quotes from participants have been selected.

To provide an indication of the strength of the findings, the following terminology has been used to quantify responses, other than where the views were held by a single participant or all of the participants.

A 'few' or 'some' refers to less than twenty per cent of the participants

'Several' refers to more than twenty per cent but less than fifty per cent of the participants

'Many' refers to more than fifty per cent but less than seventy-five per cent of the participants

'Most' refers to more than seventy-five per cent of the participants.

I made the decision to present the findings under each theme and participant source, and then to summarise and interpret those findings for each theme.

In interpreting the findings I have also brought to bear my observations, thoughts, feelings and attitudes, drawing on over ten years of experience working with independent learners working in Capable NZ, and an even longer experience as a tertiary teacher and leader and as a career development practitioner.

Theme 1: The ILP Approach – Coping with Programme Expectations

This theme is about the extent to which learners understood the ILP process, i.e. what independent learning is and what it involves, taking into account different ways of learning. I have reported this theme because it provides an important context for learner success and because the particular insights conveyed here led to the first of the changes in practice in Capable NZ from this study, i.e. a more structured learning process.

The Capable NZ ILP approach is positioned as a learning process which is suitable for mature adults with significant skills and knowledge from experience, who can learn independently and who are not expecting to be taught in the conventional sense of teaching. We do our best to communicate this to prospective learners on our website, in our publicity material and through the initial communications with their facilitator. We advise learners that they can expect to come to new understandings about themselves and their area of professional practice.

We provide examples of where new learning typically occurs, for example, around relevant theories, in critical and reflective thinking, in degree level writing and new understandings of self. It is important for learners to appreciate that they will not be engaged in a mere evidence gathering exercise to verify what they already know and can do, although assembling a portfolio of evidence of learning is an integral part of the process - a necessary but not sufficient part of being a successful learner in the ILP.

This theme is important because those who had a good understanding of the ILP were usually better oriented and ultimately better prepared to get the most out of the programme from the outset, as opposed to those who had a poor understanding of what they had enrolled in.

The Learners Surveyed

There was a significant mismatch between learner expectations of the ILP process and the reality which they experienced. Most of those surveyed had some idea that they would have to prove their current knowledge and skill levels, in part through a portfolio although not all understood what a portfolio of evidence involved.

Most appreciated that there would be a reflective element to the learning process, although not all understood what form that might take. Consequently, there were significantly different understandings of the learning process. From one learner:

“To find that it involved a process of gathering, sorting and reflecting was unexpected. It is a very self-driven process. Motivation has to be high.”

And another:

“I thought there would be more structured learning and more for me ‘to do’ as opposed for me to complete myself.”

Several learners had a conventional view of what learning in the ILP would involve. They thought they would be undertaking formal assignments and being provided with relevant information to help with completion of those assignments. Several also thought that the process would require them to complete set reading and other learning tasks.

Some learners struggled with where their prior learning fitted into the process, and others had difficulty getting beyond their experience in ‘traditional’ teaching environments, as seen in the following two perspectives:

“I was not sure what to expect when I started. I had a preconceived notion of education and university... I thought that there would be a lot more importation of knowledge and more teaching.”

“I believed it would be more formal and complicated. The process was more challenging than formal study, but because it was relevant to me and my experiences it allowed me to learn more about myself and my worth.”

Many of the learners surveyed said they did not anticipate that the process would be so rigorous, or as challenging as it turned out to be.

“For starters, I had not appreciated how rigorous the process would be, and I struggled. Equally, I had no conception of the extraordinary power of self-reflection and how vitally important was the benefit of my study being informed by my practice.”

The Learner Interviews

The learners interviewed admitted to similar misunderstandings as the learners surveyed, as to what the ILP approach involved. Some of the learners had a good understanding about the ILP learning process, having done their homework before commencing, and were well-prepared:

“I sought out and had been given all of the possible information before I signed up. I called my facilitator specifically to discuss the independent learning process. I followed this phone call up with a face-to-face meeting with my facilitator”.

As a result, this learner felt very prepared for this ILP.

Others misunderstood the process - for example:

“I held on to the belief that ‘independent’ for me aligned to my overwhelming desire not to be in a classroom. I do not think I understood that ‘independent’ meant I would be responsible for going and undertaking research ... and for being responsible for my outputs”.

“Although I did not understand the meaning of ‘independent learning’ in its fullest sense, I did want to take complete responsibility for reflecting on my life and career, and in undertaking the tasks required.”

Some learners interviewed struggled to adapt to the learning process having previously only undertaken more traditional programmes which entailed set tasks, deadlines, set goals and pre-determined outcomes.

Some learners interviewed were daunted by the process and suffered from self-doubt, questioning whether they could learn in this way. These learners were looking for a ‘framework’ with a structure and information on how that would be assessed:

“I was looking for a ‘framework and structure’ to work with. I believed the ILP revolved entirely around me; regarding my life and what I had done. I had no idea that it meant “independently engaging in learning.”

At this point, this learner had not recognised the need for reflection on her work and life journey. Another learner put it this way:

“I was challenged by the ‘open scope’, and the lack of structure and I did not know how to set parameters for the case studies.”

Once this learner committed fully to the process and ‘accepted her story’ she said she was able to move forward and develop her own parameters.

Some learners interviewed felt lost at the start and wanted to be told what to do, again seeking structure.

One learner summed up the understanding issue rather well:

I had not ever really delved into it properly... I heard it on the radio and wrote it down when I got home. And I thought that sounds like me but I did not think about the fact that you’ve got nobody else in your classroom... I didn’t think about the independent side of it.. That’s probably where I felt unsure at the beginning because I thought she would be able to tell me what to do and I thought there would be more set things that you had to do.

The Facilitator Interviews

All facilitators believed it was important before signing up that the learner be aware of what the ILP approach involves and what independent learning means. Some facilitators reported that even when learners apparently understood the process, they would still struggle with the independent learning part – underscoring that independent learning is not a straight forward concept that learners easily grasp. Consequently, facilitators would be repeating the initial discussions about learner responsibility and the nature of independent learning.

One facilitator succinctly summed up the nature of the ILP process:

“First and foremost, the independent learning process is about deep, critical reflection ... it is about self-discovery and supporting that.”

This is what learners have difficulty grasping at the commencement of the process, often having a poor understanding of what reflection is and therefore struggling with how to commence the learning process.

Making overall sense of this first theme, it is clear that despite a range of communications to learners before and after enrolment explaining the ILP approach, most learners did not fully appreciate what independent learning meant and what the ILP involved. Therefore, one of the first tasks of the facilitator is to help learners to understand what lies ahead of them, especially the nature of independent study. To this end Candy's explanation of independent study is helpful:

Candy (1991: 13) quoting Forster's (1972: ii) definition of independent learning/study:

Independent study is a process, a method and a philosophy of education:

- In which a student acquires knowledge by his or her efforts and develops the ability for inquiry and critical evaluation
- It includes freedom of choice in determining those objectives, within the limits of a given project or programme and with the aid of a faculty advisor
- It requires freedom of process to carry out the objectives.
- It places increased educational responsibility on the student for the achieving of objectives and the value of the goals.

Learner preparedness affects what the facilitator does in the early stages of their work, and affects the learner's ability to cope with the expectations of the programme. Therefore, an initial facilitation task is to orientate the learners towards the ILP approach and to establish whether or not they have the necessary attitudes and skills to undertake independent study.

Directly as a result of these findings I recommended to my colleagues that we provide more structure to the process, taking care not to compromise the learner-centred focus of the pathway. They agreed, and I developed a set of learning tasks, along with helpful tips for facilitators, to scaffold the learner through the ILP (Appendix 6).

There was no literature relevant to this particular theme, but I chose to highlight the theme because it provides a useful context to the two substantive themes which follow. The lack of understanding of independent learning sets the stage for understanding the new learning which occurs throughout the ILP.

The need for more structure and guidance speaks directly to Theme 3 on effective facilitation for learning.

Theme 2: Perspectives on New Learning – What and Why?

This is a key theme which relates directly to the aims and objectives of the project, i.e. to illuminate the new learning which learners acquire and what that new learning is. The presence of new learning relating to degree outcomes goes to the core of the validity of the ILP approach. The strategies which best promote that new learning are the subject of Theme 3.

Developing an ability to reflect deeply and critically on life and work experiences is frequently new learning for most learners. This new learning occurs at two levels. The first is an enhanced capability, often significantly so, to critically reflect. The second is the new understandings that emerge as learners synthesise what has been separate and disjointed elements of their practice, as a consequence of that critical reflection. This synthesis results in the learner's framework or model of practice and is a powerful process leading to significant new learning.

The framework of practice is developed when the learner is at the final stage of their ILP study. They are about to 'sum up' their learning and are considering the following: who am I, what do I know and why, what guides me, what informs my practice? From the reflective exercises they have undertaken, the evolution of their professional practice becomes clear, and the theoretical and practical frameworks in which they work emerge. This framework of practice is a bringing together of their ethos, vision, values and beliefs and what it means to be a competent practitioner in their field.

This framework of practice is what the assessors are most interested in hearing about because it is a revealing synthesis of the learner's practice knowledge and skill. It is through their framework of practice that the learner demonstrates the nature and quality of their degree level learning.

The framework of practice must be described in writing, but learners are also encouraged to illustrate visually, i.e. drawings, photos, metaphor, diagrams, word pictures. This framework sets out how the learner now practises and why they do what they do. It sets out their current identity as a practitioner.

Most learners and facilitators in this study describe the learner experience as transformative, which by definition means new learning has occurred. According to Mezirow (1997: 162), transformative learning is "The process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience to guide future action". We will gain a strong sense of the transformative impact of the ILP from the findings which follow.

It is evident that most, if not all of the learners indicated improved personal, interpersonal and cognitive capabilities as well as role-specific and generic competencies, and the facilitators were unanimous in their agreement in this regard. These outcomes were seen as indicators of the transformative impact of the learning process.

The Learners Surveyed

Most of the learners surveyed recognised they had acquired new learning throughout the ILP, and there were significant commonalities about that new learning, which was often profound as indicated in the following four responses:

"One of the most valuable experiences while completing this qualification was documenting my learning from an early age. It was then I fully understood just how much I had achieved throughout my working life."

"The significant new learning for me, and continues to be, is developing the skill of reflective practice. Wow. This opened up my eyes to how I lead, and why I do the things I do."

"The most learning came from within. I was able to identify why I work the way I do, what I have learned from influential people in my life, and why I have the values that I do."

"This sense of self is of major importance. Having attempted academic study in my youth and failing, I was always faced with the inner thought that I was 'thick'. It has taken the better part of a lifetime to realise any learning is useful, and none more so than reflecting on experience."

I have categorised the new learning as personal and interpersonal learning, cognitive and professional learning, and discipline/subject matter learning. Examples of specific learning follow with quotes from several of the individual learners.

The personal and interpersonal learning included:

- Enhanced knowledge of self, i.e. values, beliefs, attitudes
- Stronger sense of self-awareness, self-confidence, self-worth

- Enhanced transferable skills such as communication.

“I found there to be a vast amount of learning at every stage: about myself, about situations I had been in, both as a child and at work, and theories and practices at work.”

“I was a much better leader, more thoughtful, more considered in my actions, and more structured in my work.”

“The process was more challenging than formal study, but because it was relevant to me and my experiences it allowed me to learn more about myself and my worth.”

The cognitive and professional capabilities included:

- New or enhanced enquiry/research skills
- New or enhanced proficiency at academic writing
- Improved ability to analyse literature and interpret theories, understand models and processes
- Enhanced reflective capabilities
- Improved analytical and critical thinking skills.

“Listening and guiding me through robust academic theories that supported my learning while growing the depth and breadth of my understanding in the discipline of management and leadership.”

“I expected and received a challenge, new learning, intensive researching and analysing of information and reflection.”

“I had no conception of the extraordinary power of self-reflection, ... and how vitally important was the benefit of my study being informed by my practice.”

The discipline specific/subject matter learning included:

- New subject specific knowledge in the areas important to learners in their workplace
- A better knowledge and understanding of abilities in their particular field of study
- Validation of knowledge in discipline area which improves confidence
- In a professional situation, much more confidence of having practices, processes validated against known models.

“I was doing management practices but not thinking about it or theory behind it so doing the reading on theories was particularly enlightening.”

“I have a stronger awareness of how influential government initiatives and legislation have been in my career – I now see trends in population statistics that are reflective of historical and current policy much more clearly.”

“I learned a massive amount of new ideas, concepts and strategies of which I have been fortunate to be able to instil into my life and job. I now have a far different view on business strategies and management than before I started the programme.”

By the end of the ILP most of the learners surveyed were able to articulate an appropriate framework of practice, even though for some this was a difficult task. It was evident that many of the learners were able to connect themes from their past, their personal and professional selves, and to weave these together to define their current selves. Two learners had this to say:

Establishing my very own model of practice was significant to me. It has allowed me to understand that I, indeed, function according to a model. I'm aware that as I grow and develop, I need to be open to adapting and improving both myself and hence my model of practice.

I was surprised at the learning I needed to do in considering theories underpinning my practice. Making the link seemed to be a challenge for me. I understand this concept now and understand why it is necessary and enjoy new learning. The new learning about myself... I was able to validate my professional practice

For several of the learners, the transformative effect that the ILP had on them was considerable. They described the transformation regarding enhanced self-knowledge and with this the emergence of a ‘new me’. Transformation meant having greater self-worth and a strong perception of ‘expertness’ i.e. they were now professionally more experienced and adept compared with at the start of the process. Their ideas, beliefs and knowledge had changed for the better.

Another learner said:

“I think it was transformative - learning about self, learning that I did know a lot about ‘things’, learning that it was relevant to me and my experiences, therefore, my self-worth, learning that what I had done in my work was learning...”

Several of the other learners described the transformative effects of the programme as follows:

- New understandings of an ability to integrate theory with practice. They now knew more and could access new information more readily.
- Enhanced self-worth and ability to better articulate their areas of expertise
- Understanding that what was previously labelled as intuition was, in fact, significant knowledge and skill
- Better understanding and more positive perspectives of their future.

Not only was the new learning from the ILP transformative but also the consequences and outcomes for the learners after they had graduated:

“This achievement has become a foundation to a world I never once dreamed I would belong, and now I walk among many.”

“I think having a degree in social services garners more respect from some external agencies who have a faulty perception that only competent practitioners have a degree. Therefore it now feels like I can practice on an equal playing field.”

“My gained confidence reflects on many other areas of my life; I have shed a thick layer of anxiety, along with the constant feeling of being the underdog.”

“It has always been hard for me to be heard. Now there is proof that I know what I was doing, and this has made a difference in my work relationships.”

Typically, learners identified ‘a new me’ as a direct consequence of the learning within the programme and leading on from their success in the programme, they identified enhancements to their careers. It was common for learners to report significantly more confidence and a much stronger sense of self-worth, the latter often arising from the recognition by others of the credential they had obtained.

Did all learners report new learning? Interestingly a few of the learners surveyed reported that no new learning took place during their ILP and that the process simply affirmed what they already knew. However, it would be fair to say that these learners did not appreciate that ‘reflecting on practice’ was, in fact, generating new learning as prior knowledge became integrated into a new ‘whole’. This underscores that learning is not necessarily objective. Indeed, as Jarvis explains: "... while learning is a universal phenomenon, it is also very subjective and very personal." (2013). I agree with Jarvis: people learn in many different ways, and don't always recognise they have learned, nor would they have always called it ‘learning’.

This was an area where my survey had a shortcoming. I provided prompts for where new learning might have occurred but did not do so with regard to new understandings about existing knowledge – knowing that new understandings emerge from the reflective process.

One learner recognised this:

“No, new learning isn’t quite right, but it’s the closest option. Perhaps more accurately, the process showed me to think about what I knew in a different light. “

I was able to explore this particular concept of new learning in the interviews, reported next.

The Learner Interviews

All but one of the learners interviewed reported significant areas of new learning, with most acknowledging that they:

- learned how to undertake academic research
- learned how to make sense of theory and the practices behind it
- learned to use research to validate their models of practice
- learned how to have a more global approach to their practice
- gained new understandings of sustainability and how it impacts them and their practice, and how their practice impacts sustainability.

As with the learners who were surveyed, there was much new learning for the learners interviewed that was subject specific. Much of this new learning came out of the case studies which were prepared for assessment.

Significant new learning was the ability to research and read and analyse literature, which enabled many to feel as though they were doing the right thing personally and professionally.

This new learning also had a profound impact on the learners:

The research was new - I learned that being an investigative auditor - that those skills were research ... I learned that I enjoyed research and academic writing, and I was starting to find validation for my professional skills and my personal way of being in that research, and that’s important to me.

The theory was a bit of an eye-opener - these are just the practical things that I’ve thought about and probably never known that they were a theory.

When I went back and started linking [my practice] to theory, it was like I can see why I work that way and I can see that the whole cyclical continuance process has been completed, and I understand why I do that. I also learnt that there was so much I know that I didn't recognise that I knew... and when I think about the theories that I used, I see that they are in everything that I do, they are an inherent part of me, but I've never acknowledged that... I was like, the depth and breadth of where I was going - that hit me.

Many of the learners attributed to the literature and research aspects of the process enhanced capability in reconsidering and reconstructing past learning.

As with the learners surveyed, the learners who were interviewed identified the development of their framework of practice as a significant learning experience:

Years of knowledge and experiences meant I could now create my model of practice... to combine all the theories, models, why I knew stuff, and that opportunity to learn, unlearn and relearn, and to truly know that I had a strong values base to my work.

I now have a framework of practice that incorporates all of who I am – values, beliefs, guiding principles, my leadership ethos, theories/models/strategies and tools that support my practice, alongside thirty years of management and leadership work, as well as a very clear and transparent way in which I like to operate.

All of the learners said that completing the ILP had led to validation of the learning from prior knowledge, skills and experiences. Validation was an important and recurring theme throughout the learner interviews. For most learners the new learning came from making explicit their prior knowledge as well as learning about 'self' and the awareness of 'tacit knowledge'. From two learners:

"I learned quite a lot about myself. I learned that I am good at what I do. I learned that people are interested in what I've got to say. I learned the importance of actually taking my skills and using them on a daily basis."

"This stuff [I have written] is amazing, but I've always known this stuff, but you don't believe in yourself. I now know what I know. I now believe in myself."

For some the new learning had a profound impact in terms of sense of self. One learner was able to reframe how she saw herself, giving a stronger sense of self-worth:

I was able to identify some of my weaknesses and some of my strengths. I was able to use that. I was able to recognise what I knew, and how I knew it, and that there is value in that... I let go of who I thought I was, a person with limited value or contribution.

Several of the learners reported that they had new self-understandings, i.e. they:

- Had generic competencies that were transferable across a range of contexts
- They had contextual knowledge and skills in their discipline that was transferable.

For some learners new understandings led them to view their future in new ways:

All this new knowledge meant that I had the ability to change some of my behaviours. I focused on my communication skills and style. I have started looking at different roles, ones that require tertiary qualifications, and ones which offer different opportunities.

Most of the learners credited their new learning to the reflective process, including their reflections on the case studies they were required to prepare for their assessment:

I think the case studies were a big part of it for me ... by unpacking a case study, i.e. a failed business, and reflecting on it and then thinking about it today ... looking at my whole approach to the business; I could see that there was nothing else we could have done, it was the time and what happened, and we managed to change and evolve to a point where we could get out without any disaster... that was good for me.

“[The case study] gave me confidence ... I have done a lot and gained heaps of skills... that’s worth something. I have a lot to offer, and now I have the confidence to move forward.”

Most of the learners said their new learning came from the reflective process. Some learners struggled with reliving their past experiences but most found that they relished this aspect of the experience and learned a lot from it.

One learner put it like this:

“The reflective writing was interesting for me because normally I am focused on documenting business cases and writing business requirements - so that challenged me to look back historically at what I had done”

And from another learner:

I was a little naïve when I undertook this study, I felt that it would be easy for me to gain the qualification from my skills and experience, but in fact I learnt a lot, things that I already knew, but didn't actually know it was a "thing" - things that led me to this point.

Common outcomes for learners from the reflective process were:

- Recognising that they knew more than they thought they did and giving themselves credit for that
- Appreciating their knowledge from experience had value and could be used in different ways
- Affirmation of their knowledge and skill which led to enhanced self-belief
- Understanding how past experiences had shaped current practice
- Seeing common patterns and themes which underpinned both personal and professional actions.

As was the case with the learners surveyed, the ILP was transformational for the learners interviewed.

This transformation was expressed in terms of the 'new me' i.e. the transformed person. The following quote captures the essence of the transformation which many experienced:

There was most definitely a 'new me'... more confident in myself. I feel more grounded - I feel okay about who I am, professionally and personally, and I have the self-belief that I am really good at what I do. And a 'new me' I suppose, would be in-grained in me - I also feel validated - so that qualification and the journey of it has given me a validation I felt was lacking in the past.

This learner highlighted the transformation in her personal life:

I feel more grounded in who I am in my relationship - my family life - I'm okay with who I am now - this is me, and the transformative part of it for me was that I could recognise that my personality and my skills are unique to my way of being and I have an ability to use them appropriately in the right context. I've seen some skills external to the formal part of the qualification - which I have gained more depth in, and I like those parts of me. I think that's the transformative nature of the qualification.

Another learner felt that transformative was an inadequate term for what she had experienced:

"...transformative is too broad, and it doesn't describe the depth of change and the long-term implication of that change."

For these learners as with the previous learner quoted, the transformation was very personal:

The new me was transformed. I was a lot 'quieter'; I was gentle and calm, not as fiery; I was comfortable in my own skin and didn't need to fight 'anything'... I still practised with integrity and intention, but I was okay with who I was. It's about the person I am now.

"I felt the new me was less encumbered. I didn't realise how much weight I was carrying from the past until I wasn't carrying it anymore. "

For several of the learners, the transformative effect was considerable, described as 'therapeutic', 'unexpected', and 'life-changing'.

In one case the transformation was so significant that the learner left a job of twenty-three years and took up employment in a new field:

"To be honest with you, I think this process has inspired that change - it's a pretty big call. I sat back and looked at who I am, and where I am at... so I have taken the opportunity and taken the risk. "

Only one of the learners interviewed felt that the process had not been transformative for him. He indicated that whilst he might fine tune his practice the process essentially reinforced "the kind of manager I want to be".

In summary, all but one of the learners interviewed described the ILP as transformative, as did most of the learners surveyed. In essence this transformation came about from new understandings of self and new ways of being and doing which were learned as part of their studies. In some cases the new sense of self – the 'new me' – was about professional self but in most cases it was the person who had changed: often more confident, more assertive and more articulate.

The Facilitator Interviews

The facilitators interviewed all recognised new learning and there was a commonality to what they described, noting however, as one facilitator expressed the "extent of the learning gained is very individualistic". It is worthy of noting that often the learner did not recognize the new learning for themselves, for example, enhanced professional language and writing skills. There was a consensus of the facilitators around the following new learning which is also closely aligned with what the learners themselves identified:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of subject/discipline knowledge, e.g. HR legislation, helping models in social services
- A reframing of personal and professional self-knowledge
- Being able to associate theories with their work practices
- A more holistic view of sustainable practice
- Being able to situate their practice in a national and international context
- Skills in research and in analyzing and interpreting literature and theory.

Most of the facilitators recognised profound new learning from the learner’s critical reflection on their past experiences:

“I think we hear quite clearly new thinking, or new exploration of old experiences in our conversations with learners, which signals learning about themselves, and their competencies.”

Another facilitator reinforced this:

I have particularly noticed the learners identifying their unconscious learning from their experience and realising that that has been as significant as any formal education process. Moreover, that recognition brings about significant adjustment in their attitude about themselves, and their achievements in work and life is no longer seen as less value than they might have achieved in a conventional way.

Facilitators described how significant learning emerged through a process of integration of the learner’s practice with newly discovered theory. In the words of one facilitator:

I find this process of integration exciting and hugely rewarding. The individual story is now understood within a bigger (personal and professional) collective context, and takes on new meaning, in consequence, i.e., individual stories are linked to meta-narrative, and this bigger context is almost invariably helpful.

And another:

“I think the biggest learning takes place when the learners realise that the management and leadership practices that they have spent years developing align to an academic theory or model (or to more than one).”

As with the learners themselves the facilitators saw new learning during the preparation of the case studies:

“When they are unpacking their case studies - things start to make more sense for them, and they are open to new learning and new thinking, and this then leads to future ideas. “

Most of the facilitators saw improvements to cognitive ability in the learners throughout the learning process:

Cognitive capability improves for all learners (albeit at a different intensity). Distance travelled from first draft portfolios to final evidence and assessment is really exciting to watch. Learners develop their ability to reflect, analyse and evaluate, research and present coherent portfolios. This often shows in well-constructed thoughtful case studies.

For some learners, cognitive ability significantly improved but importantly recognised by the learner and acknowledged. They begin to see the value in their professional practice and what they have to offer.

This is the start of their increased cognitive capability, i.e., to question and improve the ability to reflect critically. Then you see growth. The high school thinking to the advanced thinking. The “what, so what, now what”, for example.

I think we hear quite clearly new thinking or new exploration of old experiences in our conversations with learners, which signals new learning about themselves and their competencies. This is just as important as the external new learning in their subject/discipline, which is made fairly clear in their enjoyment mostly of the new theories they discover and their integration of these with their past and current work.

This cognitive improvement included:

- Stretching of learner thinking into new dimensions and ideas
- Developing the skill of ‘thinking about their thinking’
- Developing much stronger reflective capabilities.

The improvements in cognitive capability was evident in the development of the learner’s writing skills:

... an obvious first change is that writing improves and becomes sharper and more focused; less narrative and more evaluative; less descriptive and more reflective with evidence of impact/implication on self and practice (the ‘so what’ and ‘now what’ of the reflective process).

Whilst improved cognitive capability occurred for most learners, it was not universal, as some learners did bring to the process very high levels of cognitive skill:

“In some situations, I did not see improved cognitive ability. Some of my learners come with a high level of cognitive ability, and their learning journey affirms what they already have.”

A few of the facilitators described gains in cognitive ability as a natural part of the learner’s development as their journey through the ILP progresses:

Yes, an obvious first change is that writing improves and becomes sharper and more focused; less narrative and more evaluative; less descriptive and more reflective with evidence of impact/ implication on self and practice (the ‘so what’ and ‘now what’ of the reflective process). There is also a deeper understanding and appreciation of the models they have espoused and work with; a clearer understanding of the ILP process and its benefits; the awakening of new insights into themselves and their practice; and the internalising of a reflective approach, so it becomes ‘unconsciously competent’. Learners make a move from ‘effective practitioner’ to ‘reflective practitioner’ to ‘critically reflective practitioner’.

All learners are at different stages of understanding how to optimise their learning processes. Some do not even recognise that spontaneous reflections and ‘ah ha’ moments are associated with building deeper understanding and increased capability. However, the fact that we encourage a full learning process does mean that learners are moving along a pathway where they can recognise the significance of these as they become apparent or are made conscious of them through facilitation.

New learning is also evident during the process as learners undertake independent research/reading into models and theories that name, frame, and articulate their practice. Another significant point is near the end as learners begin to ‘join the dots’, get an overview and see how ‘everything belongs’. I find this process of integration exciting and hugely rewarding.

It is interesting to note that the facilitators did not describe the ILP process as having the same transformative effects in the same way as the learners did, although the facilitators did recognise the changes which occurred in the learners in terms of professional capabilities as well as personal growth. Indeed, it is the personal growth that the facilitators consistently recognise. As two facilitators put it:

People often come with the idea that because they have not been to University, then they do not know anything, that they are ‘dumb’; age and experience do not seem to be a barrier to this thinking. As they work through the process, you

can sense their change in thinking; some have the 'ah ha' moments when they, with passion, voice their new learning; for others, it is a slow dawning of realisation that eventually shines out in their oral assessment. I see learning in all of the above, but I think the biggest impact that learning has is on their self-identity.

I've found the new learning is opened once they have put their Whakapapa, their hikoi in perspective. For a good proportion of learners that 'dealing ' with the past allows them to remove some massive barriers to learning. I think this removing of barriers (our learners are intelligent people but often rejected in their earlier life by 'one lane learning') is part of improving the cognitive capability for our learners. There is many a time I see their developing ability to process 'their' information shown by their decision to rewrite what they had written perhaps two months earlier.

In summing up this theme it is clear that there is significant new learning occurring throughout the ILP approach, and that both the facilitators and the learners themselves identify similar elements of new learning. There is significant new learning about 'self' which in turn leads to a new or stronger sense of identity, with the realisation of this new identity being transformative for many. There is significant new learning which is best described as learning about practice and is usually brought about as the learners engage with new theories about aspects of their practice which they previously took for granted, i.e. they just did things without thinking about the theory that lay behind their actions. Thirdly, there was new knowledge associated with the subject matter of the degree being pursued, i.e. management, social services. Such new knowledge often came from engagement with the literature. New learning also incorporated new skills particularly critical thinking, reflection, research writing and communication – always at degree level and frequently exceeding degree expectations. Arguably the most significant area of new learning is the synthesising of all the above into new personal frameworks of practice.

Some new learning is not always recognised by the learner but is obvious to the facilitator, e.g. more sophisticated models of practice that emerge towards the end of the programme. Also, the facilitators note more new learning around the subject matter/discipline knowledge than the learners themselves, who tended to emphasise the learning which was associated with personal and professional growth and development.

It is also noticeable that ILP learners engage in deep learning. The ILP approach is similar to the five-stage map of learning identified by Moon (1999: 136): "noticing, making sense, making meaning, working with meaning and transformative meaning."

This move to deep learning is something we witness with our learners especially those who have previously not given thought as to why they do things. Deep learning requires higher order cognitive skills, the ability to think conceptually, driven by the intention to understand ideas and relate them to previous knowledge and experience.

What is significant about these findings?

The significance of these findings relates to one of the aims of the study, i.e. to validate the ILP approach as an acceptable alternative to the traditional taught degree. For that validation to occur it was necessary to provide evidence that the ILP approach was much more than an assessment process and that degree level and degree relevant learning did indeed occur.

I believe that these findings provide clear evidence that significant new learning does occur and that this new learning is both directly relevant to the subject matter of the degree being pursued and to the outcomes expected of degree level learners. It is important to appreciate that when learners commence the ILP it is most unlikely that they could demonstrate degree level outcomes and the full range of associated discipline knowledge merely by putting together an evidence portfolio – as would be the case with an assessment based approach to degree acquisition. What the ILP approach does is to develop the learner's reflective capabilities, which enables them not only to extract learning from experience but also to make sense of that learning in an integrated way.

The development of reflective capability is, I believe, the critical element in validating the ILP approach. Reflective practice is not a new concept – Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) espoused its virtues as a powerful learning process; and Johns and Freshwater (1998) also described the value of reflective practice as a means of learning. There is no doubt that 'reflection' is a complex concept not easy to define. However, it involves the 'self' and is triggered by questioning of actions, values and beliefs. Johns describes critical reflection as:

A window through which the practitioner can view and focus self within the context of his/her lived experience in ways that enable him/her to confront, understand and work towards resolving the contradictions within his/her practice between what is desirable and actual practice (Johns 2000: 34).

Critical reflection can lead to transformational learning which according to Baumgartner (2001) can happen either gradually or from a sudden or critical incident and alter the way people see themselves and their world. Such transformational learning is a common outcome of the ILP approach.

There seems to be little doubt that the ILP approach is transformational for most learners and that this transformation is given effect in their framework of practice and is manifested in a sense of 'new identity'. The framework of practice and the 'new identity' in themselves are evidence of significant new learning.

In the ILP approach, the process of portfolio preparation and the development of a framework of practice are what facilitate identity growth in the individual, as these processes heighten self-awareness, involve thorough self-assessment, necessitate critical analysis and are intensively reflective and "autobiographical", as Hall (2002) notes; "identity growth is not just knowing yourself but knowing how to learn more about yourself."

It is apparent that the ILP leads to learners developing insightful understandings of themselves as individuals. The pattern of understandings learners come to is strong in the data, and this is significant because they now have a stronger self-identity, i.e. they know who and why they are. This gives them a stronger sense of confidence and self-efficacy that in turn gives them the courage to move forward, be open to new opportunities, and have a sense of control over their future plans and growth. These self-understandings constitute significant learnings, more evidence that the ILP approach is more than an assessment process.

It is worth noting my observations of learners in their oral assessment. It is when they speak out loud that the richness, the real story is heard – and it is often not until when people of 'authority,' i.e. experts in the field, are listening and discussing and interacting with them that they actually comprehend they indeed are worth listening to, that they are knowledgeable and that their skills and knowledge are valued.

Under this theme about new learning I have confined my reporting and analysis to what has been learned. However, intertwined with the 'what' is the 'how' and it is interesting that ILP learners develop significantly enhanced reflective capabilities (the what) and they do this

through reflection (the how). This then begs the question as to how to develop reflective capability. The literature is richer in tackling this issue, which I engage with next under Theme 3.

Theme 3: Facilitating Learning – How Best Achieved?

In Theme 2 I have explored the nature and extent of the new learning that typically occurs as learners progress through the ILP. Significant new learning occurs, begging the questions as to what triggers that learning, and what is it that facilitators can do to best enable and support this learning, given that ILP learners are required to be strongly self-motivated and to manage their own learning. The answers to these questions are the substance of Theme 3 and relate to one of the aims of my project which was to bring about improvements in facilitation practice in Capable NZ. It is from having a richer understanding of the experiences of the learner that I have been able to derive a framework for effective facilitation, one of the key outputs of this study.

The Learners Surveyed

The learners surveyed provided helpful insights into both facilitator relationship and capability factors that supported their learning.

To begin, many of the learners believed the right facilitator ‘match’ or ‘fit’ was a necessary pre-requisite for a positive start to the learning process. ‘Fit’ is a personal concept with several dimensions including gender, age, location, experience and culture, but also related to ‘personal connection’. It is difficult to generalise about ‘fit’, in the sense that it was not a simple case of matching characteristics, e.g. a Māori with a Māori, or a female learner with a female facilitator. Some Māori were comfortable working with a non-Māori facilitator and women were often comfortable working with men. However, once a preference was expressed for particular facilitator characteristics to be met, then this became a pre-requisite for a successful learner – facilitator relationship. The importance of ‘fit’ can be seen in these learner comments:

“The facilitator had a huge impact on my success – before him, I had been under the guidance of two others but just didn’t ‘click’ together.”

“It is important “facilitators are matched to their learners – an incredible amount of weight hangs on the pairing of the right facilitator with the right learner.”

Once the learning process was under way, learners identified aspects of the relationship they enjoyed with their facilitator and which they regarded as important, such as honesty, empathy, willingness to challenge, persistence:

“Honesty, connected with me, understood my circumstances and environment. Kept putting challenges and milestones in front of me.”

“Incredible persistence of a highly capable professional. With lots of love and admiration is how I would describe xx xxx lead and support as my facilitator – I needed exactly that.”

“My facilitator was for me the most important part – she kept me motivated, pushed me further than I would have done without that input.”

“Her input and nudges along the journey have been significant, but also extending me – she simply appears to know and understand exactly where I’m at and where I should be looking deeper – she does this in a caring and genuine way.”

Appreciated by learners, and seen as very important were facilitator accessibility, availability and flexibility:

“Accessible, thought-provoking and encouraging. Knew my field of work, so conversations were beneficial.”

“Always available to talk over phone however the biggest value for my confidence was when he came and met me face to face – I got more out of that than over the phone.”

“Was available seven days per week, direct and clear instruction, and honest feedback.”

“Flexibility – he worked around my demanding work schedule – late phone calls at night and Sunday morning regular meetings.”

Key facilitation skills were also identified with the ability to provide clear and constructive feedback high on the list:

“It was easy to digest and apply her comments and suggestions to my work, as she presents her feedback in a very clear and succinct manner.”

“The feedback was open and reflective; she listened and then explained information to me in a way she knew I would understand it.”

“The facilitator was very professional and gave valuable feedback and guidance on what I was developing.”

Whilst the ILP process requires high levels of learner responsibility, it was clear that effective facilitators believed in and travelled with the learner, meaning that they got to know and understand the learner:

“She was on the journey with me, superbly connected and seemed to be thinking about me the whole way through. She facilitated – wrote clear and comprehensive emails, supported me superbly, helped me relax, her belief in me was wonderful.”

“He was genuinely interested in me and provided thought provoking feedback.”

“She showed patience in me, faith in me, encouragement and availability.”

“Made me feel important – I trusted her with my stories she challenged my thinking and the robust discussions we had. She kept me inspired and was a great support.”

“The insight into who I was as a person and how we could tailor the process to suit how I worked. “

Effective facilitators were seen as knowledgeable, not only in the discipline area of the degree but also as an educator:

“Knowledgeable, encouraging and highly skilled communicator, she provided me with challenges/stretch, and it pushed me to do great rather than just good.”

“His people skills were excellent – he was always available – questioning was always underlined by his knowledge of adult learning.”

There were many paradoxical comments, with seemingly contradictory attributes seen as important, e.g. patient yet persistent.

“Empathetic, understanding, bossy, kept pushing me.”

This suggests that the facilitator needs good judgment as to when to assume different roles in relation to the learner. Acting in the interests of the learner requires a facilitator who cares, yet is willing to hold the learner to account to make progress and keep to deadlines.

Other facilitator qualities identified in the survey were caring, passion, sense of humour and trusting, this latter quality being about believing that the learner could and would succeed.

The Learner Interviews

Without exception learners attributed their success in the ILP programme in significant part to their facilitator. There were several common areas in which these learners believed the facilitator was important, all consistent with the feedback from the learners surveyed:

- In keeping the learner on task and to deadlines
- In keeping track of the learner and the progress made in their learning
- In encouraging and pushing the learner to think more deeply
- In encouraging the learner to include more content and give more consideration to their case studies.

As with the learners surveyed, the learners interviewed identified the importance of the facilitator being the right 'fit' for them in terms of a strong learner-facilitator relationship. Two learners described the relationship with their facilitator as the most important component of the learning process:

I think the relationship with the facilitator is probably one of the most important parts of the process, because it requires you to make yourself vulnerable, and to be fully open and honest and expose stuff to yourself, and about yourself. I know that was a big issue for me, so, the facilitator's job - that relationship is important.

I think that the facilitator's ability to be quite subject specific for my case studies and understand the context was incredibly important to me – I don't believe I would have got the depth of analysis without that and I think there was a real timely empathy to my facilitator – there was listening, caring, and just at the perfect time, we would move on. I think that I got the right facilitator for me. I think the adaptability of the facilitator was good. I think the ability to hear the nuances over the phone and change to adjust to me – to the mood or to the attitude at the time. I don't think I would like to have just one approach – I was happy with the facilitator's ability to change. One of the new learnings for me was the style of the facilitator - her openness and the willingness to take feedback all the time. I wouldn't have liked somebody that rubbed me up the wrong way – that didn't have the ability to modify their own behavior.

The learners interviewed reinforced the feedback from the learners surveyed with regards to the skills, qualities and attributes needed of effective facilitators. In the words of three learners interviewed:

She had so much passion and energy that she poured into the whole process and me, and I always felt like I was the most important person in her day that

this is the most important thing on her agenda, but when I actually talked to other learners, they all felt the same.

I guess it is how a facilitator actually can get inside your head and I truly think that I could have had another facilitator and I would not have done so well... her emotional intelligence, understanding and listening and hearing and seeing the little flags I put up and understanding it from another person's perspective... she always challenged me.

I had a fantastic facilitator who was supportive and encouraging. That was due to the positive and constructive feedback I got.

The following capabilities and qualities summarise the feedback from the learners interviewed:

- Having a depth of subject and content knowledge
- Being open, empathic and honest and thus fostering a relationship of trust
- Being passionate, caring, encouraging and interested in the learner as a person
- Ability to be an effective mentor
- Being flexible in their availability – meeting the learners when needed
- Ability to motivate
- Ability to travel alongside the learner throughout the process.

The importance of having the right fit or the right facilitator was also evident with the sole learner who did not believe she had been assigned the right facilitator. She said that there was no personal connection between her and the facilitator and identified what her assigned facilitator lacked:

- Ability to make a genuine, personal connection with the learner
- Ability to fully commit to the learner and the process
- Ability to travel alongside the learner throughout the process.

She describes one incident:

I wrote to him and said I was struggling, challenged around academic wording, for example. He was really good about this, and then he signed off using another name, not mine. So at that moment, I gave up. I decided to do this on my own without him at this point.

For this learner it was better to have no facilitator than the wrong one.

In summary, the interviews with the learners strongly reinforced the views of the learners surveyed, with the overall emphasis of the feedback being on the learner-facilitator relationship. Neither group of learners really zeroed in on facilitation techniques, but rather on more generic facilitator actions such as challenging the learner and providing constructive feedback on work done. It was the facilitators themselves that identified the facilitation practices that were effective in promoting learning.

The Facilitator Interviews:

The facilitators had a clear shared view of their overall role, an understanding of which provides the context for making explicit the capabilities of effective facilitators. One facilitator summed up the role as follows:

Lots of navigation images come to mind – it's providing the compass and setting a clear direction for the learner, identifying the destination and inspiring them to want to reach it, valuing what they know already and why they might want to know more, being upfront/realistic about some of the challenges en route, being a rudder to keep the learner on course, championing effort, celebrating success. Enabling independence.

There also was strong agreement amongst the facilitators as to the skills, qualities and attributes required for effective facilitation, and these were very much in alignment with the learner perspectives. High on the list was a strong relationship between learner and facilitator, and the need for effective listening and strong questioning skills. However, at the top of the list is the ability of the facilitator to help learners develop their capabilities in critical reflection. Four facilitators put this forward in different ways:

First and foremost the ILP journey is about deep critical reflection and the role of the facilitator is to enable that. At its simplest level, it's Kolb's experiential learning cycle and the VARK model in action. But it's much more than that

Enabling a deeply reflective process of personal and professional transformation for the learner the outcome of which is the achievement of an academic qualification.

Definitely – if we give them some tools around (reflection), so we need to remove the 'old ways' i.e. reframe the way they think, feel, believe. Give examples. This is the start of their cognitive capability i.e. to question things and improve the ability to critically reflect. Then you see growth. The high school thinking to the advanced thinking.

Teaching and learning skills and knowledge. Knowledge and understanding of reflective practice, which is the very first skill that should be shown/taught/understood for the learner.

Of course, in order to develop the reflective capabilities of others the facilitator must him/herself be a reflective practitioner:

“Be a critical thinker. Be a reflective practitioner; you cannot expect your learners to undertake such a reflective journey if you do not live it yourself.”

Also, to develop learner reflective capability requires the facilitator to have strong listening and questioning skills:

“It’s active listening, timely questioning and belief in the learner. Really seeing them. Patience, and knowing when to listen, when to talk, when to ask questions, when to coach, when to push.”

The learner–facilitator relationship was seen as very important from the facilitator perspective, as the following comments, each from a separate facilitator, illustrate:

“The ability to connect with, show understanding of the whole person, while growing and pushing academic achievement and development.”

“My core belief is that the work evolves out of our relationship and that that relationship must be respectful, empathetic, and real, as well as offering a challenge.”

Knowing the learner as a person, recognising their individuality both personally and professionally and placing the learner at the centre of the process came through strongly in the interviews, as these three facilitators expressed:

“The ability to connect with, show understanding of the whole person while growing and pushing academic achievement and development.”

“... have a high level of understanding of individuals and their learning styles and excellent listening to what the learner needs, and having the ability to ask the right questions of your learner to see where they are ... need an understanding of human behaviour.”

“To have an intimate relationship which is focused on developing ‘self’ of the learner through dialogue and reflection, and the primary functions are to develop learner’s capacities for learning about tasks and self, transmit knowledge, culture and wisdom.”

Communication was seen as a key facilitation skill and knowledge of subject area, especially theories was emphasized as important, and the ability to link this knowledge back to practice.

“Ensuring that you can provide relevant support, information and links back to work-based learning and professional practice is essential.”

“They must have the ability to frame and reframe learning tasks, understanding of research, understanding and application of academic theories.”

Knowledge about learning and theories of learning was also seen as essential:

Facilitators must have a high level of understanding of individuals and their learning styles. They must have knowledge of a range of theories including reflective practice (the key to this process), learning to learn, transformational learning and experiential learning.

In addition to sharing common beliefs around those qualities that determine what makes a person an effective facilitator, a number of interesting and highly individualised factors came through in the analysis. Each of the following list of skills, qualities and attributes represent a key factor that an individual facilitator believed was important:

- Having a knowledge of teaching and learning theories and models related to adult learning including experiential learning and recognition of prior learning
- Having a passion (and hence drive) for the job
- Having commonalities in beliefs and outlook with the learner
- Having regular contact but boundaries and parameters from the start
- Having a fundamental interest in people and the workings of the human heart/mind and spirit
- Being trustworthy, open and honest
- Having the ability to keep track of learner’s progress and to keep the learners on track
- Having the ability to motivate and mentor
- Having the ability to challenge the learner yet to know the boundaries for challenge, so as not to undermine learner confidence
- Understanding and application of academic literature and theories
- Knowledge of the ILP process and qualification requirements of a degree. (NB there is a different facilitator for each quality listed).

Last but not least, one facilitator shared a particular quality for facilitators which struck a distinct chord with me, even though only one view. It underscored the essential difference

between traditional teaching that is so often teacher focused compared with the very learner-centric approach which characterizes the ILP:

“You cannot have an ego; it should never be about ‘me’ but instead about the learner. Be humble in your achievements as a facilitator, don’t make it about yourself.”

Having presented my findings about skills, qualities and attributes of facilitators, I would like to take a step back and explore the role of the facilitator with reference to the literature.

Carl Rogers (1951) first developed the idea of facilitation as a teaching method. His humanistic outlook stressed the need for student-centred learning environments, thereby emphasising the freedom for individual learner development, and to enable students to become more resilient and self-directed in their learning.

“A person cannot teach another person directly; a person can only facilitate another's learning”.

Rogers stresses the relevancy to the learner is essential for learning to occur, which means that the learner’s experiences become the basis of their learning. New ideas and new thinking needs to connect with existing experience.

Workman and Helyer (2016), capture the role of facilitation in work-based learning contexts, making the point that given the differences of work places the teacher needs to focus, not on content but on “ ... offering tools, techniques and support for inquiring within a work-based environment” (p. 42). This is certainly part and parcel of the role of the ILP facilitator – not at all concerned with transmitting content and very much focused on supporting learner reflection.

Studies of traditional teaching in conventional educational environments have considered the implications of teaching being reconceptualised as facilitation e.g. Lakalelala-Mekose (2010). The key success factor for a facilitation approach was the ability of the teacher to remove themselves from centre stage and to adopt a student-centred approach, i.e. allowing students to take responsibility for their learning and operate in a self-directed manner. Interestingly Lakalelala-Mekose’s study was that students had difficulty with teachers trying to be facilitators but retaining control.

The Lakalelala study is but one of many looking into attempts to reconceptualise teaching as facilitation and underscores the validity of facilitation as an alternative teaching methodology. Interestingly in the Lakalelala study, teachers coming from traditional teaching backgrounds struggled because they had no format for facilitation. So, whilst they could see the benefits of a facilitation model they lacked the guidance to implement that model.

Heron (1989, 1993, 1999) writes an elegant and academically rich account of the facilitation of adult learning, placing emphasis on the role of the facilitator. He focuses on how people learn and how to bring about that process, and his model is concerned with the self-directed learner. He concentrates on the whole person and enters into a learning contract where discussions are invited around learning goals, timetabling, guidelines, teaching and learning methods, and the use of resources – such cooperative course design may involve a contract between facilitator and learner. The conception of facilitation that Heron advocates is precisely the conception of facilitation which learners appreciate and which facilitators embrace in the ILP programme at Otago Polytechnic.

As well as providing insights into the role of facilitators the literature is informative about what it is that makes for effective facilitation. Burrows (1997), from a review of the literature related to facilitation, suggest that there are four factors critical to effective facilitation:

1. Genuine mutual respect
2. A partnership in learning
3. A dynamic, goal-orientated process
4. Critical reflection (p. 396)

As we have seen, the findings from this study are entirely congruent with these critical factors. Both learners and facilitators stress the importance of the learner-facilitator relationship including genuine mutual respect, but also characterised by facilitators having a genuine interest in the learner, both as a person and as a professional colleague. Learners and facilitators speak about the partnership in learning, under the language of ‘travelling together’. At the heart of the ILP is a clear goal focus, both in terms of the completion of short term reflective activities and the longer term goal of presenting for assessment. Finally, both learners and facilitators acknowledge that it is reflection which drives the learning.

Burrows' (ibid) four factors bring to mind the work from Hall's Relational Theory of Learning (2002) through which facilitators and learners learn from each other through the sharing of ideas and together create the learning and teaching environment.

According to Hall there is a relationship between facilitator and learner which is focused on developing the self of the learner through dialogue and reflection. The primary intent is to develop the learner's capacities. There needs to be an ability to create close relationships and relate stories and perspectives. This ability arises from the capacity to listen carefully and question at the deeper level of self. There also needs to be a focus on motivating and growing the learner's need to learn about themselves, their roles, and ideas. Hall's (2002) concept of facilitation is widely shared amongst Capable NZ facilitators. In my interviews with facilitators, all of Hall's points were identified but the words of one facilitator in particular provide an excellent summary of the learner-facilitator relationship:

For me, facilitation is an influencing and reflective process that enables a learner to develop their own learning processes in relation to their present circumstances and focus at any point in their learning journey. A facilitator is helping the learner become more aware of their current learning situation with reference to any part of their Johari window of perception. At the same time, a learner only becomes fully aware of the experiential learning cycle of learning and specifically the significance of modeling and reflection through timely interventions by their facilitator at relevant points on their learning journey. It is helping a learner become confident with the outcomes of their own learning processes, outcomes and judgments and for them to progressively move towards taking control of all aspects of their learning journey. In a sense it is to help them unlearn their often dependence on other parties to confirm their own learning situation and significance.

I don't think we can overstate the importance of a high quality learner-facilitator relationship. Amundson (2009) talks about developing a climate of mattering and makes an important point: "When people feel they do not matter their interpersonal connections are weakened" (2009: 44). The facilitator role is fundamental to the learning process and requires the facilitator to be skillful in building an effective relationship: developing a rapport and gaining trust; along with other attributes such as being adaptable, accessible, approachable and supportive. The learner needs to matter.

I have stressed on several occasions the importance of critical reflection to the ILP and have noted that the development of the capability to critically reflect is an essential degree outcome. I have also noted that the process of critical reflection is the key process which generates the new learning which learners and facilitators report. Larrivee (2000) adds a further dimension in writing about critical reflection as being the distinguishing feature which turns teachers into effective facilitators.

In other words, the teacher becomes the 'effective facilitator' only when they themselves develop high level capability for critical reflection. Larrivee provides much food for thought around what makes for an effective facilitator. She suggests that an effective facilitator must "remain fluid and able to move in many directions, as situations occur". Effective facilitation is "a deliberate philosophical and ethical code of conduct."

Effective facilitators take their knowledge base and skills to a new level. Larrivee contends that they move to a stage where "they integrate and modify skills to fit specific contexts, and eventually, to a point where skills are internalised enabling them to invent new strategies." In essence, "they develop the necessary sense of self-efficacy to create personal solutions to problems" (2000: 294).

In Larrivee's terms, an effective facilitator must possess the skills "to face deeply-rooted personal attitudes concerning human nature, human potential, and human learning." They "challenge the assumptions and question existing practices, thereby continually accessing new lens to view their practice and alter their perspectives" (2000: 296). Larrivee also states that effective facilitators must be willing to be "an active participant in a perpetual growth process requiring ongoing critical reflection" of facilitation practices.

Before leaving this discussion on the learner-facilitator relationship I would like to reference Pohatu's (2005) concept of "Āta". The context for "Āta" was social services and the concept is about understanding, developing and sustaining relationships with Māori. Āta is essentially about relational behaviours and respect for the values, traditions, practices (kaupapa) important to Māori. The essence of "Āta", reflecting Māori ways of being is respect for people, purposeful intent, reciprocity, respect for place (wahi) and a willingness matters to take whatever time (wa) is necessary for them to resolve. "Āta" embraces reflection and sees as an integral element of relationships.

Whilst a Māori concept, “Āta” resonates as an elegant statement of what a learner-facilitator relationship should be. What the findings about facilitation of learning reported above reveal to me is that it is a complex process.

Facilitators are not mere guides nor are they technicians following a prescribed formula. Their success with learners is a consequence of their ability to play multiple roles in their engagement with the learners, to bring to bear the right skills and knowledge at the right time which means to have an in-depth understanding of the learner – not just their skills and knowledge but their personality and motivations – so that they can make important judgment calls at just the right time, e.g. to push or to challenge, or to encourage, or to hold to account. This is a role as complex as any teaching role as we might understand teaching to be. It is the role of a professional – one with significant expertise in their field i.e. facilitation.

It is interesting that my exploration of the literature around facilitation did not capture the complexity I have described. What I have seen in the literature are descriptions of what facilitators might do (e.g. Helyer 2016) but not the complexity. The literature seems to treat facilitation more as a technical skill set than a professional activity.

My findings emphasis the following as being important to learners about the role of facilitator in their learning process:

- The importance of ‘fit’ regarding location, gender, age, culture, commonalities, beliefs, area of specialisation
- The importance of building an effective relationship (trust, empathy, collaboration, collegiality, congruence, reciprocity)
- Having the right skillsets, attitudes and qualities: constructive feedback, passion, energy, role model, accessibility, availability, responsiveness, timeliness i.e. JIT – just in time feedback, and the ability to know when to be e.g. patient yet pushy i.e., paradoxical.

A reasonable interpretation of the findings reinforces the view that facilitation as practised in the ILP is an alternative form of teaching. The ILP facilitators need to understand adult learning theories and apply these as appropriate to learners as individuals, who they need to understand as learners.

Chapter Five: Towards a Model of Effective ‘Facilitation of Learning’

In this chapter, I set out and explain a model for effective ‘facilitation of learning’ which I envisaged at the outset to be an output of this project. I considered the development of a model to be significant and necessary as a means of underpinning a high quality of both learning by the Capable NZ learners, and facilitation by the Capable NZ academic staff. With regard to learner development, it is important to understand the nature of the typical learner who undertakes degree learning through the ILP approach. As explained in Chapter One while these learners are professionally/vocationally very experienced they are not academically experienced – most do not have a tertiary level qualification at all, let alone one at degree level. Most have not engaged in formal learning since leaving school – for many this was up to 20 years prior to enrolling in their programme with Capable NZ. They are, of course, self-starters and are willing and able to embrace an independent study pathway, but most require to be supported as they embark on that journey and to be scaffolded into the reflective process that is the underpinning of the ILP approach.

With regard to facilitation, the context is important, i.e. effective facilitation of independent learning at degree level is not a simple set of technical tasks which are easily obtained. Our experience in Capable NZ has been that good facilitators of independent learning require high levels of skill, are not easy to find, and take considerable time to develop. Also, as explained earlier, Capable NZ is a fast growing school at Otago Polytechnic and to support that growth needs to expand its facilitator workforce, adding weight to the need to have a model in place to guide recruitment and for facilitator induction and development.

Furthermore, our experience is that it is easy for facilitators to get facilitation wrong for a particular learner and this is consistent with my earlier points about facilitation – it is not a simple technical activity. That this is so was evidenced in my findings in that while most learners declared much new learning from the ILP process, some did not – yet the process is designed to generate new learning and is intended to be transformational for the learner. I contend that for those learners who learned little that was new that the facilitation they received was not as effective as it could have been. Facilitators need to know how to exercise judgment and need to understand that facilitation is a relational role, that requires an empathy with and an understanding of the learner, which may not always occur. Facilitators operate in the best interests of their learners, i.e. they get to know them and they matter. Facilitators join their learners in a journey, i.e. they travel together.

The knowledge the learner acquires in the course of the ILP is not handed down, but is co-constructed. It is the learner's knowledge but comes about through the reflection and reflexivity in the process of learning. Travelling with the learner and co-constructing knowledge is not a simple ask for the facilitator but requires significant knowledge and skill.

This then is the essence of my rationale for developing an effective learner-centred 'facilitation of learning' model.

The model for effective facilitation I am explaining here is in two parts:

The first part of the model comprises an underlying conception of facilitation as a professional educational activity, a set of principles, and a competency framework. These elements have been derived from my study of effective facilitation for undergraduate degrees and I believe apply to the facilitation of learning for any degree with independent learning at its core. I also believe that this part of the model will apply to post-graduate learning and to this end there has been some testing with learners in our Masters of Professional Practice (MPP), with encouraging results. I am hopeful that the model will be applicable in other independent learning contexts.

The second part of the model specifically relates to the facilitation of an undergraduate degree by the ILP approach. This part constitutes an overview of the learning process, a set of individually focused learning tasks to aid learners and a visual map to guide the use of these tasks, as well as complementary tools for facilitators (Appendix 6).

The elements of the model have been drawn together with a tool for self-assessment and reflection, for facilitators and for learners which I have named the SPRINGBOARD. This tool for reflection has yet to be tested in the field, but early consultation is encouraging that it will be a useful frame of reference to support learners in their learning process, and for facilitators to be effective with their learners. SPRINGBOARD as an aid to reflection is consistent with the independent learning approach which characterises all Capable NZ programmes.

The model conceptualises facilitation as a professional educational activity rather than as a set of technical skills.

This is important to understand because facilitation is a widely used term with many different meanings, including being a relatively straight forward technical process of guiding learners through a predesigned structure – as might be the case with facilitating the acquisition of practical skill. Indeed, at Otago Polytechnic we have a category of employment of ‘lower level’ academic staff called facilitators which was negotiated for staff who helped adult learners in our Community Education Centres. These staff were seen as less skilled than ‘teachers’ because they simply had to ensure that learners understood the instructions in the learning packages they were working on, and to troubleshoot if problems arose, particularly with the technology the learners were using. Such a simple conception of facilitation is not appropriate as the underpinning of the process used in Capable NZ to guide independent learners through the completion of their undergraduate degree. Rather, facilitation in the context of Capable NZ must be seen as a professional activity as explained below.

Facilitation as a Professional Activity

The findings of my study are consistent with what we already know about learning i.e. that it is not straight forward, essentially because learners are all individuals who present with their individual challenges and who are all uniquely prepared for the learning process that lies ahead of them. Learners need to be supported by facilitators who have well-developed diagnostic and analytical skills, who recognise when challenges are interrupting the learning process and who are capable of exercising sound judgments in the interests of their learners. If what I have described above is a fair description of the reality of learners and learning, and I believe it is, then our view of facilitators as teachers must inevitably coincide with the view of teachers as professionals that I foreshadowed in Chapter Two, and that others so clearly enunciate. A central element, then, in the design of an effective ‘facilitation of learning’ model is that its foundation is the proposition that facilitation is a professional activity, which has as its ultimate goal, the promotion and enhancement of learning.

What therefore are the various elements which make the facilitator a ‘professional’ as opposed to a ‘technician’? As professionals they work within a recognised body of knowledge, within an ethical framework and with their learner’s interests foremost. They exercise meaningful judgments about their learners, so they need to be highly reflective and well-informed by the current body of knowledge about their profession. They are expected to acquire a repertoire of specialised techniques and knowledge, including knowledge of

when to use a particular technique. Implicit in this conception of facilitation is the view that any problems in facilitation or learning can be solved given the skills, knowledge and expertise the person has in this area. Facilitators must define and enforce their standards of practice that align with the 'facilitation of learning' model i.e. autonomy, self-discipline, and a shared ethic of performance support professional activity. They have a significant degree of control over their work regarding the structure and the nature of work tasks. They value feedback which is essential to maintaining the unique relationship between facilitator and learner. They also value peer review as a process that furthers the continual development and application of standards of effective practice. Finally, they have a key responsibility to make their decisions in the best interests of their learners.

When facilitation is conceptualised as a 'profession', facilitators not only need to develop a repertoire of techniques but also the judgment about when to apply them - and in this regard they are no different from any other educator. Theoretical and technical knowledge is required as is the ability and willingness to reflect on the experience. Facilitation is seen as challenging and not lending itself to standardised solutions or routine procedures.

As professionals, facilitators work to a set of professional standards and to this end I have developed a competency framework, which has been tested with colleagues and fine-tuned in the light of their feedback. The framework is informed by theory as identified below and is my original work. This framework helps to define facilitation practice provides guidance for professional performance for effective facilitators and acts as a professional development tool offered to all staff along with relevant workshops and opportunities for up-skilling towards mastery. The elements of the competency framework are described later in this chapter, and the full framework is attached in Appendix 6.

A professional conception of a 'learning facilitator' views facilitation as unpredictable, variable and complex; such that facilitation techniques and knowledge must be accompanied by intuition, creativeness and insightfulness. Workman and Helyer (2016: 43) suggest that a facilitator of learning should "do whatever you can to develop your own understanding of the learning theories, learning styles and approaches, therefore enabling learning that is 'fit for purpose'". The role of facilitator, therefore, is one of a professional who practices an approach of learner-centredness i.e. has understood the learner and their

unique skills, knowledge, attitudes, needs, and therefore encourages and inspires, supports and guides the learner, having understood them.

To promote understanding of their practice, facilitators who are professionals in the sense I have described above, are expected to gather feedback about what they are doing and the effects which their actions have on learner achievement i.e. they must obtain feedback on their practice. This feedback process includes learner and colleague feedback and is supported by critical self-appraisal. Feedback processes are in place in Capable NZ and are working well, and are seen as one of the ways facilitation can be improved by illuminating sources of difficulty and identifying opportunities for change. Feedback in Capable NZ is based on holistic judgments rather than on analysis of discrete behaviours or skills. The purpose of feedback is to support the facilitation and learning process, rather than being about monitoring and control.

Formal feedback processes, as are now commonplace in most tertiary institutions, are helpful but one of the most effective mechanisms for generating insightful feedback on an informal basis. Informal feedback frequently occurs at the end of the learner's final assessment interview and at the gatherings of graduands prior to their graduation ceremony. We hear rich and heartfelt feedback from learners and their families, often about the process, usually about their facilitator, and for many about the impacts on their careers following their success. Data collection is thus part and parcel of everyday practice which means that opportunities for improvement present in a more timely manner compared with feedback processes which are focussed at a point in time.

Facilitation as a professional activity will also see facilitators as active participants in a community of practice, through which they will engage in action learning about their practice, informed by both formal and informal feedback which is willingly shared. Peer mentoring occurs amongst colleagues in Capable NZ as a voluntary activity, but one in which most facilitators regularly engage. Peer mentoring may be formal or informal (just-in-time) to listen to the tensions, confusions, frustrations in our work with learners, and to share in a way that is empowering and non-judgmental and yet encourages constructive discussion. "This sharing of information and knowledge gained from reflecting on experience improves practice, and the collaboration of new knowledge leads to change as well as personal and organisation development" (Ions and Sutcliffe (2015) as cited in Helyer (2016: 213)).

This reflective process which we have noted on several occasions is critical to the independent learning approach.

What is clear by now is that under a professional approach to facilitation there is very little procedural prescription and the emphasis is focused on the abilities of the facilitator to help their learners to engage in the deep reflection which leads to transformational learning and understandings of new identity. The motivation for facilitators and learners to improve their practice will come from within the facilitators and learners themselves and not by standardised rules.

Facilitators as professionals do, of course, need to be supported by their institution and support structures will be concerned with equipping facilitators with appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to become competent self and peer evaluators. Institutional support will also factor in real opportunities for professional dialogue as part and parcel of regular workload. I am pleased to say that this is the case in Capable NZ – evidenced not only by the existence of my role but also by the willing adoption of the learnings from this doctoral study. Facilitators operating in this ILP programme of study regularly share and engage in innovative and creative ways to improve facilitation and learning strategies – strategies designed to cultivate and encourage deep learning in their learners, and the support processes are now in place to help facilitators cope with more practical approaches to learning.

Principles for Effective Facilitation of Learning

From my work, study and reflections, I have derived a set of four key principles for effective facilitation, drawn from what learners themselves have reported as what has best helped them in their learning process, and which facilitators have reported as being effective across a range of learners and contexts. The principles are consistent with the literature discussed in Chapters Two and Five and align with my observations and experiences as a practitioner in the field over the last eleven years.

Principle 1: Fit – it is important that there is a close fit between learner and facilitator.

Feedback from learners comment on why their ‘learning process’ was such a success, i.e. they attribute much of that to the facilitator ‘caring about them’ or ‘understanding their

background and experiences’ or ‘being able to meet them on Sunday morning’ or ‘having lots in common’. ‘Fit’ has the following dimensions: location, the area of specialisation/commonalities, culture, gender and age, and it is important that wherever possible the alignment between facilitator and learner is a good match. The instant recognition of ‘things in common’ whether that be location, background interests (e.g. music, sport, writing plays, children), or work roles of interest makes that initial contact and beginnings of building a relationship that much easier.

The facilitator must have the self-awareness to recognise if the ‘fit’ with a learner is not an ideal one and if they believe they are not the right person, to gain clarification of who might be so that the learner is successful. This principle is consistent with a professional conception of facilitation – the interests of the learner come first. While some facilitators have the ability to make the necessary adjustments to ensure ‘fit’, for others, this can be too difficult, for example, a clash of values. Equally, we must encourage the learner to feel empowered to suggest changes if they are not comfortable with either their facilitator or the actions of their facilitator.

The importance of ‘fit’ has been recognised within Capable NZ as being sufficiently important that it now drives the allocation of work to facilitators. The work allocation model used in Capable NZ is provided in Appendix 6.

Thus, this principle applies initially as the basis for establishing the facilitator-learner relationship which itself is essential and is set out below as Principle 2. If the initial fit proves not to be the case, the learner should be reallocated.

Principle 2: Relationship – it is important that the relationship between facilitator and learner is one that is bound by mutual respect, trust and empathy.

Important is the ability of the facilitator to gain insights into their learner as soon as possible. This requires the facilitator to have read the learner’s CV, interpreted the results of the self-assessment tool and to have noted any other information which the learner has provided to either the administrators or to the facilitator in the initial engagement. With the facilitator knowing the learner's background they can quickly establish a rapport, showing they care about the learner and that the learner matters.

The facilitator can also detect whether there might be a clash of values which would trigger consideration for reallocation of the learner to another facilitator.

As part of the first engagement, a skilled facilitator will listen attentively and be curious of the learner as they often share anxieties, misconceptions about the ILP, and seek clarification of information before confirming their enrolment in the programme. If a learner in their first meeting or initial contact has had an instant connection with their facilitator, e.g. talking about things in common or a work role they have been in, or even a sense of humour and light laughter about study – this will spark an appreciation of “this feels good, he understands me, I feel validated, I matter”. Thus, it is important that the facilitator sets out to create this environment from the outset i.e. at their initial enquiry. To do this the facilitator must be aware and recognise nuances in another person, whether it be in their voice on the phone, or facial cues on Skype, or in person and in that initial greeting and the way they engage.

Principle 3: Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes - it is important that the facilitator has the capabilities for the role.

A range of skills and attributes are required, as suggested by the learners who participated in this study. The following are drawn from the data: passion, energy, empathy, an effective role model, accessible, available, responsive, timely feedback (including just in time (JIT) feedback), and the ability to know when to be both ‘patient and pushy’, i.e. paradoxical. Learners like to know they are in “good hands” i.e. that the facilitator fully understands the ILP process, and this is evident in the way they discuss it, and in their confidence of how they talk. Learners also like to see affirming conversations and awareness that the facilitator has heard them, acknowledged their experiences, and is genuinely interested in them understanding and succeeding in this journey.

The facilitator must demonstrate a knowledge of adult learning theories, especially of reflective practice, an understanding of experiential learning, a grasp of the subject-specific knowledge and understanding of workplace practices, knowledge of learning processes including expectations required of degree level learning. Facilitators must also adhere to the principles of manaaki and the concept of mana as described in more detail below.

Principle 4: Learners First – it is important that facilitators are responsive to learners, available to meet learner needs and always act in the interest of the learner.

Effective facilitators are willing to work flexibly and to be available to engage with learners within the parameters of their work and life constraints. ILP learners typically are in work and often their study time is in the evenings and weekends. Therefore facilitators need to be available at these times, within reason and as negotiated with the learner.

While a willingness to work flexibly is a desirable attribute of the facilitator, the corollary is a willingness of the facilitator's employer also to appreciate that effective facilitation is unlikely to occur within a traditional 9 am to 5 pm timeframe. Therefore, the employer will ensure that facilitators have the autonomy and flexibility around their work hours. This principle is congruent with the conceptualisation of facilitation as a professional activity, whereby professionals manage their own time and accept responsibility for meeting client needs.

At the same time, effective facilitators are encouraging of autonomous, self-directed learning and empowering the learner to take control of their learning as much as they can. The facilitator must be intentional and purposeful in their work with a learner in this regard. This is evident in Theme 3 of my findings.

Relevant to all four of the above principles is a requirement that the facilitator be able to work effectively with learners from different cultural backgrounds, and in New Zealand with Māori in particular. For facilitators of the ILP approach, this is even more important given the inherent attractiveness of the ILP to Māori learners.

This model of effective “facilitation of learning” is informed in particular by the Māori value of manaaki, which underpins notions of relationship, caring and understanding of the learner as a person. Manaaki has a commonplace meaning of hospitality, people caring for people and being kind (Moorfield, 2011). This correlates with my own account of valuing people, i.e. caring for them and letting them know that they matter, as described in my work.

The NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2013:3) explains manaaki this way:

1. Manaaki – being careful with how we nurture and look after people and their mana.
2. Mana-aki – taking care of and enhancing the mana of the people. This is what is measured.
3. Mana-a-ki – the power of the spoken word. Mana-a-ki reminds ‘hosts to be expressive and fluent in welcoming visitors. It is also a reminder to the tangata whenua (hosts) that the power of the word (or the words) of your manuhiri (guests) can sing your praises if your expression of manaakitanga is exemplary. But beware – it can also be detrimental, if manaakitanga is less than acceptable’. Mana-a-ki reminds the tangata whenua that they need to be consistent and truthful in what they say, for actions will reveal the discrepancies and if what we say and/or do is not favoured by the manuhiri it can be detrimental to the tangata whenua and their project.

Mana is a concept that is integral to te ao Māori (the Māori worldview) and it attends to a person or people’s prestige, influence and spiritual authority (Pere, 1997). Intrinsic to man is humility and empowering others towards collective empowerment inclusive of oneself. The association of mana with manaaki is pivotal as it acknowledges that mana is being measured. Expressing manaakitanga is ‘role modelling mana enhancing behaviour towards each other, taking care not to trample another’s mana’ (Williams and Broadley 2012).

In our work with Māori learners and staff we adhere to the principles of manaaki in all of the ways described above. All Capable NZ staff acknowledge that these principles guide decisions made by Māori in their everyday life. These are often difficult to measure yet are implicit in Māori, i.e. the way they feel and think. It is their own internal way of being, one that we acknowledge and respect. Māori want to feel their own mana is being enhanced and this is done through welcome, caring for, and being supported and resourced.

Therefore, the definition of manaaki has a close relationship with values such as kindness and yet is not often discussed in tertiary level education. A lot of our learners allude to the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whariki*, which ‘reflects the partnership between Māori and The Crown inherent within Te Tiriti o Waitangi, New Zealand’s founding document, and is an example of how traditional values, concepts, worldviews, and philosophies have been integrated into a modern, bicultural, educational document’ (Rameka 2011: 252).

Manaaki goes beyond simple kindness and is aligned throughout *Te Whariki*, as a measurement and indeed as an assessment. Manaaki requires that we as learners, and I would suggest facilitators, 'develop empathy and connectedness with others, understand and respect social and communal identities, and understanding of roles and responsibilities associated with those identities' (Rameka 2011:252).

Competency Framework

An essential element of a model for effective facilitation of learning is the knowledge and capabilities required of facilitators. I have developed the framework that recognises that facilitators will develop over time through three stages from developing through competent to advanced practice. This Competency Framework emerged as a result of my findings as to what learners and facilitators themselves believe are important criteria for facilitators to adhere to as a professional approach to 'facilitation of learning', and the Framework was developed and refined with colleagues in Capable NZ.

This framework is used to inform facilitator recruitment and as the basis for facilitator induction and professional development. It is also an aid to self-reflection and for guiding peer mentoring and colleague feedback. Facilitators use the framework to help design and think about their professional development activities for the year. Staff decide the professional development as a group, discuss and select appropriate people to run the sessions, with aims and objectives and outcomes decided in advance.

There has been a balance between internal and external people supporting the facilitators in 'learning more' and thus adding to their body of knowledge and professional skill base.

Facilitators need to be skilled at supporting learners to become personally effective individuals, skilled at making good use of their time and resources at their disposal to achieve goals. They should have strong personal, interpersonal and cognitive capabilities and build positive relationships, taking responsibility for their actions and seeking feedback to improve their performance. They should also have subject matter/discipline knowledge in a range of areas as well as strong understandings of generic competencies required for the future world of work. At Otago Polytechnic it is a requirement that all programmes of learning develop learners as future focused individuals and sustainable practitioners.

Future focussed individuals can look forward and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for continuous learning, to broaden their abilities and to adapt to change. Sustainable practitioners can apply frameworks of sustainable practice (ecological, social, political and economic) to the context of their industry, the field of study, or community of practice, to challenge existing practices and develop more sustainable ways of operating. Thus, facilitators at Otago Polytechnic themselves need to be future capable and have a solid understanding of sustainable practice.

My three-stage framework is drawn from the work of Dreyfus's Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition (Christiansen 2005), which shows the developmental trajectory of how facilitators can move through the levels to reach high levels of proficiency, providing the required expectations of skill and knowledge. The Dreyfus Model commences with a novice stage which I have dispensed with because when we hire facilitators we do so ensuring they already have a relevant experience skill set and knowledge base, for example, experienced in adult education, or experienced as a career counsellor. This then makes starting at the developing stage appropriate, depending on what the new facilitator has brought with them. If a new facilitator has prior experience, skills and knowledge aligned with the competency stage, they will be appointed at that level. I have also left out Dreyfus's advanced stage, in the interests of a more streamlined model. In the developing stage the facilitator has a limited understanding of the context of the work that is encountered, especially given our work with learners is individually focused requiring a range of skills, knowledge and abilities (discussed below). Competence is developed when the facilitator is able to apply principles which they have evolved to quickly assess the specific processes that are relevant to the particular independent learning programme, demonstrating sound planning and decision making skills. Mastery is achieved when the facilitator operates intuitively from a tacit knowledge base, making decisions based on analysis in circumstances where there are challenges. At mastery level the facilitator is able to provide professional leadership.

Elements of the Competency Framework

The full competency framework is set out in Appendix 6. The key elements of the framework follow with a brief explanation about each element in italics.

Professional knowledge – comprises of subject/discipline knowledge related to the degree being sought by the learner, adult learning theory, reflective practice understandings, knowledge of experiential learning theories, knowledge and skills.

These are important professional knowledge expectations of all facilitators i.e. to understand the learning environment they are going to be working in, and what they should know and understand before commencing work.

Educational knowledge – comprises of the background knowledge to understand and maintain robust processes, familiar with NZQA levels of qualifications and skills outcomes at each level. Understands the application of the taught curriculum to the graduate profile, or NZQA unit standards.

Educational knowledge is another key requirement of a facilitator's knowledge base, i.e. that of the educational requirements. Otago Polytechnic is working towards graduate profiles for all qualifications. However, there are still some NZQA unit standards at this point.

Information and resource management - understands how to access information and resources for learner needs; includes library system, ability to locate and research academic literature/articles, operate our CRM (client record management system), student support systems, as well as Otago Polytechnic's internal systems, processes and policies with which to inform practice.

Another requirement and expectation a facilitator needs i.e. the ability to know how and where to access information.

These skills should be part of the role modelling a facilitator demonstrates to their learner, so that in time the learner is comfortable and familiar enough to be able to access some support systems without facilitator guidance, e.g. student support, library online.

Portfolio building skills - understands and practices using listening, questioning, summarising, analysis, synthesising techniques that assist a learner in portfolio building, using language appropriately, and analytical skills to apply judgment. Understands a range of facilitation tools and associated techniques and can work with learners using them.

A key requirement for facilitators before working in Capable NZ, i.e. the ability to support others by practising the skills of relationship building. This is a requirement as a team member and as a facilitator when working with learners.

Applies communication skills - to a) Clarify learner needs, steps, goals, b) Build learner confidence and engagement, c) Facilitate learner self-understanding and skill development and d) Communicate the independent learning pathways processes effectively.

Another key requirement for facilitators, i.e. the ability to communicate efficiently and effectively to ensure clarity and engagement.

Relationship Management - a) Develops and maintains effective relationships with learners and colleagues, b) Understands and recognises the diversity of learners and in which programme they are learning in, c) Applies professional standards and boundaries to all interactions with learners, and d) Ability to interpret graduate profiles and institution requirements and translate these to a learner or enquirer.

An expectation that all staff can build and maintain effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders and applies standards and boundaries appropriately.

Professional Practice and Development - a) Actively develops knowledge and skills for effective practice, b) Applies high standards of professional and ethical standards to interactions with learners.

There is an expectation that facilitators will actively develop their skills and knowledge by contributing to discussions for in-house workshops, as well as external professional development that aligns with their role and practice. There are also peer mentoring sessions available as well as supervision for those who facilitate in areas that require specific support, e.g. Bachelor of Social Services work.

Capable NZ Knowledge and Practice - a) Is familiar with Capable NZ programme documentation and processes. b) Understands the differences in the ILP versus taught practices including pedagogic theory, c) Completes administrative requirements as required, d) Plans for own workload, personal and professional development and performance

reviews, e) Meets legislative requirements, and f) Examines own work practices to ensure personal effectiveness and efficiency.

While not a pre-requisite to working in Capable NZ, part of the induction to this work will be the familiarisation of Capable NZ systems, processes and administrative practices. However, the ability to prioritise competing demands and workloads and accesses professional development is an expectation.

Facilitators move through the Framework as their capabilities develop. It is not a time-serving approach, therefore the pace at which facilitators progress is entirely dependent on the experience they accumulate and the skills, knowledge and eventually wisdom they develop. It is more than possible that a facilitator could move through the framework in a three-five year period, depending on the number of learners they work with and the quality of their learning from their experience with those learners.

The second part of the model specifically relates to the facilitation of an undergraduate degree by the ILP approach. This part comprises an overview of the learning process, a set of individually focused learning tasks to aid learners, a visual map to guide the learners in the use of these tasks, and a complementary set tools for facilitators (Appendix 6).

Overview of the Learning Process and Learning Tasks

This overview is a ‘snapshot’ of the learning process, showing learners what the tasks are going to cover, and in language that makes it easy and straightforward to understand. It also suggests how long a learner should spend on this learning task.

What sits alongside this overview are a set of related tasks sheets that ‘unpack’ each learning task giving more information to encourage the learner, including snippets from the work of other learners.

Learning Tasks	Activity	Timing
1	Early Influences – WHO AM I - `positioning’ of the self This is the beginning of building the Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) including a daily reflective/learning journal	Two weeks

Learning Task 1:

Early Learning, Life and Influences – Who am I?

What were your early learning influences?

This task asks you to reflect on your **early influences** – where you have come from, who you are (culture, family history, beliefs, values) – all those things that have impacted on who you are and what you have become. Especially interesting in here will be how that relates to the working life you have developed, what is important to you in your workplace, and why.

Some early learnings and key influences in your life might be things such as:

- Family values, history, faith, culture, activities (e.g., sport)
- Key mentors in your early life – teachers, parents, grandparents, sports coaches, Minister from local church
- Location – where you grew up – how that influenced you, including travelling to and from other countries, learning different cultures, your beliefs about people
- Things that are especially relevant to you - what your parents did and worked at, any other important family members.

Some considerations and strategies to assist you:

- Think about the **proverbs or quotes** you heard in your childhood as guiding comments; these also help to capture our childhood memories:

You reap what you sow
It takes a village to raise a child
Children should be seen and not heard
People in glass houses

What did you **learn** from these?

- Who were your **role models**?

When thinking about your early influences, was there a specific person who became a great role model for you? (Teacher, Sunday School Teacher, Kuaia, local police officer, next door neighbour, grandmother). Why? What was it about them, (personality/strengths/behaviours/job/role) that made you want to be like them?

Examples of learners' comments about values:

'My values set that guides my life and work:

Māori values – importance of land and community, acknowledging the wisdom of the elders, respect and manaaki

Tongan cultural values – respect, loyalty, community, extended family

Personal family values – achievements, commitment, loyalty

Work values – ethics, effort, commitment, teamwork, communication.'

'The values I took from home

The strongest values I remember in our household were those of hard work, education and fairness. If you wanted to get ahead, you just worked hard and did a good job. Education was really important – my parents had missed out on a higher education and were determined we would not. We were also expected to act fairly and honestly in all words and actions. I grew up expecting everyone else would think like this!

'My mother, even with five children, managed to work jobs which allowed her to spend time with us, and even in the wider community she would and continues to look out for others – on reflection this is where I learnt manaakitanga, honesty, respect, and empathy for others, all of which have stood me in good stead in my professional role.'

Reflective Diary/Journal

We encourage you to keep a running commentary on your reflections as you navigate this learning journey – capturing those 'aha' moments of awareness of learning, of light bulb moments, of low points and highlights. You can add these to your Portfolio of Evidence or just capture some of the key moments in your oral/visual presentation.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

This section requires a great deal of thinking, and you might find using mind maps or timelines to assist you to map out key events in your life.

SCOPE: In this section, talk about your life up until approximately 18 years of age, or until you finished school. Summarise by providing your reflection on, and identifying the learning you brought with you into your life and work today.

This could be up to 10 pages of work.

Self-Directed Learner Hours: 30

Directed Hours: 3

Learning Outcome: *Identify early learnings related to a portfolio of evidence and practice.*

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, also any maps or timelines you construct. Include photos or maps of your childhood if you wish to show or demonstrate a way of life growing up.

As I wrote in Chapter Three, and as a result of the findings of the first set of data i.e. in the survey sent out to learners in 2015, it was evident that more information needed to be provided to learners, and a more structured learning process would be helpful to give more clarity around what the learners are required to do. This structure is now provided through the learning tasks, illustrated above, and set out in full in Appendix 6. These tasks are not prescriptive in the sense that they have to be slavishly followed but to provide learners with suggestions as to how they might go about their learning. From the learner with no idea how to even get started, to the learner who scanned it and went off on her/his own to undertake the work, they all fed back how helpful it was and that they enjoyed having some ideas in terms of ‘how it could look’. These individual learning tasks now belong to the facilitator who ‘creates their task depending on the learner and their unique experiences’, i.e. they create it in such a way that it focuses on that specific learner, and if the task is not needed for a particular learner it is set to one side.

Alongside the overview of the learning process, I created an outline for the facilitator, i.e. suggesting prompts and providing signposts along the way, for them to note where necessary. Some of these prompts related to administrative information that was needed, and others related to support strategies.

LT	ACTIVITY – ROLE OF FACILITATOR	Hours	Links To:
	Pre-enrolment stage The early stage of enquiry by a potential learner – they have information from the website or customer services,	1 hr facilitator time	Competency Framework for Facilitators

	<p>administration staff, and they now need some contact with a facilitator.</p> <p>They want to discuss challenges and have queries about their suitability and preparedness for the programme (based on their CV and self-assessment tool). They want to know about hours of learning, costs, the role of facilitator and learner, graduate profiles – how that works. What is in a Portfolio of Evidence? What does reflective practice mean, identifying gaps in knowledge?</p>		<p>Importance of 'Fit' between Facilitator and Learner</p> <p>Beginning of first stages of establishing a relationship (manaaki)</p>
1	<p>Early Influences – WHO AM I, WHY AM I?</p> <p>The first piece of work for learner – support them in understanding their adult learning style, reflective practice – what this is, how can one think about reflection. Also good to check in around levels of learning, expectations of writing, and support services available where needed. This work goes into PoE as evidence of early learning and life influences. This is the start of learner capability. Therefore, the facilitator needs to be looking for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of professional academic writing at L7 (to determine if more support will be required and when to offer this) • Supporting structure – themes (how to step back from story and consider themes) • Understanding how to reflect (reflection understandings, i.e., reflection is a learning process) • Identifying values/beliefs/attitudes (can the learner do this easily?; if not how to support this) • Listening for clues (often learners like to tell their story first, which will establish trust and rapport. Therefore facilitator role is to listen deeply for the clues, for what isn't said, for the glue that holds the story, i.e., the themes) • Language (consider that language may be different, facilitator role is to ensure that they change their language or explain similarities of words learner not necessarily familiar with) • Structure – facilitator needs to be flexible here – some learners will want guidelines, e.g., word count, layout, pages, examples, timelines, feedback. • Explain the compiling of evidence for PoE at this stage – which includes these written reflections, can include photos, maps, other info that best represent them (e.g., video clip, artefacts) • Cover potential majors, timelines, expectations, panel assessment <p><u>Formative feedback</u> Encourage the use of a reflective diary – to capture those 'aha' moments of awareness of learning, of light bulb moments, of low points, of highlights – and encourage the learner to capture these.</p>	<p>Two weeks</p> <p>3 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Establishing the relationship and negotiating way of working – developing an agreement that respects accessibility, availability, responsiveness and JIT feedback</p> <p>Reflective practice</p> <p>Understanding of values and beliefs – narrative/story</p> <p>Identity Awareness of Personal Self</p> <p>Language Structure</p> <p>Importance of Portfolio of Evidence and Compilation</p> <p>Reflective diary, journaling</p>

Finally, I have developed a ‘visual map’ of the learning process, which is a colourful depiction of the learning tasks, examples of work from previous learners, the values we ascribe to, for example. This too has now been used as a tool for facilitator and learner, and again, customised by facilitators as they see fit for their particular learners. I acknowledge my colleague Samuel Mann for his skills in converting my concepts into the visual form presented as the ILP ‘Canvas’ Map in Appendix 6.

All of these elements of the model have been drawn together with a tool for reflection, for each of facilitators and learners, which I have named SPRINGBOARD, a metaphor that depicts a person’s ability to think, feel, dream and believe – it is intended to convey an image that ‘anything is possible’ as learners stand on the board and spring up and out into the unknown.

SPRINGBOARD is a convenient aid for both the facilitator and learner to reflect on their respective roles during the learning process, i.e. signposts and prompts to ensure they are on track and that they have attended to the expectations required of them. This reflection should be on-going throughout the learning process. However, I would suggest at four interim points, i.e. at the beginning, three months in, six months and just before completing the process.

SPRINGBOARD for Facilitators

As a facilitator you need to be adaptable, available, approachable and passionate if learners are to be inspired and engaged in learning. You need to take on the role of a co-traveller, who travels alongside the learner, guiding, questioning, challenging, listening, to support deep and critical reflection, self-discovery, validation, along with creative and innovative ways to learn more about themselves both in work and life, and in their future possibilities. SPRINGBOARD contains suggestions for effective facilitation practice on which you are encouraged to reflect, asking yourself how you have engaged with each of your learners.

- S** Sharpen the learner’s understanding of what successful practice looks like which includes that of a self-managing, autonomous learner.

Ensure that in the initial conversations with a learner you give a full picture of the process, and potential outcomes of undertaking the ILP including the learner's own role in taking responsibility for asking for support/clarification and submitting work on time. This should also include the skill of reflective practice, experiential learning and the principles of adult learning.

*(This relates to feedback about structure, processes, expected outcomes, the role of reflective practice, and understanding of experiential and adult learning. **Theme 1**)*

P Point the learning in the most productive direction for the specific learner and encourage the linking of theory to practice.

As you travel with the learner support and guide wherever possible ideas for new learning which include practical, real world issues, experiences and situations to critically inform the learner's practice wherever possible, and show them how to make the links between new understandings and the impact on their practice. At the end of the ILP, point the learner in the direction of future possibilities and understandings of employability and capabilities required for the future world of work.

*(This relates to feedback about direct links to relatable theory, understanding how to research and critically analyse it, including a focus on new learning that matters. **Theme 2**)*

R Read the background, skills, knowledge, attitudes, needs and motivations as accurately as possible, and construct with the learner an appropriate learning plan which is relevant to them and their learning requirements.

Ensure that the learning tasks are individually focused and ensure the learner's culture and particular skill set is acknowledged, as well as providing identification of areas for improvement and new learning. This tells the learner that you have read, listened and understood their background and areas of work, and that you are ensuring that the new learning has relevance to the learner.

(Relates to the feedback that the learner believes facilitators demonstrate that they care, that they are focused on them and that they matter. Themes 2, 4)

- I Introduce the learner to an integrative framework that helps them make sense of the new learning they have gained from identifying their skills, knowledge and attitudes from experience, informal and formal learning.

Demonstrate the focus on the personal and professional (holistic) framework of practice giving an overview of the final expectations, and the linking of integrated skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and beliefs.

(Relates back to one of the transformational aspects of the ILP ie the development of their Framework of Practice, also the ability to link their personal and professional identity, giving the learner clear understandings of the assessment focus that is valid and only concentrates on the graduate outcomes of the qualification, what was learned and their future focus, and that the assessment is integrated. Theme 3)

- N Negotiate the way you will work together, i.e. weekly, monthly, times, expectations, outcomes, feedback, ideas about new learning and how to access information.

Ensure clarity about learning tasks and overall outcomes and expectations, i.e. where the learning is heading and how they contribute to a coherent framework of practice. Then negotiate what is the most appropriate and helpful way to work together.

(Relates back to data about clarity regarding overall structure, timelines, examples, and outcomes including expectations. Theme 1)

- G Gather together appropriate resources to assist with the learning process for each learner.

From the outset ensure your understanding of the learner's background as well as the areas for development, so that new learning can be integrated during the process as and when appropriate.

Find specific articles, suggest books and topics that will resonate with your particular learner; this validates your awareness and understanding of them including areas of new knowledge you believe might be helpful to them.

(Demonstrates that the learner matters, that the focus is individually based, and that you know them well and are there to support their learning. Themes 2, 4)

B Broaden the learner's perspectives on what constitutes effective practice.

Take opportunities where appropriate to share examples, stories, cases, of effective practice, which provide opportunities for broadening practice.

(Relates to feedback about needing to see other people's work to get ideas. Also part of a facilitator's role is to help shape and support the depth and breadth of a learners professional practice so that there are many more future possibilities and understandings. Themes 2, 3)

O Overcome identified barriers to learning in a timely fashion and give support which is timely and applicable.

Discuss with learner any constraints to the ILP, ensure learner feels comfortable about disclosing any issues (learning, personal, work) and all barriers can be eliminated where possible and support services notified where appropriate.

(Relates to feedback about the role of facilitator, processes, support services, other resources needed. Themes 1, 4)

A Availability and accessibility to meet learner needs and determine specific constraints.

If you accept the learner as one of yours to facilitate ensure you are available and accessible given their needs and constraints, e.g., times suitable for the learner to engage and communicate with a facilitator (evenings, weekends, during work hours).

(Relates back to the role of 'fit' with facilitator and ability to be flexible. Theme 4)

R Review progress constantly and provide constructive feedback on how to overcome shortfalls in performance.

When discussing learning plan with the learner, ensure that timelines are met which include timely and appropriate feedback that is constructive.

*(Relates back to the role of facilitator and expectations of ILP. **Theme 1, 4**)*

D Determine the impact of what is being achieved in real world practice and help set direction.

Ensure you are up-to-date on the world of work, what the current capabilities and competencies are expected by employers and organisations, and that you share this with learners where appropriate and direct them to topical literature. Demonstrate your professional practice as a skilled practitioner in the field to show relevance and practice, not just that of the academic expectations.

*(Relates back to an updated Framework/Model of Practice which should include future possibilities and understandings, and feedback about expectations of facilitator to have the real business acumen and understandings that are current. **Themes 3, 4**)*

S P R I N G B O A R D for Learners

As an adult learner, you will be aware that you are treated as a self-managing, independent learner who will be focusing on your skills and knowledge from experiences as well as being supported to look at areas of new learning with respect to the qualification you are seeking. Your facilitator will work with you to determine a learning plan that meets your learning needs about the expectations of the graduate profile of your degree. A clear understanding of each learning task, as well as the end goal i.e. the outcomes of the graduate profile, is essential, as is a collaborative relationship with your facilitator. SPRINGBOARD contains suggestions for improving your effectiveness as a learner on which you are encouraged to reflect.

S Seek advice whenever it is unclear what is required

As an independent adult learner, it will be expected that you will feel comfortable asking for clarification, support, extra assistance when you are not sure what is required, at any stage throughout the ILP process.

*(Relates to the ILP process and clarity around expectations and engaging in conversations if unsure of work. **Theme 1**)*

P Use **P** Practice in your workplace as a starting point for learning

As a learner it will be expected that your place of work (and prior workplaces) will be the cornerstone of how you continue to learn, grow, adapt, and add value when undertaking specific tasks of skills, knowledge and attitudes learned in, at and through work.

*(Relates to the understanding of reflective practice, the role of experiential and other forms of learning including areas for new learning. **Themes 1, 2**)*

R Review your progress in delivering your learning plans constantly against agreed criteria

It is a good idea right from the start of this learning process to keep note of the learning stages and timing suggested as well as a reflective journal. This will help you to take responsibility for delivering on those agreed dates, and against the criteria expected.

*(Relates to the ILP process. **Theme 1**).*

I Integrate your learning into an overall framework of practice that is congruent, integrated, and professional and also meets future aspirations.

Ensure you keep the 'end goal' in sight, i.e., what is expected in the final assessment process which includes timelines for peer review and clarification of understanding.

It is often helpful to understand this integration of learning at the outset, or within three months of starting the ILP process, so as to keep to task.

*(Relates to the demonstration of all that you are, know, and have learned, into a Framework/Model of Practice, that is current and depicts future aspirations. **Theme 3**)*

N Negotiate your learning plans carefully, taking into account the key areas you want to improve

You will be expected to engage with your facilitator about the negotiation of your learning plan including timelines, dates, expectations and feedback. Also to be clear and focused on areas for improvement and new areas of learning, so that you both work towards these goals together.

*(Relates to learning tasks and negotiation of what will be included in them as you navigate new learning. **Theme 2**)*

G Generate imaginative and relevant outcomes from your learning that meet current and future aspirations

Make the most of your learning process and ensure you have support around imagining different or new possibilities for your future once you gain your qualification and have become a lot more aware of who you are and what you can offer.

*(Relates to areas of new learning including future. **Themes 2, 3**)*

B Broaden your perspectives on what constitutes effective practice in today's global environment

Make the most of your time by investigating and researching what is happening in your area of expertise locally, nationally and globally.

*(Relates to aspects of the graduate profile for degree level learning, including new learning and being able to articulate this into a Framework of Practice. **Themes 2, 3**)*

- O** Organise yourself to meet learning outcomes as agreed and negotiated with your facilitator

Ensure you have a well-organised structure of how and when you will do your learning and find ways to stick to the plan – leaving everything to the last minute is not fair to yourself or to the facilitator and the institution that supports you.

*(Relates to the ILP process and the expectations of a ten-month learning plan. **Theme 1**)*

- A** Articulate your learning needs to your facilitator clearly and promptly

Be open and honest about those areas where you know you will need more support so the support systems available can help you, including the facilitator.

*(Relates to the learner feeling able to discuss their individual needs openly and honestly with their facilitator. **Theme 4**)*

- R** Reflect on your learning by seeking to identify accurately what capabilities, skills and knowledge you have now developed and will continue to grow

It is important right from the start of your ILP to learn the cycle of reflective practice, which will then help you identify areas for further development based on your desires.

*(Relates to being open to learning and motivating self to grow in those areas you are interested in for your future. **Themes 2, 3**)*

D **Decide how you will ensure that your learning will be productive**

Set goals with your facilitator, stick to them and keep this map beside you as you engage in the learning. Refer to it when distracted and ensure you are clear about the particular task before beginning work on it, i.e. read it in advance, seek clarification with the facilitator, map out what you are going to do and stick to it.

*(Relates to the ILP process and designing a plan that works for you. **Theme 1**)*

Conclusion

In this chapter I set out to present the main features of an effective 'facilitation of learning' model, to aid facilitators to be able to examine and improve their facilitative practices.

The model is comprised of two significant components:

Part 1 The underlying conception of facilitation as a professional activity

A set of principles for effective facilitation

A three stage competency framework to enhance professional development and capability

A reflective tool for facilitator self-assessment, SPRINGBOARD.

This model can be used for all independent learning programmes offered via Capable NZ.

Part 2 An overview of the learning process of the ILP for degree level learning

A set of individually focused learning tasks to aid learners throughout the ILP process

A visual map to guide the use of the ILP process

Complementary tools for facilitators to accompany the above information

A reflective tool for learner self assessment, SPRINGBOARD.

This model has been developed over the three years during which I have been engaged in this doctoral programme. It was always my intention that I would put to good effect learnings from my study which could improve facilitation practice in Capable NZ and lead to better outcomes for our learners. Consequently, the various elements of this model have been introduced in stages and refined as more research data came to hand and in the light of my analysis of the findings and the literature. The first element of the model was the initial iteration of the competency framework. This was enhanced as I developed clearer understandings of facilitation as a professional activity with my increasing appreciation of the complexity of the facilitator role.

Many discussions with colleagues combined with the insights from this study have led to me introducing a range of professional development practices for our facilitation team, e.g. peer mentoring.

Building into the programme more structure for the learner commenced soon after the results of the learner survey were analysed and understood, however it took another year before a comprehensive set of learning tasks became an integral element of the programme.

Thus, the model as presented here whilst still a work in progress is a working model that has been tested, with the exception of the SPRINGBOARD tool for reflection. As mentioned earlier initial feedback is encouraging however we haven't had sufficient experience to know whether this will endure as an integral part of the model.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Reflections

In this final chapter I am setting out what this study has achieved, what it has meant for me, and the value it has added for Capable NZ and potentially for facilitation as a profession. I also reflect on some limitations of this study and identify other areas for future enquiry that I believe would complement this study - perhaps for one of my colleagues to pursue.

The overarching purpose of this study was to illuminate the learner and facilitator experience of the ILP approach to degree acquisition offered through Capable NZ. In this general sense, the study has provided the insights I was seeking, and I now have a rich and well-documented account of the learner experience, what they learn and what they believe helps them best to learn. I also have valuable insights into the impacts of their learning and successful completion of their degree on their personal and professional lives. On the facilitator side, I have gained extremely valuable understandings of how my colleagues practice and from them a rich account of the diverse strategies, tools and techniques which they use as they guide our learners to success.

In Chapter Two I conveyed my aspiration that this study would contribute new knowledge to the field of adult education, in particular about the educative power of facilitation, the nature of the facilitation process which will be educative and the capabilities needed of a facilitator to harness that educative power. I believe I have done this, as set out in my model of effective facilitation and as explained below.

It is from the deep understandings of the ILP process that I have been able to develop a model for effective 'facilitation of learning' which has already been implemented at Otago Polytechnic, guiding the professional development of facilitators in Capable NZ and their practice. As well, those aspects of the model that relate to the learners is currently providing the structure and guidance which the learners who participated in this study saw as desirable for their learning. Anecdotally, at this time, as a consequence of the changes to the programme our learners better understand what independent study means and are finding it easier to engage with the reflective process that is central to their learning. It is our intention to evaluate formally the effectiveness of this model as the current cohort of learners complete their studies.

As part of this study I undertook a wide ranging review of the literature relevant to the learning of adults in the work place. The findings from my study were consistent with the literature on learning from and through experience and especially the literature that confirmed the validity of informal and experiential learning. However, relatively little has been written in educational circles about how to support the particular learner demographic which featured in this study i.e. professionally experienced and capable adults who typically do not have well-developed academic skills. There is much in the literature arguing for reflection as a powerful process to make sense from experience. However, there appears to be an implicit assumption that learners will have the necessary reflective capability.

In other words, the skills for reflection seem to be taken for granted. From this study it is clear that reflective capability cannot be assumed simply because a person is experienced, skilful and successful in their practice. Many of the learners in this study initially had difficulty extracting the learning from their experiences, let alone integrating that learning into a framework of practice. It was clear that they needed support in two ways – the first was from their facilitators who provide the questioning, probing and challenging to prompt learners to think more deeply about their experiences. Second, by being provided with a structured process to guide their reflection and to help them move from mere description of learning experiences to an explicit understanding of the learning that those experiences had generated. This structure has become an important output of this study as part of the model of practice which applies to learners.

Just as it is clear that learners require structure to help them develop their reflective capabilities, so it is that facilitators must have the skills to guide that learner reflection. The educational literature was not strong on what capabilities facilitators would need to have, which led me to draw on career counselling literature to derive competencies for effective facilitation.

What literature I did discover on facilitation as a process tended to treat facilitation as a relatively straight forward set of technical skills, whereas my study revealed that something much more complex was going on with learners and a more sophisticated concept of facilitation was required. Hence, I have argued for facilitation as a professional educational activity requiring of its practitioners higher order capabilities such as diagnostic skills and the ability to make sound judgments of its practitioners.

I have also argued for the importance of the learner-facilitator relationship which requires not only the right attitude but also relationship building skills.

It was clear from my interviews and informal discussions with facilitators that they engaged with learners at quite different levels. Some were situationally unaware, i.e. they were unable to discern what emphasis to put on particular interventions with learners at particular points in time. They were practising at a technical level, applying facilitation skills almost indiscriminately as if all skills were born equal. These facilitators were certainly at best 'developing' which gave me the starting point for my competency framework. At the other end of the continuum were facilitators who themselves were highly reflective.

They were intentional and purposeful in their feedback to learners and were insightful in knowing what the learner's needed to do next. They knew when to keep pushing the learner to think more deeply and broadly, and to be more global in their understandings, and to better understand their "selves". Highly capable facilitators do not dwell on detail, because they know that as the learner develops, they will come back and lift their thinking and writing. Rather, highly capable facilitators provide challenging and timely feedback that keep the learner moving forward.

One of the intended outcomes of this study was validation of the ILP approach as an alternative to traditional approaches to degree acquisition. For this validation to occur there needed to be evidence that learners were engaging in degree level learning and were achieving degree level outcomes. This has demonstrably been the case. The reflective process in which ILP learners engage, not only enables them to make explicit learning which has already occurred but also enables them to construct new meanings as they integrate those learnings into their own models of practice. Thus, the learning whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Not only has this new learning occurred but it has also occurred at high levels of critical thinking and analysis – certainly at or exceeding that usually achieved by degree graduates. The ILP learners also complete their learning as skilful communicators and researchers, skills which typically they did not have when they commenced study. How do I know that ILP learners were achieving or succeeding expected degree outcomes? The simple answer to this question is that I have examined the assessor reports which carefully document the levels of learner achievement and what is noticeable is the proportion of learners who achieve with merit and distinction – in excess of those grades for learners in

the Otago Polytechnic taught programme. Of course, a different type of learning also occurred in the ILP for most learners, at a personal and professional level. By their own account the ILP was transformational and this was borne out by the observations of their facilitators.

A key objective of this study was to develop a model for guiding facilitation practice. This objective has been achieved. We now have in place in Capable NZ a way of working which gives effect to the principles underpinning the facilitation model, collegial practices which reinforce facilitation as a professional activity, and a competency framework which informs the training and development of new facilitators, their placement on a salary scale and their professional development. The competency framework also provides the signposts for career promotion.

What does all of this mean? Now that the study is complete I believe it has been worthwhile for not only my own practice but for the practice of my colleagues and potentially for others in the future who might engage with learners who are pursuing higher qualifications through independent learning approaches, rather than being taught in more traditional course based programmes. Thus, this study has contributed significantly to facilitation practice at Otago Polytechnic, as outlined above.

This study was focussed on an approach to degree learning which is unique in NZ and which appears to be unique in the world. I am surprised that this is so given that the validity from learning through and from experience is well established in the literature. Not surprising therefore is the sparsity of directly relevant literature and particularly in NZ. Thus, this study, subject to publication and dissemination, can make a worthwhile contribution to the literature and has the potential to encourage other institutions to offer similar options to their learners.

Limitations of the Study

In Chapter Three I identified the aspects of the study that did not quite go as well as I would have liked, but overall I had remarkably few problems. I have confidence in the data generated because there is a strong congruence of the findings from the various data sources, and the data gathered formally as part of the study design told the same story as the

anecdotal feedback available to me, as well as my own experiences and observations and the conversations I had with colleagues over the three years of the study.

The findings from the study, the conclusions I have reached and the outputs I have created are all relevant and beneficial to the ILP specifically but are generalisable to all of the programmes in Capable NZ. The question then is, are they generalisable to other institutional and programme contexts? This is potentially the biggest limitation of my study, i.e. that the model for effective facilitation is only of value to Capable NZ. However, I do not believe that is the case, and that at the very least the results of this study are applicable in other contexts where adult learners are charged with the full responsibility to manage and direct their own learning, but who still need support because they do not bring with them the right experience as learners.

Areas for Future Enquiry

This study was focussed on the learning that was occurring within the ILP approach and how that learning is best supported. What wasn't considered was the assessment of that learning and it is this that I see as a logical next area of enquiry. In this regard, I see two potential lines of enquiry, one relating to the judgments being made by the assessors and the other relating to the process which learners go through and the evidence which they provide for assessment. I see value in this for two reasons, the first is an instrumental reason relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of assessment in Capable NZ. Currently two assessors are involved in the summative assessment process and there is a formative peer review undertaken just prior to the learner submitting for assessment. Could this process be further streamlined? The second is to provide further validation of the ILP approach by verifying the validity and reliability of the judgments made.

Another area of enquiry which I would like to see undertaken is a comparative study of the graduates from the ILP programme alongside graduates from the taught programme for the same degree. A study of this nature could further reinforce the validity of the ILP model. Particularly interesting would be to evaluate the capabilities of graduates from each degree pathway, taking a sample of graduates with distinction in each case as well as graduates who had achieved only a pass grade. Even more interesting would be to examine the effectiveness of the graduates in the work place post qualification. Of course, like would need to be compared with like.

It would not be helpful to compare the effectiveness of taught graduates who had never been in the work place because they had undertaken their degree directly from school with graduates who had significant work experience prior to undertaking their study. What would be a valid comparison, though, would be to compare the effectiveness of experienced workers who chose a traditional taught degree pathway for their upskilling, with those who chose the ILP.

An aspect of this enquiry which I would have liked to have explored in more depth is to better understand the transformation which learners frequently claimed occurred. It is a common belief that education is transformative so in a general sense it was to be expected that learners would identify significant changes in their lives as a consequence of undertaking the programme. However, in this study I got more glimpses than deep understanding of what specifically caused the transformation and what that transformation was. I think it would be most worthwhile to have a better understanding of how facilitators might engage with learners specifically to trigger transformation.

In a similar vein, I would have liked to have gone into more depth around the impact that undertaking this process has had in the learner's work place. Studies have been done in this regard in the context of work-based learning which typically has a tripartite relationship involving learner, employer (or sponsor), and educational provider, with an intention to have a positive impact on the employer or sponsoring organisation. Such intentionality is not a characteristic of the ILP, yet many learners indicated positive benefits for their employer. I can see value in understanding what these benefits are and what lies behind them, not only in the interests of the ILP approach but as a basis for understanding the impact of any employee choosing to upskill themselves with a degree whilst at work.

Final Reflections

This has been a journey of discovery – about Capable NZ and its independent learning programmes and about myself as to why I am 'committed' to ILP learners and passionate about leading these ILP programmes.

This doctoral study has been challenging but enjoyable, lonely but productive. The challenges, I imagine, are common to most if not all doctoral studies: an enormous amount of data to make sense of – where does one start?

An enormous range of literature – what is really relevant? I did go down many very interesting rabbit holes as I read around the topics inherent in my study. There was also the challenge of juggling work demands with study, but it was actually a good thing to remind myself that I was experiencing exactly what my learners experience. And I could not help but to interpret the findings of my study through my own eyes as a learner, bringing an additional dimension to my role as an insider- or practitioner-researcher. I have learned a great deal through this research process which I have applied to my professional practice as both a facilitator and leader of a team of facilitators and to the systems and processes of Capable NZ.

Although challenging, this has certainly been a most enjoyable process, I have thrived on the new insights gained and have been enriched from the reading I have undertaken, reading which simply would not have happened had I not been engaged in this study. I am hopeful, though, I have learned new habits and that I will continue to read an article or chapter a week. I am now constantly on the look-out for readings which may be helpful to my practice.

A study of this nature and especially one by distance is lonely. Whilst my supervisor was merely an email away, I did miss the community of practice which I have previously experienced with other qualifications I have undertaken. Of course, it is possible to form a community of practice or a community of learning in this case, on-line, but that requires others sharing a common substantive interest I suspect. As I got further into the writing up phase and therefore was generating material I could share with others, this loneliness did start to dissipate. Colleagues were interested in what I was doing and keen to engage. Finally, this has been enormously productive as I have emphasised several times in this report. What I haven't previously said is that I have already presented some of my findings and interpretations in staff development sessions and am currently co-authoring several conference and journal papers. This writing for public consumption is not something I have done a great deal of previously in my career. I am enjoying this new productivity. I might say as well, so is my employer!

This study was designed with clear aims and objectives in mind, which had a strong instrumentality to them: to validate the ILP pathway and to create a model for effective facilitation of learning, however I have come to realise that what I described in Chapter One as a contextual factor has a lot more significance to it.

What I am referring to is the target demographic for the ILP, i.e. professionally experienced adults, usually in work, who are often under-served by traditional approaches to degree level credentials.

I think when I started this project I was simply seeing these people as a market segment and the ILP as a worthy 'product' which met their needs to have access to learning that was both convenient and affirming of the capabilities that they had already developed. However, as the voice of the learners came through in the findings, it was clear that the ILP journey is genuinely transformational for most of those who undertake it. They change as individuals, their practice changes and in most cases their careers advance. The significance of this for me is now to see the ILP as having a very strong moral purpose, i.e. not simply providing people with access to a credential, but with access to an opportunity to change their lives. This then raises for me the question of why more tertiary providers do not join Otago Polytechnic in offering learning opportunities of this nature, and what is it we might do to change that? Not that my employer would necessarily agree, given that Otago Polytechnic enjoys a monopoly in NZ with learning of this nature.

There have been several distinct phases to this project. The early stages when writing about the themes of my professional life, and deciding where my focus for this enquiry would be was seemingly the easy bit. An early challenge came from the Middlesex panel which reviewed my proposal, with their suggestion that I undertake an extensive survey of past ILP learners. This turned out to be invaluable as it generated rich data and enabled me to triangulate the findings from the interviews. The interviews themselves were a privilege, and it is very hard to overstate the valuable insights I gained. Regardless of whether or not I completed this doctorate, the learnings from these interviews have been invaluable in shaping the work that I do for Capable NZ. Analysis and interpretation of the findings of the literature have been both challenging and rewarding. It was this phase – actually, multiple phases – that led to the practical outcomes which I had hoped and intended would be the outcomes of my study.

I entered this study with a genuinely open mind, and I do not believe that I set out to validate existing beliefs about "how things work". I knew I was passionate about the role of facilitation, but I appreciated that not everyone sees the world as I do.

So, I was interested to know what others thought and believed about facilitating learning and what the focus of their facilitation should be, and how facilitators could develop professionally. I wanted that wealth of knowledge that can only come from the diversity of perspectives that others bring.

Rather than seeking to justify my beliefs, I was looking for 'gold' in the data; things to help me grow, deepen and expand on my then thinking. I wanted to better understand the experience of learners and facilitators and from that understanding to derive principles and build a model for effective facilitation practice. My motives were twofold: to do better by our learners and to ensure that the planned growth for Capable NZ would be supported by skilful facilitators. My study has indeed generated the 'gold' I was looking for, and I am pleased that I have been able to convert much of the understandings into practical outputs for Capable NZ.

As a result of this study we have made considerable inroads to articulating our programmes and how we work, and why. We have added more structure to the way we work – we are more overt and explicit. Our information for learners is more expansive and helpful. What we have concentrated on is ensuring guidance for learners has more focus: the new learning and the learner reflection is more present, understanding of theorists to help build ways of thinking is more explicit, ensuring the learner's understanding of the learning process and that they are in control of it is clearer, as is learner appreciation that what is important is what they have learned, not what they have done.

There were surprisingly few obstacles to this study other than my ability to get distracted and find other 'important things to do'. The learners and facilitators who participated were willing contributors and seemed pleased with the opportunity to tell their stories. Gathering the data was not a problem, although interpreting it and making sense was more of a challenge.

This study has underscored for me that only those who are committed should work in this space - facilitating ILP learners is not a 9 am to 5 pm job. I believe it is a gift to be an enabler of second chance learners who went off to work because university "wasn't for their family or them", or who had failed in traditional educational settings, usually secondary school.

As a consequence of this study, I now have a clearer understanding of my own framework of practice - one which brings together all the elements of my personal and professional life, which are intertwined.

The essence of my practice is comprehending and appreciating the elements that make up a person's story. I like to focus on the story because I like to listen to the language that people use so as to know how to best engage with them. Language and stories are construction tools for making meaning.

As learners tell their stories they become more real, that is, they see the themes of their life emerge. The more they view their 'me', the more they develop their self-concepts. Storytelling crystallises what learners think of themselves, therefore I help them understand the implications of what they have said in telling their stories. At the same time, my role is helping them to expand the language available to make meaning out of their experiences. Using the vivid language of stories helps learners develop their vocabulary of self which increases their ability to relate their experience and to understand and communicate who, why and what they are.

Thus, my practice is embedded in story, and the power it evokes and I see my work being about engaging in stories to create a conversation that becomes deeper and more meaningful as was the case with this study. What is important is the ability for facilitators to connect with learners, to motivate and guide when learners have self-doubt, to help learners clarify beliefs and values and to allow for diverse interpretation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Regulatory Requirements for Degree Level Learning

Capable NZ offers an alternative pathway to a degree qualification. What is important to appreciate is that this alternative pathway is one which fits within the NZ regulatory framework for tertiary education and is sanctioned by the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

In New Zealand a degree is defined in the Education Act 1989 as:

'... a programme of advanced learning that

- a) is taught mainly by people engaged in research; and
- b) emphasises general principles and basic knowledge as the basis for self-directed work and learning'. (Section 253B)

NZQA provides a further definition in its document Degrees and Related Qualifications.

Guidelines for Programme Approval and Accreditation to Provide Programmes:

A Bachelor's Degree:

- provides individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject [1] (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning.
- involves at least one sequential study programme in which content is progressively developed such that it might form a basis for postgraduate study and/or professional practice.

A graduate of a Bachelor's Degree is able to:

- demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigor
- engage in self-directed learning
- demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject
- demonstrate the skills needed to acquire, understand and assess information from a range of sources
- demonstrate communication and collaborative skills'. (NZQA 2016)

Appendix 2: New Zealand Productivity Commission ‘New Models of Tertiary Education’ March 2017 – RPL and Capable New Zealand

Recognition of Prior Learning. Pages 121-123

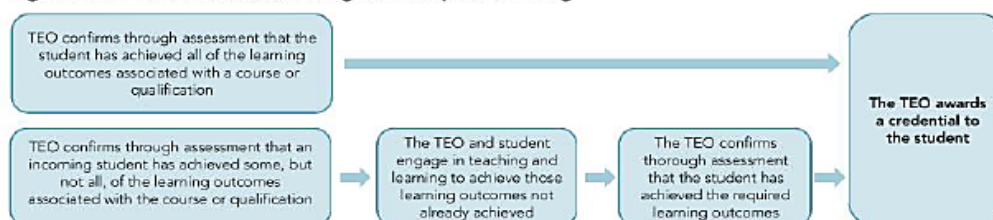
Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) (or “recognition of current competency”, or “recognition, validation and accreditation”, or one of a number of other labels) involves assessing what an incoming learner already knows and can do, and providing the learner with credit toward a qualification on that basis. Learners wanting to take advantage of RPL are often people with workplace experience and vocational expertise, whose lack of qualification is a barrier to career advancement or further study.

A “pure” RPL model would involve a tertiary provider assessing that a student has all the necessary learning outcomes associated with a particular course or qualification, and then awarding that credential to the student (Figure 4.13). Under this model, the provider adds value through providing a credential with labour market currency that formally attests to what a student already knows and can do.

A more common model involves determining that an incoming student already holds some of the learning outcomes associated with a certain course or qualification but lacks others. The provider then tailors the programme accordingly (Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13 Two models for recognition of prior learning



Several inquiry participants anticipated greater demand for RPL in the future, and questioned whether New Zealand’s tertiary education system is well-equipped to meet this demand (eg, NZUSA, sub. 19; ACG Tertiary and Careers Group, sub. 84). Ako Aotearoa suggests technological changes are likely to increase the demand for upskilling and re-credentialing, and notes this will require:

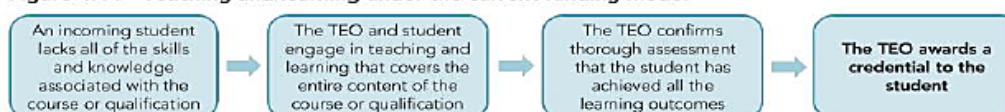
... changes to government policy settings in areas such as financial support, funding rules, TES priorities etc., to ensure that the system is accessible for and evaluates its performance with regard to older learners. This also suggests that our system will also need to pay more attention to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), both in terms of TEO approaches to RPL and how funding and regulation creates barriers or incentives for TEOs in this regard. (Ako Aotearoa, sub. 58, p. 21)

The ITP subsector notes there are “a number of areas where the current accreditation, recognition, and funding systems are not sufficiently flexible” and that “recognition of and credit for workplace experience is clunky and expensive for all concerned” (sub. DR127, p. 4).

The main barrier to RPL stems from a requirement that providers deliver a certain number of learning hours per funded EFTS. The funding determination for SAC 3+ states that TEC must measure enrolments in units of EFTS, and that one EFTS is defined as the student workload that would normally be carried out by a student enrolled full-time in an academic or calendar year. TEC’s corresponding funding conditions state that one EFTS equates to a programme of study or training that is 1 200 learning hours or 120 credits delivered over 34 teaching weeks. TEC holds providers accountable for delivering this volume of teaching for each funded EFTS (TEC, 2017a).

As such, the current funding model assumes a process where students lack all of the skills and knowledge associated with a certain course or qualification (or at least that all incoming students are consistent in regard to which skills and knowledge they have and which they lack), and that the delivery of a prescribed number of learning hours are required to achieve the relevant learning outcomes (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14 Teaching and learning under the current funding model



Chapter 15 recommends that TEC removes any reference to inputs in its definition of an EFTS, and instead uses the relevant quality assurer’s assessment of “credit value” as the means of determining the size of a funded course or qualification (without any additional stipulations about learning hours or teaching weeks). This would allow for funded RPL.

Although RPL is not funded by TEC, many tertiary providers do offer RPL programmes. In most cases, students' prior learning is assessed through an examination of a portfolio of relevant work. If the prior learning meets assessment standards, students are awarded a certain amount of credit toward their qualification. In most cases, the amount of credit that can be obtained through RPL is capped. For example, at Massey University, the maximum credit from RPL towards an undergraduate degree is 120 credits (out of a total of 360). Credit earned through RPL at Massey University can only be at 100- or 200- level, and no RPL credit is permitted toward a graduate or postgraduate qualification (Massey University, 2016). Southern Institute of Technology limits RPL to one third of a programme's total credit (SIT, 2016a). The University of Otago limits RPL credits to nine first-year courses (University of Otago, 2016).

The fees associated with this type of RPL vary. In some cases they are typically significantly lower than the course for which RPL is a substitute. For example, students applying for RPL at Whitireia Community Polytechnic are required to pay an application fee of \$50. If they are granted the RPL, they are charged 15% of each paper, course, module or unit standard approved (Whitireia, 2016).

Otago Polytechnic, through Capable NZ, have developed degree programmes that are eligible for TEC funding, while still retaining some elements of RPL. Under this process, Otago Polytechnic screens applicants to identify those whose experience represents around two years' worth of a degree. They then help students to consciously recognise their existing knowledge, and deliver additional learning as required to complete the degree. The Commission understands that the costs to students for this model of delivery are similar to a standard fee for one year of a degree.

F4.9

Barriers to mid-career retraining include current funding and regulatory settings for tertiary education that focus on younger, full-time learners completing full qualifications, the design of the student support system, and funding rules that make recognition of prior learning difficult.

Capable New Zealand. Page 324

Otago Polytechnic's Capable NZ

Capable NZ is an Otago Polytechnic subsidiary that concentrates on assessment of prior learning (APL) and work-based learning (WBL). APL and WBL can suit people who might have years of skill, knowledge and experience but not always the qualification, or whose learning needs are quite specific or focused on their own practice. Both APL and WBL are assessed orally in front of a panel, and the candidate is required to produce a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate they have the skills and knowledge that meet the requirements of the qualification.

Otago Polytechnic, through Capable NZ, offers a Master of Professional Practice and a Graduate Diploma of Professional Practice. Degrees in professional practice are becoming common overseas. They offer the opportunity to attain academic recognition for skills, knowledge and experience developed in the workplace. These degrees typically focus on a specific area of practice relevant to the student's work, build on their work experience, and offer a qualification to enhance their career progression. Students are mentored to explore their profession further, and consider the professional challenges associated within their specific area of practice. A student's reflection on their expertise and experience with a mentor or learning facilitator is an act of learning itself. Some programmes are designed to help the student critically analyse current debates relevant to the professional context in which they are working.

The Master and Diploma of Professional Practice at Otago Polytechnic are based on the Middlesex University model in London. Capable NZ screens applicants, identifies those whose experience represents at least two years' worth of a degree, assists them to consciously recognise their existing knowledge, and then delivers additional learning as required to complete the degree.

(New Zealand Productivity Commission 2017)

Appendix 3a: Letter to Learners – pre Survey

21/5/2015

Dear (name)

We are Glenys Ker and Naell Crosby-Roe, currently undertaking a Doctoral and Master's research project (respectively). Details of our projects are provided at the end of this email.

We are seeking participants who are current or past learners at Capable NZ, or are representative of the Capable NZ learner demographic. Current or past learners at Capable NZ have been identified from the Otago Polytechnic Student Management System, and accessed (i.e. managing recruitment and withdrawals) on behalf of the researchers by the Otago Polytechnic Organisational Research team.

In the next few days you will receive an email with more detailed information about participating in the research, a link to the questionnaire and consent form. Participation is voluntary and your responses to the questionnaire will remain anonymous should you agree to participate.

At the end of the questionnaire you will be asked whether you would be happy to participate in a further stage of the research. If you would be willing to participate you will be asked to provide contact details that will be passed to the researcher. This subsequent stage is a 45-60 minute interview to share more detail about your individual circumstances and experiences as a learner, either in person or via phone. Participation in the questionnaire will not obligate you to participate in subsequent interviews.

This email has been sent on our behalf by the Capable NZ Customer Services Administrator who will respond to any questions you may have about the research. This ensures your privacy and anonymity should you agree to participate.

Thanks and kind regards

Glenys Ker and Naell Crosby-Roe

Glenys' Research

I am a student at Middlesex University and currently undertaking a research project on the Independent Learning Pathway (LP) as a Learning Process: a case study of practice at Otago Polytechnic, for my Doctoral Studies. This topic is of particular interest to me because of my current work with Capable NZ, Otago Polytechnic as a facilitator of learning via Assessment of prior Learning with learners in the undergraduate programmes (Bachelor of Applied Management, Bachelor of Social Services).

The research project is about engaging with you to explore your thoughts and feelings to the learning journey, and to the prompts and strategies you used to support this process. I will also be exploring with you whether or not those strategies worked for you, as well as looking at what other interventions and tools we could use to support learners.

Whilst this research will assist me with my studies I am hopeful that the findings from the research will be helpful to other facilitators and learners in the future who might also be interested in gaining qualifications this way.

Naell's research

Behavioural economics is an emerging model of economics and marketing. Different from traditional marketing, behavioural economics states that consumers decide to purchase (or not) based on emotions, social norms, and other irrational factors affecting us – despite our convictions that we make rational judgements. Some marketers propose that this irrationality is systematic and predictable, and can be employed successfully in marketing practice. In my role as Sales & Marketing Manager I am responsible for creating marketing campaigns to attract students. As such the ability to develop campaigns and plans is essential for the organisation's continued growth and commercial success.

The main purpose of this project is to develop a framework for use by marketers within Otago Polytechnic engaging with mature learners, specifically Capable NZ learners. This framework is the integration of behavioural economics into marketing, basing campaign development on the actual motivations and experiences of learners.

This campaign development framework will be a reference tool for marketing specific products to a mature learner. This benefits both the organisation and the learners by creating more meaningful and relevant dialogue.

Appendix 3b: Letter to Learners – with Survey

3 June 2015

Dear

Doctoral and Master's Research Participation Request

I am emailing you on behalf of Glenys Ker and Naell Crosby-Roe, who are undertaking a Doctoral research project at Middlesex University and a Master's research project at Otago Polytechnic (respectively).

You are invited to participate in a questionnaire about your study experience at Capable New Zealand which should take you no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

Click below to complete the questionnaire

[Research Questionnaire](#)

Glenys' Doctoral project focuses on the ILP as a Learning Process: a case study of practice at Otago Polytechnic. This topic is of particular interest for Glenys as a current employee with Capable NZ Otago Polytechnic and as a facilitator of learning via Assessment of Prior Learning with learners in the undergraduate programmes (Bachelor of Applied Management and Bachelor of Social Services).

Naell's Master's project focuses on behavioural economics and advertising tertiary educational programmes and how marketing can use these to better connect with potential learners. He is currently employed by the Otago Polytechnic and involved with marketing and business development within Capable NZ, and is seeking to advance his understanding of an approach to campaign development that engages potential learners at a meaningful level.

As part of this project they would like to also interview several learners who have recently graduated with their degree, in particular those who would be happy to talk about their learning journey, or their motivations for completing a programme. Whilst this research will assist with their studies they are hopeful that the findings from the research will be helpful to other facilitators and learners in the future who might also be interested in gaining qualifications this way. If you complete the questionnaire there is a section asking if you would be available for an interview.

This research has the approval of the Middlesex University Ethics Committee and Otago Polytechnic Ethics Committee (respectively). You can read full details of what your participation involves by clicking here. [Participant Information Sheet](#).

To ensure your response is included I need you to submit your response **by Sunday 21 June**.

If you have any questions please contact Naell (naell.crosby-roe@op.ac.nz) or Glenys (glenys.ker@op.ac.nz). For any concerns of an ethical nature please contact the Otago Polytechnic Ethics Committee at ethicscommittee@op.ac.nz.

Thank you. Your participation and support is greatly appreciated.

Stuart Terry
Organisational Researcher | Otago Polytechnic
Forth Street | Private Bag 1910
Dunedin 9054
New Zealand

Appendix 3c: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form - Facilitators

Glenys Ker
Facilitator, Mentor, Assessor
Programme Leader
Capable NZ
Otago Polytechnic
DUNEDIN

Dear

INDEPENDENT LEARNING PATHWAY (ILP) AS A LEARNING PROCESS: A case study of practice at Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand

I am a student at Middlesex University and currently undertaking a research project on the ILP as a Learning Process for my Doctoral Studies. This topic is of particular interest to me because of my current work with Capable NZ, Otago Polytechnic as a facilitator of learning via Independent Learning Pathway (ILP) with learners in the undergraduate programmes (Bachelor of Applied Management, Bachelor of Social Services).

As part of this project I would like to interview several facilitators, in particular those who would be happy to talk with me/answer questions about their perspectives on the learning journey that they support learners through. Whilst this research will assist me with my studies I am hopeful that the findings from the research will be helpful to ensuring effective facilitation for learners in the future.

This research has the approval of the Middlesex University Ethics Committee.

How Were You Chosen To Be Asked To Be Part Of The Study?

I have identified you as a facilitator who has worked with a learner studying one of our programmes via assessment of prior learning.

What Happens In The Study?

The research project is about engaging with you in a personal interview and/or email with a series of questions to explore your thoughts and feelings to your role as a facilitator of learning, to the prompts and strategies you found useful and lastly to your beliefs about the role of the facilitator to support this learning process. I will also be exploring with you whether or not those strategies worked for you, as well as looking at what other interventions and tools we could use to support learners. The particular questions we would explore are as per the attached **Question Sheet**.

The interview should not take more than an hour. I would like to take notes and also audio-tape the interview. If you are prepared to assist me in my research I would meet with you, or phone you, or email you the questions at your convenience to conduct the interview. I will type up each sample as a mini case study, and then write up a report as to my findings. I will send a copy of this report to you for confirmation as to accuracy.

What Are The Discomforts And Risks?

I do not expect there to be any discomforts or risks involved in this interview process. However, if you do feel distressed or upset you will be free to stop at any time without any penalty. Below are contact details that you are welcome to contact:

What Are The Benefits Of The Research?

I intend the results of this research project will enable me and other facilitators to be more effective in our work with learners currently studying with us, as well as potential learners in the future. I will present my findings at an Otago Polytechnic Seminar/Workshop, as well as at a Capable NZ Workshop. At some point I intend to write research articles that may be of interest to others working in this space around the globe. I also intend to develop some guidelines and training material for facilitators working in this space. Please be assured that the results will not include any information that may identify you, unless specific consent for this has been obtained.

How Is Your Privacy Protected?

Your privacy will be protected in the following ways:

- The interview will be via telephone, email or face-to-face. I will discuss privacy issues with you and will respect completely your wishes regarding the confidentiality of any information and opinions. The report of the project will only identify you as a code number. You will be given the opportunity to read and give feedback on the relevant parts of the report before it becomes available.
- Your signed consent form will be collected by myself, and stored in a sealed envelope, in a locked filing cabinet in the research information office at the Otago Polytechnic.
- Notes and tapes from the interview will also be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the storeroom of the Otago Polytechnic. The tapes, once typed will be wiped and destroyed, and the notes will be destroyed by shredding after five years. Identifying information will have been removed before storage.

Costs of Participating

The only cost of participation in this project is your time and I appreciate your generosity in agreeing to give your time for an interview.

Opportunity to Consider Invitation

I would like you to consider participating in this voluntary interview. If you agree to participate I would appreciate it if you completed the attached consent form and return it to me. You may of course phone or email me direct. No explanation or justification is needed if you choose not to participate.

Withdrawing Consent to Participate

Participants are free to withdraw their consent to further involvement in the research project at any time. This includes the withdrawal of information or material that has already been collected.

Researcher Involved In This Project

Should you have any questions or require any further information about the research project, please contact:

Glenys Ker

Phone 021 445 369

glenys.ker@op.ac.nz

Independent Contact Person

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Chris Morland

Phone 021 735 521

chris.morland@op.ac.nz

Otago Polytechnic

Supervisor

Dr Nell Buissink

nell.buissink@aut.ac.nz

Auckland University of Technology

Attached: Interview Question sheet *, Consent to Participation in Research form

* **Appendix 4**

Consent to Participation in Research

Title of Project:

INDEPENDENT LEARNING PATHWAY (ILP) AS A LEARNING PROCESS: A case study of practice at Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand

Project Supervisor: Dr Nell Buissink

Researcher: Glenys Ker

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered. If I have any additional questions I have a name and contact number available.
- I understand that the interview will take approximately one hour (in person, via email or phone), and will be audio-taped and transcribed (where necessary).
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I am distressed or upset during the interview I understand that I am free to stop at any time without any penalty. I understand that there are available contact details should I require to access them.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I understand that the information will be kept confidential, and that my identity will not be disclosed without my consent.
- I understand that the information will be presented in a conference/seminar or workshop people working in the Capable NZ space, as well as for interested parties at Otago Polytechnic for the purposes of assisting facilitators to be more effective in their work with learners wishing to study and learn this way.
- I have read the information provided with this consent form and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research. Yes/No (please circle)

Participant Signature: Date 2015

Participant Name:

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix 3d: Survey Questions

Q1 What was the qualification you undertook?

Qualification	Quantity	Percentage
Bachelor of Applied Management	127	80.9
Bachelor of Social Services	30	18.6
No response	4	2.5
Total	161	100

Q2 You decided to move from school to work - why did you choose this pathway of learning on the job as opposed to a traditional pathway involving attending classes at a polytechnic or university?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
I did not particularly like school	22	13.7
I did not know what interested me	24	14.9
I was not sure what I was good at	18	11.2
My family circumstances meant I had to go to work rather than study	46	28.6
I wanted a better lifestyle – earning money seemed more important than studying	20	12.4
I wasn't motivated to do further study after finishing school	40	24.8
I had a preference for learning on the job rather than formal study	33	20.5
Other	59	36.6

Q3 As an adult learner in work you have chosen to pursue a qualification at this stage of your life. What were the reasons for this decision?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
A qualification was a pre-requisite for me to get higher pay	20	12.4
A qualification was a pre-requisite to get a higher level job	28	17.4

To add credibility/validity to my reputation as a practitioner in my field of expertise	98	60.9
I always wanted to get a degree/qualifications	84	52.2
I felt a qualification was essential for me to become more employable	52	32.3
I wanted to understand myself and what I knew a lot better	44	27.3
I wanted to be acknowledged formally for the knowledge and skill I had built up over the years	115	71.4
I wanted to develop my thinking skills	62	38.5
I wanted to inspire others in my family /community to pursue learning	50	31.1
I wanted to be able to do more for my family /community	20	12.4
Other	9	5.6

Q4 When you decided to pursue a qualification were there any significant life events that occurred around this time?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
We had a birth in the family	5	3.1
I got married	3	1.9
I got divorced/separated from my partner	8	5
We had a bereavement in the family	8	5
I started a new job/career	23	14.3
I was made redundant from my job	6	3.7
I reached an age milestone	21	13
I/We moved to a new location or country	18	11.2
Other	57	35.4

Q5 Were there any barriers that prevented you from pursuing a qualification sooner than you did?

Responses	Quantity	Percentage
I had no encouragement from work for further learning	21	13

My work pressures did not leave quality time for undertaking learning	65	40.4
The lack of qualification had not been holding me back in my career	73	45.3
My family/personal circumstances weren't conducive to me learning at that time	55	34.2
I didn't have the confidence to return to formal study	28	17.4
Other	27	16.8

Q6 The Capable NZ process is quite different from learning in a taught programme. What did you expect the learning journey for this qualification to involve?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Compiling evidence to prove knowledge and skill from experiences	129	80.1
Undertaking formal assignments with relevant information to help me	80	49.7
Completing reading and other arranged learning activities	77	47.8
Reflecting on my experiences at work and what I had learned from them	123	76.4
Other	13	8.1

Q7 Having chosen to pursue a qualification (see Q3) you then chose to do so through the Capable NZ independent learning model rather than through a taught (face-to-face or online) programme. What were the reasons you chose to undertake learning through the Capable NZ model?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
The way the programme was structured meant I could take responsibility for my own learning	85	52.8
The flexibility to undertake learning at times that suited me	118	73.3
The opportunity to validate the learning I had already acquired at work and through my life experiences	139	86.3

I could undertake this qualification and still continue to work fulltime	135	83.9
Other	17	10.6

Q8 How much new learning took place during the process of attaining your qualification?

Responses	Quantity	Percentage
There was no new learning – the process simply confirmed what I already knew	18	11.2
There was some new learning – particularly about myself and why I do what I do	89	55.3
There was some new learning – particularly about theories and underpinning my practice	95	59
There was a lot of new learning – the process opened up many new areas of understanding	59	36.6
Other	5	3.1

Q9 What aspects of the learning process did you find particularly helpful in your learning?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Consciously reflecting on my work and life experiences	148	91.9
Undertaking independent reading	77	47.8
The online support and resources available	26	16.1
The specific feedback from the facilitator	138	85.7
Other	6	3.7

Q10 Having gained the qualification what have been the impacts for you professionally i.e. on your work/practice?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
There has been minimal/no impact for me professionally	57	35.4
I have secured more pay as a result of gaining a qualification	25	15.5

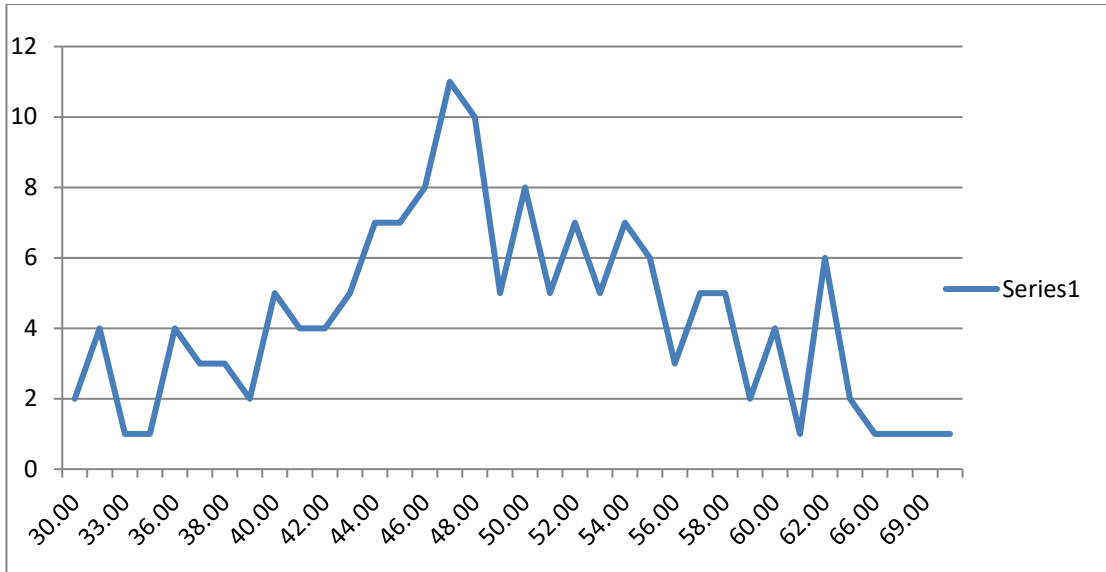
I have gained more recognition as a result of gaining a qualification	55	34.2
I have secured a high-level job as a result of gaining a qualification	24	14.9
I feel I am more employable as a result of gaining a qualification	90	55.9
Other	33	20.5

Q11 Having gained the qualification what have been the impacts for you personally?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
I have a stronger awareness of myself and my abilities in the field of study	113	70.2
I now have a brand that I feel accurately represents who I am, what I know and what I can do	67	41.6
I have a lot more confidence in myself and my abilities	94	58.4
I have a stronger sense of self-worth	95	59
Other	15	9.3

Q12 What is your current age in years?

Age range	Quantity	Percentage
30-34	8	5
35-39	12	8
40-44	25	16
45-49	41	27
50-54	32	21%
55-59	21	14
60-64	9	6
>64	4	3



Q13 What is your gender?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Female	87	54
Male	68	42.2

Q14 What is your ethnicity?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Pakeha	114	70.8%
Maori	28	17.4%
NZ other	2	1.2%
Pacifica	8	5%
SE Asian	0	
Middle Eastern	0	
Latin	0	
African	1	0.6%
Indian	1	0.6%
Chinese	1	0.6%

Q15 Are you the first in your immediate family to achieve a tertiary qualification?

Gender	Yes	No
Female	45	42
Male	36	32

Q16 Who in your family completed tertiary study?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Mother	14	8.7
Father	19	11.8
Sibling	52	32.3

Q17 What is your marital status?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Single	13	8.1
Married or civil union	124	77
Divorced/Separated	13	8.1
Widowed	0	0
Choose not to answer	5	3.1

Q18 What is your current employment status?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Self employed	22	13.7
Employed full time	116	72
Employed part time	8	5
Unemployed	2	1.2
Studying full time or part time	1	0.6
Other	6	3.7

Q19 How did you first hear about Capable NZ?

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Otago Polytechnic prospectus / brochure	10	6.2
Recruitment agent	1	0.6
Expo	2	1.2
Radio	1	0.6
News story in the media	3	1.9
Internet	15	9.3

Friend	24	14.9
Family member	15	9.3
Work or business colleague	51	31.7
Newspaper	3	1.9
Television	8	5
Other	22	13.7

Q20 There was quite a lot of information on the Capable NZ website and from Capable NZ facilitators about gaining qualifications via independent learning. What strategies had you put in place before signing up with Capable NZ to prepare yourself for this type of learning?

Q21 What advice would you like to share about the Capable NZ process from which other learners may benefit?

Q22 What advice would you like to share so that Capable NZ facilitators who work with learners may benefit?

Q23 Thinking about the facilitator who was supporting you, what did you find most helpful about how he/she worked with you?

Q24 What did you find least helpful? Do you have any recommendations for improvements?

Appendix 4a: Interview Questions - Learners

Tell me about your experience as an 'independent learner' undertaking the degree?

- How prepared were you for the experience? What prepared you – regarding Capable NZ information, and for yourself personally
- (prompts around high and low spots and why that was – did you get stuck, lose motivation, were there any difficulties that caused you to give up/what got you going again)
- How supported etc. – what was the support?

Tell me about the new things you learned in the course of your study?

- About business/social services?
- About yourself, your skills, your job?
- About the old and new you? Was there a new you?

Tell me how significant this learning for you was. Explain?

- Why was it significant? Significant regarding what?

Can you identify key times or points in your learning journey where new learning did occur?

- So what brought this about?
- Was there anything that the facilitator that brought this about?
- Were there any aspects of the learning tasks that brought this about?

How important was the facilitator in bringing about new learning?

- What were the actions of the facilitator that helped this new learning surface?-
- How did the facilitator help foster this new learning?

How did the facilitator support your learning?

- What techniques/approaches were helpful/not helpful?
- What was the facilitator's style (e.g., directive – was it helpful?) Prompts that helped you unpack e.g., Empathic and bossy, calm and challenging, etc? Does it work?

Was this process in any way transformative for you?

- Personally or professionally? In what way?
- If no – did the process bring about any changes in your practice or in the way you saw yourself?

What can we do better moving forward?

- Regarding Capable NZ – website, information given, facilitator support?

Appendix 4b: Interview Questions - Facilitators

In summary, the particular research questions are likely to be:

- What is facilitation in the context of the ILP journey?

- What makes for effective facilitation?

- What skills, knowledge and attitudes do you need?

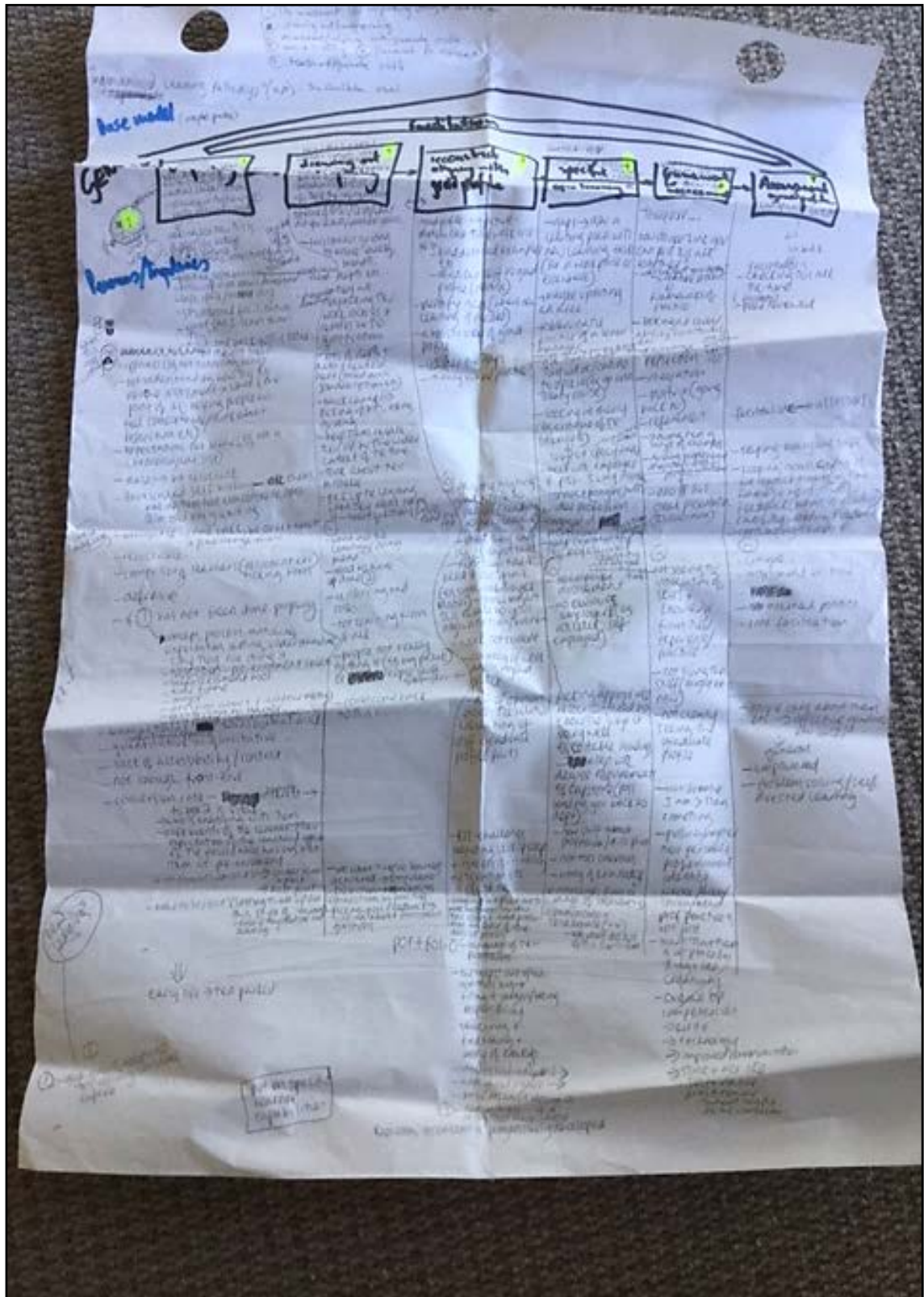
- What is key to the relationship?

- What is your key comment/belief/quote about your role as a facilitator?

- In general, are you able to recognise new learning in your learners, and if so where along the journey do you start to see this?

- Did you see improved cognitive capability as the process of the learning journey progresses?

Appendix 5a: Initial Data Gathering



Appendix 5b: Coding Analysis Example

The ILP Process – coping with programme expectations	Perspectives on New Learning – what and why?	Facilitating Learning – how best achieved?
<p>To find that it involved a process of gathering, sorting and reflecting was unexpected. It is a very self-driven process. Motivation has to be high.</p> <p>I thought there would be more structured learning and more for me 'to do' as opposed for me to complete myself.</p> <p>I was not sure what to expect when I started. I had a preconceived notion of education and university... I thought that there would be a lot more importation of knowledge and more teaching.</p> <p>I believed it would be more formal and complicated. The process was more challenging than formal study, but because it was relevant to me and my experiences it allowed me to learn more about myself and my worth.</p> <p>I had no conception of the extraordinary power of self-reflection, ... and how vitally important was the benefit of my study being informed by my practice.</p>	<p>One of the most valuable experiences while completing this qualification was documenting my learning from an early age. It was then I fully understood just how much I had achieved throughout my working life.</p> <p>The significant new learning for me, and continues to be, is developing the skill of reflective practice. Wow. This opened up my eyes to how I lead, and why I do the things I do.</p> <p>The most learning came from within. I was able to identify why I work the way I do, what I have learned from influential people in my life, and why I have the values that I do.</p> <p>This sense of self is of major importance. Having attempted academic study in my youth and failing, I was always faced with the inner thought that I was 'thick'. It has taken the better part of a lifetime to realise any learning is useful, and none more so than reflecting on experience.</p> <p>I found there to be a vast amount of learning at every stage: about myself, about situations I had been in, both as a child and at work, and theories and practices at work.</p>	<p>The facilitator had a huge impact on my success – before him, I had been under the guidance of two others but just didn't 'click' together.</p> <p>It is important facilitators are matched to their learners – an incredible amount of weight hangs on the pairing of the right facilitator with the right learner.</p> <p>Honesty, connected with me, understood circumstances and environment. Kept putting challenges and milestones in front of me.</p> <p>Incredible persistence of a highly capable professional. With lots of love and admiration is how I would describe xxx lead and support as my facilitator – I needed exactly that.</p> <p>My facilitator was for me the most important part – she kept me motivated, pushed me further than I would have done without that input.</p> <p>She was on the journey with me, superbly connected and seemed to be thinking about me the whole way through. She facilitated – wrote clear and comprehensive emails, supported me, helped me relax, her belief in me was wonderful.</p>

A Snapshot of Coding – Emergent Themes

Appendix 6: Model of Effective 'Facilitation of Learning'

Learning Activities and Role of Facilitator for Undergrad Programmes (full ILP)

Learning Tasks	ROLE OF FACILITATOR	Hours	Links To:
	<p>Pre-enrolment stage</p> <p>This is the early stage of enquiry by a potential learner – they have information from the website or customer services/admin staff, and they now need some contact with a facilitator.</p> <p>They want to discuss challenges/queries about their suitability and preparedness for the programme (based on their CV and self-assessment tool), hours of learning, costs, role of facilitator and learner, graduate profiles – how that works, what is in a Portfolio of Evidence, reflective practice and what that means, identifying gaps in knowledge, etc.</p>	1 hr facilitator time	<p>Competency Framework for Facilitators</p> <p>Importance of 'Fit' between Facilitator and Learner</p> <p>Beginning of first stages of establishing a relationship</p>
1	<p>Early Influences – WHO AM I, WHY AM I</p> <p>The first piece of work for learner – support them in understanding their own adult learning style (so as to get the best out of the learner), reflective practice – what this is, how can one think about reflection in and on their practice. Also good to check in around levels of learning, expectations of writing, and support services available where needed. This work goes into PoE as evidence of early learning and life influences. This is the start of learner capability. Therefore, the facilitator needs to be looking for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of professional academic writing at L7 (to determine if more support will be required and when to offer this) • Supporting structure – themes (how to step back from story and consider themes) • Understanding how to reflect (reflection understandings, i.e., reflection is a learning process) • Identifying values/beliefs/attitudes (can the learner do this easily?; if not how to support this) • Listening for clues (often learners like to tell their story first, which will establish trust and rapport. Therefore facilitator role is to listen deeply for the clues, for what isn't said, for the glue that holds the story, i.e., the themes) • Language (consider that language may be different, facilitator role is to ensure that they change their language or explain similarities of words learner not necessarily familiar with) • Structure – facilitator needs to be flexible here – some learners will want guidelines, e.g., word count, layout, pages, examples, timelines, feedback • Explain the compiling of evidence for PoE at this stage – which includes these written reflections, which can include photos, maps, other info that best represent them (e.g., video clip, artefacts) 	<p>Two weeks</p> <p>3 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Establishing the Relationship and Negotiating Way of Working – developing an agreement that respects accessibility, availability, responsiveness and JIT feedback</p> <p>Reflective practice</p> <p>Understanding of values and beliefs – narrative/story</p> <p>Identity Awareness of Personal Self</p> <p>Language</p> <p>Structure</p> <p>Importance of Portfolio of Evidence and compilation</p>

Learning Activities and Role of Facilitator for Undergrad Programmes (full ILP)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover potential majors, timelines, expectations, panel assessment <p>Formative feedback</p> <p>Encourage the use of a reflective diary – to capture those aha moments of awareness of learning, of light bulb moments, of low points, of highlights – and encourage the learner to capture these.</p>		Reflective diary, journaling
2	<p>My Professional Career and Development – WHAT DO I KNOW, WHY DO I KNOW, HOW DO I KNOW</p> <p>By now the learner has gained an understanding of reflection, therefore, moving into a career timeline can involve another set of new understandings – e.g., how to use technology to demonstrate a career timeline, e.g., fish bone, a fully detailed CV to unpack, etc</p> <p>Developing a chronological timeline of career development and looking for patterns across working life (paid and unpaid work), including other experience (community work, volunteer roles). Please note in here that someone's very first job may have set the ground for strong beliefs, ideas, values, principles that underpin work done today. Both good and bad examples and learning are important.</p> <p>These career roles should include a series of projects or opportunities for development throughout a career in which learning has occurred, including successes and low points (sparkling and defining moments). There will be critical 'turning points' in this trajectory which will include business as usual to defining moments which has helped consolidate understandings of work environments and roles</p> <p>Therefore the development of skills, tools, practice, influence of the main mentors, development opportunities which is unpacking the whole career in terms of roles, accountabilities, tasks of role, the learning and how it was gained, the meaning now for professional practice – understanding skills/strengths/knowledge concepts, how to help the learner grasp the differences and unpack this information to depth required.</p> <p>Formal and Informal learning – what does this look like, e.g., training in workplace, attending seminars/conferences, professional development, learning by reading books/articles, role models/mentors, etc</p> <p>Finding material – support learner how to find material as well as evidence, e.g., academic transcripts, certificates of training opportunities</p> <p>Detailed CV with roles, responsibilities, - describe the learning (updated and added) – annotated</p>	<p>Three weeks</p> <p>3 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Reflective Practice</p> <p>Language</p> <p>Both detailed (micro) and strategic (macro) thinking required</p> <p>Stimulus sheets available to support thinking</p> <p>Portfolio of Evidence</p>

Learning Activities and Role of Facilitator for Undergrad Programmes (full ILP)

	<p>Formal education and training – not just to gather the evidence (certificates, artefacts) BUT what they learned and the meaning now on professional practice</p> <p>Adding to reflective diary/journal</p> <p>NB It would be valuable to establish a major (or not) in the first 3 months of the learning journey A good time here to update CRM</p>		
3	<p>Case Study/ies – looking back to evidence my learning - WHAT I KNOW, HOW I LEARNED, THE MEANING ON MY PRACTICE TODAY</p> <p>See example of Case Study (prog doc's) – using a case study that is from the past and present (i.e., but not the current one)</p> <p>Describe role, context, learning, meaning today Evaluate your performance – the good, bad and ugly scenarios Insert examples of best practice, innovation, a project/event, managing a difficult situation, decision making, conflict resolution, problem-solving, sustainable practice, etc Unpack wider environment in which you worked and analyse the impact of this upon decisions and actions. Identify key people, formal learning and professional development opportunities that were influential along the way and why Undertake a GAP analysis – areas for PD at that time</p> <p>Reflective diary/journal</p> <p>Formative feedback</p>	<p>12 weeks</p> <p>4 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Stimulus sheets of questions to promote deeper thinking and reflection</p> <p>Creating opportunities for development and change stimulus sheets</p> <p>Language Structure</p> <p>Portfolio of Evidence</p>
4	<p>Proving my Capabilities – completing a matrix against the graduate profile/s – HOW DO I MATCH UP AGAINST THE CRITERIA AND WHY. IDENTIFYING THE GAPS AND IDEAS ABOUT GAINING THE NEW LEARNING REQUIRED</p> <p>Matrix Evaluation – support learners to match up their skills and knowledge against graduate profile/s Check for how the learner believes they are meeting requirements of graduate profile and where the gaps might be Evidence – is in the building of the portfolio Identify the new learning Fac: progress tick – this is where we are up to.</p>	<p>1 week</p> <p>2 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Reflective Practice</p> <p>Knowledge of experiential and other forms of learning</p> <p>Evidence gathering and explanations</p> <p>Awareness of new learning needed</p>

Learning Activities and Role of Facilitator for Undergrad Programmes (full ILP)

	<p>Facilitation document after the matrix.</p> <p>Use of reflective diary/journal</p> <p>NB Learner must have identified a major (or not) by this point if not sooner A good time to update CRM - Mid-point formative assessment, evidence of learner progress.</p>		Ways of gaining new skills and knowledge
5	<p>New Learning – WHAT ELSE DO I NEED (Could include a selection of theoretical topics, ethics, sustainability, Treaty issues) – this will come out of the gap analysis</p> <p>Facilitator role: to look for the gaps from the matrix and in discussion with learner, who hopefully will self-identify how to meet the new learning requirements – online information, reading, learning from key people in workplace, mentor/s, attending specific courses, etc</p> <p>Information on moodle around readings/books/referencing format that may support the new learning – bookshelf of topics</p> <p>Reflective diary/journal</p>	<p>7 weeks</p> <p>6 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Self-awareness of learning styles and learning to learn</p> <p>Self-management of acquisition of new learning – and of the various ways one can learn new information</p> <p>Skills in reading and critical analysis of information</p>
6	<p>New Case Study – current – WHAT I NOW KNOW AS IT RELATES TO MY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE</p> <p>Facilitator supports the indication of the current work role and responsibilities including the new learning and theory that informs practice</p> <p>The focus needs to be on the reflection of the new learning – what it meant, what was learned, the ability to critically analyse and evaluate information, including the personal and professional reflections on this learning journey.</p> <p>Reflective diary/journal</p> <p>Work must be submitted for peer review including panel booked for assessment – approximately 4-6 weeks in advance. CRM update.</p>	<p>4-5 months = 16-20 weeks</p> <p>6 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Reflective Practice</p> <p>Mentoring, Coaching</p> <p>Note this case study is learning in, at, for, through work</p>

Learning Activities and Role of Facilitator for Undergrad Programmes (full ILP)

7	<p>Framework/Model of Practice – summing it all up. THEREFORE THIS IS WHO I AM, WHY I AM, HOW I AM, WHERE I AM</p> <p>Facilitator role to support learner to frame this up – creativity, innovation, using metaphor, drawings/painting, i.e., a visual map as well as the written documentation of the personal and professional identity of this learner as they now are. This includes the values/beliefs/guiding principles/understanding of tools, strategies, theoretical models that support the formation of someone's practice including their new brand or signature of who they are now.</p> <p>Adding final thoughts to reflective diary/journal</p>	<p>1 week</p> <p>2 hrs facilitation</p>	<p>Use of metaphors and other creative ways to design a framework/model of practice</p> <p>Personal and Professional Identity</p> <p>Possible and Future Selves</p>
8	<p>Preparing for Assessment – compilation of the Portfolio of Evidence, including the reflective diary of the learning journey, bibliography, attestations/references, up-to-date CV, examples of work, early learning, case studies, theories etc, preparation for an oral presentation of synthesized information eg powerpoint, prezi, e-portfolio, the oral presentation itself – PREPARATION FOR</p> <p>ASSESSMENT – the Portfolio of Evidence to go to panel plus the oral summing up.</p> <p>This is the ongoing gathering of supporting evidence to support claims made. Facilitator supports learner to continue to explore ways of gathering evidence, to develop a solid PoE that contains the written reflective journey of the above, in a format that is expected of a graduate for the qualification sought, i.e., structure, contents, grammatically correct, etc</p> <p>This also includes the preparation of the oral assessment which encourages the use of ppt, prezi, e-portfolio which is a summing up of the PoE, and the expectations of the learner to oral present their skills and knowledge from experiences and this learning journey.</p> <p>This is on-going throughout learning journey so at this point it should need a final tidy-up, grammatical check (advise learner to get someone to check this)</p> <p>Final CRM update</p>	<p>Two weeks</p> <p>4 hrs facilitation</p> <p>= 30 facilitator hours all up including formative and summative assessments</p>	<p>Just in time feedback, constructive feedback</p>
	<p>Assessment – 10 months – 42 weeks from start date</p>		<p>Year Three of Graduate Profile</p>

OVERVIEW OF LEARNING TASKS – LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activities and Role of Facilitator for Undergrad Programmes (full ILP)

Learning Tasks	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Self-Directed Learning Hours - Learner	Timing
1 Looking Back (LT 1,2,3)	Early Influences – WHO AM I Beginning of the building of the Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) including a daily reflective/learning journal	30	2 weeks
2	My Career Timeline and Development – WHAT DO I KNOW, WHY DO I KNOW, HOW DO I KNOW, IMPACT of that learning today Understanding and making explicit skills/strengths/learning derived from experiences Adding to the PoE – evidence of training, study, courses, professional development, and updating Reflective Journal	50	3 weeks
3	Case Study/ies – selecting on work role where there was huge learning/lots of impact regarding development of skills and knowledge - looking back to evidence my learning - WHAT I KNOW, HOW I LEARNED, THE MEANING ON MY PRACTICE THEN AND NOW - TODAY	300	12 weeks
4 Taking Stock (LT4, 5)	Proving my Capabilities – completing a matrix against the graduate profile/s – HOW DO I MATCH UP AGAINST THE CRITERIA EXPECTED AND WHY Using evidence, attestations, training, study, PD, etc. to complement where necessary Identifying potential gaps in skills and knowledge	20	1 week
5	New Learning – WHAT ELSE DO I NEED (Could include a selection of theoretical topics, ethics, sustainability, Treaty issues) Using the gaps from the matrix exercise decide the best way to obtain the new learning required (in discussion with facilitator)	150	7 weeks

Learning Activities and Role of Facilitator for Undergrad Programmes (full ILP)

6 Summing Up and Looking Forward	<p>New Case Study – current – WHAT I NOW KNOW AS IT RELATES TO MY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE TODAY</p> <p>This includes new learning, use of tools, strategies, skills, knowledge developed in practice</p>	600	4-5 months = 16-20 weeks
7	<p>Framework/Model of Practice – summing it all up. THEREFORE THIS IS WHO I AM, WHY I AM, HOW I AM, WHERE I AM, WHAT I KNOW – this is about the historical evolution of your, for example, management/social services (depending on qualification) philosophy and understandings, the theoretical and practical frameworks in which you work will emerge. This is your ethos, vision, values, beliefs you have around this environment and what it means to excel in this context, as well as a generic set of understandings that could be applied to a variety of contexts.</p>	10	1 week
8	<p>Preparing for Assessment – compilation of the Portfolio of Evidence, including the reflective diary of the learning process, bibliography, attestations/references, Up-to-date CV, examples of work, early learning, case studies, theories, learning records (study, training, PD) etc, preparation for an oral presentation of synthesized information eg powerpoint, prezi, e-portfolio, the oral presentation itself – PREPARATION FOR ASSESSMENT – EVIDENCE, PRESENTATION (written and oral)</p>	50	2 weeks
TOTAL	THE LEARNING PROCESS – 10 months	1200 Learning Hours	

LEARNING TASKS 1-8

Learning Task 1:

Early Learning, Life and Influences – Who am I?

What were your early learning influences?

This task asks you to reflect on your **early influences** – where you have come from, who you are (culture, family history, beliefs, values) – all those things that have impacted on who you are and what you have become. Especially interesting in here will be how that relates to the working life you have developed, what is important to you in your workplace, and why.

Some early learning's and key influences in your life might be things such as:

- Family values, history, faith, culture, activities (e.g. sport)
- Key mentors in your early life – teachers, parents, grandparents, sports coaches, Minister from local church
- Location – where you grew up – how that influenced you, including travelling to and from other countries, learning different cultures, your beliefs about people
- Things that are particularly pertinent to you - what your parents did and worked at, any other important family members.

Some considerations and strategies to assist you:

- Think about the **proverbs or quotes** you heard in your childhood as guiding comments, these also help to capture our childhood memories:

You reap what you sow

It takes a village to raise a child

Children should be seen and not heard

People in glasshouses

Do unto others

What did you learn from these?

- Who were your **role models**?

When thinking about your early influences, was there a specific person who became a great role model for you? (Teacher, Sunday School Teacher, Kuia, local police officer, next door neighbour, grandmother). Why? What was it about them, (personality/strengths/ behaviours/job/role) that made you want to be like them?

Examples of learners comments about values:

'My values set that guides my life and work:

Tongan cultural values – respect, loyalty, community, extended family

Personal family values – achievements, commitment, loyalty

Work values – ethics, effort, commitment, team work, communication'

'The values I took from home

The strongest values I remember in our household were those of hard work, education and fairness. If you wanted to get ahead, you just worked hard and did a good job. Education was really important – my parents had missed out on a higher education and were determined we wouldn't. We were also expected to act fairly and honestly in all words and actions. I grew up expecting everyone else would think like this!

'My mother, even with five children, managed to work jobs which allowed her to spend time with us, and even in the wider community she would and continues to look out for others – on reflection this is where I learnt manaakitanga, honesty, respect, and empathy for others, all of which have stood me in good stead in my professional role.'

Reflective Diary/Journal

We encourage you to keep a running commentary on your reflections as you navigate this learning journey – capturing those ‘aha’ moments of awareness of learning, of light bulb moments, of low points and highlights. You can add these to your Portfolio of Evidence or just capture some of the key moments in your oral/visual presentation.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

This section requires a great deal of thinking, and you might find using mind maps or timelines to assist you to map out key events in your life.

SCOPE: In this section, talk about your life up until approximately 18 years of age, or until you finished school. Summarise by providing your reflection on, and identifying the learning you brought with you into your life and work today.

This could be up to 10 pages of work.

Self-Directed Learner Hours: 30

Directed Hours: 3

Learning Outcome: *Identify early learnings related to portfolio of evidence and practice.*

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, also any maps or timelines you construct. Include photos or maps of your childhood if you wish to show or demonstrate a way of life growing up.

Learning Task 2:

Career Development Information

My Personal/Professional Growth and Development

In this section you will unpack and analyse your experience, providing an overview of your work experience and the skills you developed throughout your work and life activities, as well as your reflections.

Reflections on work – your career timeline:

- roles, tasks, learnings (what, so what, now what)

WORK: List your work roles or create a chronological career development timeline (in any style you choose to use) of the role/s you held, the tasks/responsibilities you had, the learning you got from the roles, and the meaning you attribute to that learning now. Consider the environment and how it influenced your learning, include voluntary and community roles. Look for patterns across your working life (paid and unpaid roles). These roles will most likely include a series of projects or opportunities for development throughout your career in which learning has occurred. It might be from defining moments (things that didn't work so well but had a huge impact on your learning) as well as sparkling successes; from critical turning points as well as business as usual moments which have helped consolidate your understanding of your role in a specific context. It is important to reflect and write about the wider environment in which you worked and analyse the impact of this upon your decisions and actions. Identify key people, formal learning and professional development opportunities that influenced you along the way and why.

Think about what you really learned, as well as the tasks on your job description.

Examples:

Job and Tasks

I found myself employed at Auckland Hospital in the general outpatients. Again I worked in an area that meant I was required to have competent customer service skills. I was responsible for booking appointments with patients with their surgeons, patient info would come from the wards and I would make up files ensuring all the correct papers were added, phone calls to patients were made to ensure their files had the correct details. I'd communicate with both surgical and medical wards to share and/or gather information and I had to have a professional working relationship with doctors, nurses and colleagues.

IDENTIFY: Skills, tools, developmental opportunities, training

What I really learned:

The greatest learning I got from this role was how to be highly organised. Attention to detail was important, there was no room for getting information incorrect. I learnt about the importance of effective communication skills, being clear with requests, also treating patients with care, confidentiality and thoughtfulness. Treat people how you wish to be treated is always at the forefront of my mind and I continue to work in this way today.

Reflection on learning after military training:

I became much more resilient and able to work under extreme pressure. I formed friendships that have stayed with me the rest of my life. The core qualities of courage, responsibility, initiative and loyalty still play a key role in my life now. This was also the beginning of my leadership journey.

LIFE ACTIVITIES/ VOLUNTARY and COMMUNITY WORK/COMMITTEES/SPORTS/WHANAU

Add into this narrative the involvement you have had, the lessons you have learned, and the **skills and capabilities** you have developed from any important areas of your life.

LEARNING: KEY EVENTS, REFLECTIONS

Comment on the key learning events that influenced you. These can come from a variety of sources – books, seminars, training courses, study, or significant events (e.g. for many the Christchurch Earthquake was life changing.)

LEARNING: FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Outline the formal education and training you have been involved in. Describe the course, analyse your learning, evaluate the importance to you now. It may be helpful to use the model of:

What?	What was your course?
So What?	What did you learn?
Now what?	What does it mean for you now?

A short example of learning via formal study:

Diploma of Social Work

'What an exciting and emotional time of discovery and learning I gained from the Social Work Diploma. I learnt as much about myself as I did about social work and about parts of the story of Aotearoa that they never taught us at school. The self-awareness that came to light made sense of my upbringing, my culture and the significant events that had so far happened in Aotearoa.'

LEARNING: FRAMEWORKS, THEORIES, LEGISLATION, MODELS OF PRACTICE

Provide a written description of key learning theories, models, and frameworks. Explain what you currently use in your work, what informs your industry or field of practice.

KEY PEOPLE, MENTORS, IDEAS, BOOKS, TOOLS

Note key people or ideas who have been influencers in your workplace or lifelong learning.

Think about ideas and tools that are used in your field - discuss those that have been or are important to you.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

Scope: Talk about your life up until now, selecting the most significant learning information. The section should evidence the development of your skills and experience from both paid work and community or voluntary activities. This will be about 6-8 pages of work, depending on the length of your prior experience, and your style of layout.

Skills: Check that you are not just *describing* your work, you are *analysing* and *evaluating* your growth and experiences.

Critical Reflection (demonstrates awareness of multiple theories and principles and multiple perspectives – ideas which go beyond the subject, the project and the self): As a critical thinker, you: interpret, analyse, evaluate, infer, explain, seek information, examine your own practices, evaluate the judgements you make on a day-to-day basis, explore underlying areas and assumptions, explore what has contributed to who you are in your work and critique those influences, turn mistakes into learning opportunities, ask 'why', 'why not?', are open to possibilities, seek themes/patterns/trends, follow hunches, build from regular or 'normal' thinking, are prepared to move through a state of disorganisation towards clarity, move towards communicating your thinking with confidence and clarity. IT IS NOT: common sense, task oriented, working in isolation, being competitive.

In your final Portfolio: you will support this section with vocational evidence - a detailed CV, any training course certificates, diplomas or formal certificates or academic transcripts, references, documents that support your comments. More information on this is provided in **Learning Task 8 Preparing a portfolio for assessment.**

Self-Directed Learning Hours: 50

Directed hours: 3

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, ask for help as you need it.

Learning Task 3:

Case Study One - Historic

This learning task provides you with the opportunity to reflect upon, critically explore and analyse a key learning experience, or experiences, from your past working or community life. You will unpack and analyse experiences you have had, analyse the impact of your practices, and aim to demonstrate skills and knowledge that align with graduate profile requirements. In some cases a specific work role/job will be a useful one to unpack; one where there were a range of significant learning experiences which contain **some** of the following:

The following are examples of typical projects you may have undertaken as part of a work role:

- Events you have organised or project managed
- Projects you have managed or coordinated
- Workshops you have designed and/or implemented
- Resources you have written and implemented
- Policy or programmes you have developed and/or implemented
- Change management processes you have undertaken
- Setting up/operating a small business
- Client cases you have worked with
- Interventions you have designed or used
- Leadership events or opportunities, including team leadership

- Ethical issues you have had to manage through to resolution
- Innovative ideas you have implemented into your practice

The case study/work role chosen should be explained in context, and the skills, knowledge and attributes used within it should be highlighted. Discuss your case study choice with your facilitator, who can help with examples in your area of work.

At the end of your case study, evaluate your performance, the strengths you utilised as well as the gaps in your knowledge and skill development at that stage.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

Scope:

This case study will be about 4-6 pages of work, including illustrations where applicable.

Skills: Check that you are not just *describing* your work, you are *analysing* and *evaluating* your skills and experiences within the case study.

Critical Reflection (demonstrates awareness of multiple theories and principles and multiple perspectives – ideas which go beyond the subject, the project and the self): As a critical thinker, you: interpret, analyse, evaluate, infer, explain, seek information, examine your own practices, evaluate the judgements you make on a day-to-day basis, explore underlying areas and assumptions, explore what has contributed to who you are in your work and critique those influences, turn mistakes into learning opportunities, ask ‘why’, ‘why not?’, are open to possibilities, seek themes/patterns/trends, follow hunches, build from regular or ‘normal’ thinking, are prepared to move through a state of disorganisation towards clarity, move towards communicating your thinking with confidence and clarity. IT IS NOT: common sense, task oriented, working in isolation, being competitive.

Self-Directed Learning Hours: 300

Directed hours: 4

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, ask for help as you need it.

Learning Task 4:

Summary of Learning Journey - Matrix Evaluation

Key questions to consider:

- What are my attributes and how do these match those required for the graduate profile?
- What do I need to learn to meet the requirements of the graduate profile?
- How do I find supporting documentation/evidence for the graduate profile?

Summary of work/ practice to date

You are asked to provide an analysis and evaluation of your current strengths, knowledge, skills and capabilities against the graduate profile requirements.

1. Looking back at your learning journey, fill in the sections you can against the graduate profile attributes.
2. Identify the areas you need to work on for improvement or development.
3. Make a note of knowledge, models and theory you may have utilised for your practice to date in the appropriate sections
4. Use your personal draft as a checklist for your portfolio and case studies
5. Supply the Matrix with the identified learning needs to your facilitator for review and discussion of new learning tasks.

Completion of the matrix is a mid-point formative assessment which is recorded by your facilitator as evidence of your progress. Please note: if you are undertaking a major in addition to the generic qualification, you will also need to write up a matrix against the graduate profile for that as well.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

Scope: This section requires you to reflect, analyse in depth and connect your experiences with the required matrix.

Self-Directed Learning Hours: 20

Directed hours: 2

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, ask for help as you need it.

Example of MATRIX / Data gathering Tool for Candidates:

Graduates of the Bachelor of Applied Management will have:

Graduate Profile Attribute	Where I have shown this - role, position, setting context etc.	What evidence supports this (role or job description, performance review, client feedback, awards, qualifications etc)	How do I evaluate myself on this attribute, what tools, resources and skills do I use to illustrate this attribute
Apply specialised technical knowledge and skills to a specific business field, along with abilities for adapting and/or generalising these to other business fields.			
Apply a broad range of generic business skills, principles and practices, including safety in the working environment, and be able to mentor and motivate others in such application.			
Display well-developed critical thinking capabilities, including analysing, evaluating and critically reflecting on information, decisions and behaviour. Enable strategic thinking and adaptability in a constantly changing global environment.			
Recognise, adopt and where necessary, instil in others the proper ethical dimensions inherent in business decision making having particular regard for issues of social responsibility and sustainable practice.			
Exercise self-direction and adopt independent working			

practices, and an ability to foster these in others.			
Accept responsibility for the quality of their own work outcomes, and where applicable, for the quality of others' work outcomes.			
Apply independent learning skills that encourage the regular accessing of new knowledge and information.			
Use effective written communication and well-developed inter-personal skills, and have an ability to foster these in others.			
Initiate, inspire, guide, supervise, and reward the work of others.			
Work effectively in group situations, as a leader or a follower, as appropriate.			
Adapt to, and work effectively in, diverse cultural contexts and work environments, encouraging others to do likewise.			
Use technology and communication systems effectively.			
Understand the relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi to applied management in New Zealand/Aotearoa.			

What are the areas for my new learning:

**Learning Task 5:
New Learning Tasks**

In this task you will identify, access and research frameworks of relevant practice, reflecting on how these might influence your practice. You will be asked to consider ethical dimensions, sustainability and Te Tiriti o Waitangi issues. You are asked to identify the most relevant material and integrate it into your second case study.

To begin this task your facilitator will discuss with you the gaps in your matrix evaluation (Learning Task 5) and indicate a range of new learning for you to explore and evaluate.

This learning task encourages you to reflect on this new learning, critically analyse and evaluate the information, models, theory you have explored. Your focus needs to be on this reflection, asking yourself questions such as:

- What did I learn?
- What does this mean to me?
- How will it impact on my practice today?

Examples of new learning might be:

- Researching theories related to your area of practice
- Referencing theories and writing a bibliography
- Evaluating models or tools used in various settings
- Researching policy or international examples related to your work
- Critiquing theories for relevance and value to your practice
- Critiquing innovative ideas or interventions
- Exploring leadership theory/styles/processes related to your area of practice
- Reflecting on and articulating your leadership style
- Exploring concepts of sustainable practice and impact on your work place and/or community roles
- Exploring literature on ethical decision making and its impact in your workplace
- Integrating principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi into your practice
- Undertaking reflective tasks set by the facilitator
- Developing research skills applicable to your learning level, including library and online search skills
- Preparing a PowerPoint, Prezi or visual presentation.

A library of task sheets in various areas of practice is being developed for Moodle access and reference.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

Scope:

This learning task will be about 6-10 pages of work, including illustrations where applicable. You are asked to note the new learning gained, and its value to you. This work will be integrated into your final portfolio, and used within your second case study. You will also utilise presentation work for your final assessment.

Skills and knowledge: Ensure you provide reflection on the new learning gained, as indicated in the questions above.

Self-Directed Learning Hours: 150

Directed hours: 8

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, ask for help as you need it.

Learning Task 6:

Case Study Two – Current Working Role

This learning task provides you with the opportunity to reflect upon, critically explore and analyse a key learning experience, or experiences, from your current working or community life. You will unpack and analyse experiences, analyse the impact of your practices, discuss theories, models or tools you utilise or have discovered that relate to this work, and demonstrate how you have met graduate profile requirements.

New learning that illustrates your work should be integrated into this case study. Consider what you now know and how it relates to your professional practice.

The following are examples of typical projects you may have undertaken as part of a current work role:

- Events you have organised or project managed
- Projects you have managed or coordinated
- Workshops you have designed and /or implemented
- Resources you have written and implemented
- Policy or programmes you have developed and /or implemented
- Change management processes you have undertaken
- Setting up/operating a small business
- Clients cases you have worked with
- Interventions you have designed or used
- Leadership events or opportunities, including team leadership
- Ethical issues you have had to manage through to resolution
- Innovative ideas you have implemented into your practice
- Developing and Integrating the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi into your work practice
- Implementing sustainability initiatives into your work place

The case chosen should be explained, and the skills, knowledge, theories and attributes used within it should be highlighted. Discuss your choice with your facilitator, who can help with examples in your area of work.

At the end of your case study, evaluate your performance, indicating the key strengths and capabilities utilised.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

Scope:

This case study will be six or more pages of work, including illustrations where applicable.

Skills and knowledge: Check that you are not just *describing* your work, you are *analysing* and *evaluating* your skills and capabilities within the case study. Ensure you illustrate the knowledge you draw upon, and integrate new learning where applicable.

Self-Directed Learning Hours: 600

Directed hours: 4

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, ask for help as you need it.

Learning Task 7:

My Framework/Model of Practice

In this section you have the opportunity to sum it all up – to reflect on your development over the course of this qualification and consider the following:

- Who I am
- What I know and why
- What guides me, how I am, where I am now
- What informs my practice

From the reflective exercises the historical evolution of your (subject area/professional practice) philosophy and understanding will become clear and the theoretical and practical frameworks in which you work will have begun to emerge. This framework/model of practice is about the evolution of your (subject area/professional practice) ethos, vision, values and beliefs you have around what it means to be a competent practitioner in your field as well as a generic set of understandings that can be applied to a specific context.

This framework/model of practice is what the assessors are most interested in hearing about because you have written and reflected on your work throughout this learning journey, and provided evidence for, in your Portfolio of Evidence. The work you have done around your early learning/influences, the development of case studies and new learning has already been captured in the documentation. Therefore they are interested in hearing about your integrated knowledge, understanding and practice experience. You will continue to refine this framework as you work towards getting ready for your assessment presentation.

This task may be illustrated creatively in a variety of ways – through drawings, pictures, metaphor, diagrams, word pictures, i.e. a visual map. Some learners like to show both the ‘old me’ and the ‘new me’ which demonstrates the transformative learning journey they have been on, and again this can be done using photos/images/metaphors as well as the written documentation.

As well you are asked to provide written documentation to explain the map, focusing on your personal and professional identity. Include or refer to your values, beliefs, guiding principles, influential tools/strategies/models: whatever supports *your* practice, and provides a signature or map of *who you are now*.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

Scope: This section may be quite short, 1-2 pages, and provide a succinct explanation of the visual map/metaphor/illustration of your Framework or Model of Practice.

Self-Directed Learning Hours: 10

Directed hours: 2

Send your work to your facilitator as you go along for feedback, ask for help as you need it.

**Learning Task 8:
Preparing for Assessment**

In this task you will prepare your portfolio and the requirements for assessment, including your PowerPoint, Prezi, e-Portfolio or visual presentation.

Assessment Requirements:

1. Portfolio of Evidence (PoE)

This refers to your complete Portfolio which begins with your early influences and incorporates all the work of the learning journey task sheets. A reflective journal or an overview of your learning journey can be inserted into the Portfolio.

It will include a bibliography or references section.

It also includes your vocational evidence. This section at the end (which can be appendices) includes:

- an up-to-date CV
- training certificates, examples of previous courses or qualifications
- references, attestations, job descriptions
- any other evidence that supports a variety of work developed/implemented

This will be supplied to your facilitator to send for peer review **4 WEEKS** prior to your assessment date (which leaves you two weeks to make changes). The final PoE needs to go back to your facilitator to send to the assessors **10 DAYS** prior to your assessment date. Your visual presentation should be sent to your facilitator for checking **7 DAYS** prior to your assessment.

2. Oral Presentation

You will provide an oral/visual presentation at your final assessment, usually in the form of a PowerPoint, Prezi, e-Portfolio, which captures the key components of your portfolio, with particular emphasis on your Framework/Model of Practice. You will have prepared parts of this during the course of your learning journey work, and will complete this task at the end.

Typically this oral presentation takes approximately **one hour**, followed by up to half an hour for further questions or clarification and feedback. You can expect a professional conversation with the assessors about your portfolio.

Your Facilitator will attend and be there to support you. After your oral presentation the assessors will confer and you will then be advised of the outcome of your assessment. The assessors will provide a written report subsequent to successful completion of the assessment.

ABOUT THIS TASK:

Scope:

This task outlines your final preparations of documentation for your assessment. You will provide **one hard copy** of your portfolio and **one hard copy** of your ppt/prezi presentation, including vocational evidence at the assessment for the assessors to keep for writing up the report, and for hard copy evidence.

You will bring your visual presentation on a **USB** to the assessment.

Self-Directed Learning Hours: 50

Directed hours: 4

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR FACILITATORS

Competency Framework for Facilitators in Capable NZ

- 1 -

Definitions

1. Definition of Facilitation:

Introduction

Competency standards define professional practice, provide guidance for the professional performance of effective facilitators and act as a framework for professional development. This competency framework sets out the level required for each area of competency and is designed to help facilitators articulate/demonstrate their level of expertise.

Facilitators also need to be skilled at supporting learners to become personally effective individuals, skilled at making the best use of their time and resources at their disposal to achieve goals. They should have strong personal, interpersonal and cognitive capabilities and build positive relationships, taking responsibility for their actions and seeking feedback to improve their performance. They should also have subject matter/discipline knowledge in a range of areas as well as strong understandings of generic competencies required for the future world of work. Future focused individuals can look forward and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to seize learning opportunities throughout life to broaden their abilities and to adapt to change. Sustainable individuals can apply frameworks of sustainable practice (ecological, social, political and economic) to the context of their industry, the field of study, or community of practice, to challenge existing practices and develop more sustainable ways of operating.

	Developing Facilitator (the effective practitioner, the practising thinker)	Competent Facilitator (the reflective practitioner, the advanced thinker)	Advanced Facilitator (the critically reflective practitioner, the master thinker)
<u>1.0 Professional Knowledge</u> 1.1 Discipline and Adult Learning Theory, Knowledge and Skills	Is knowledgeable of core theories, skills and contextual influences relating to the qualification area, and can apply them to assist learners. Knowledge of adult learning theory and principles of adults' approaches to learning, including experiential learning, work-based learning, reflective practice, identity,	Explains and articulates a range of theories and relevant models to practice. Experienced and knowledgeable of adult learning theory, principles of adults' approaches to learning, experiential learning, work-based learning, reflective practice, identity,	Can critically apply and integrate a range of theories and models into discussion, and facilitates learning using a wide variety of innovative strategies. Can lead others in developing knowledge and skills of adult learning theory, principles of adults' approaches to learning, experiential

	motivation and cultural expectations.	motivation and cultural expectations.	learning, work-based learning, reflective practice, identity, motivation and cultural expectations.
1.2 Educational Knowledge	<p>Has the background knowledge to understand and maintain robust processes. Is familiar with NZQA levels of qualifications and skills outcomes at each level. Understands the application of the taught curriculum to the graduate profile, or NZQA unit standards.</p> <p>Ability to interpret graduate profiles and institution requirements and translate these to a learner or enquirer.</p>	Skilled in understanding and application of cognitive skills hierarchy, qualification levels and skills and the application to graduate profiles. Maintains robust processes in the oversight of Capable NZ qualifications.	Experienced in writing and design of academic curriculum and academic processes relating to the specialist area. Can monitor and review qualification processes for robustness.
1.3 Information and Resource Management	Understands how to access and use information and resources relevant to learner needs.	Guides learners in selecting and applying enquiry methods.	Can design research methodologies related to the qualifications that require enquiry.
1.4 Portfolio Building Skills	<p>Understands and practices the questioning, listening, summarising analysis and synthesis skills that assist a learner in portfolio building; using language appropriate for the learner. Uses analytical skills to apply judgment.</p> <p>Understands a range of facilitation tools and associated techniques and can work with learners using them.</p>	<p>Demonstrates ability and confidence in the key skills of the portfolio building process (questioning, listening, summarising, analysis and synthesis of information) and using appropriate language. Uses analytical skills to apply judgment.</p> <p>Applies facilitation tools and techniques with competence.</p>	<p>Displays expertise in assisting the process of portfolio building and its related skills and tools with a broad or specialised group of learners. Uses well developed analytical skills to apply judgment.</p> <p>May develop generic or specific tools and can evaluate them for practice.</p>

<p>1.5 Communication Skills</p>	<p>Applies communication skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify learner needs, steps, goals • Builds learner confidence and engagement • Facilitate learner self-understanding and skills development • Communicate the ILP/PP process effectively 	<p>Skilled and able to assist learners individually and in groups to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify their progress/obstacles • Build their reflective competence, engagement • Set goals and strategies for personal success. • Communicate the ILP/PP process effectively 	<p>Demonstrates expertise in the communication of strategies for self-awareness, self-development, engagement, goal setting and reflective competence.</p> <p>Can communicate the ILP/PP process to both learners and groups at any level</p>
<p><u>2.0 Relationship Management</u></p>	<p>Develops and maintains effective relationships with learners and colleagues.</p> <p>Understands and recognises the diversity of learners and in which programme they are learning in.</p> <p>Applies professional standards and boundaries to all interactions with learners</p>	<p>Develops and maintains a network of learner relationships in a range of professional settings.</p> <p>Continuously enhancing knowledge and skills to work effectively and appropriately with diverse learners in a range of programmes.</p> <p>Has an awareness of the importance of relationships and boundaries to enable good learning to occur, which keeps learners and facilitators safe and can intentionally shape and direct the engagement with the learner.</p>	<p>Models best practice in relationships with learners and professional networks.</p>
<p><u>3.0 Professional Practice and Development</u></p>	<p>Actively develops knowledge and skills for effective practice.</p> <p>Applies high standards of professional and ethical standards to interactions with learners</p>	<p>Maintains currency as a facilitator through further education and professional development activities.</p> <p>Contributes to the professional development of colleagues.</p> <p>Applies high standards of professional and ethical standards to interactions with learners</p>	<p>Demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills as a facilitator in areas of specialisation.</p> <p>Provides leadership in the professional development of colleagues.</p> <p>Applies high standards of professional and ethical standards to interactions with learners</p>

<p>3.1 Capable NZ Knowledge and Practice</p>	<p>Is familiar with Capable NZ programme documentation and processes. Understand the differences in the learning journey versus taught practices. Reads ILP, PP documents and theory.</p>	<p>Sound knowledge of Capable NZ programme documentation and processes, the differences in the learning journey versus taught practices, and APL, PP documents and theory.</p>	<p>Provides leadership in writing or reviewing programme documentation and processes, and developing Capable NZ models based on APL, PP theory.</p>
	<p>Completes administrative requirements as required, planning for own workload, personal and professional development and performance reviews.</p> <p>Meets legislative requirements.</p> <p>Examines own work practices to ensure personal effectiveness and efficiency.</p>	<p>Completes administrative requirements as required, planning for own workload, personal and professional development and performance reviews.</p> <p>Meets legislative requirements.</p> <p>Examines own work practices to ensure personal effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <p>Guides others in developing effective work practices</p>	<p>Completes administrative requirements as required, planning for own workload, personal and professional development and performance reviews. Supports colleagues to do the same.</p> <p>Meets legislative requirements.</p> <p>Examines own work practices to ensure personal effectiveness and efficiency, and supports others to do the same.</p> <p>Lead and guide others in developing effective work practices</p>

WORK ALLOCATION MODEL Capable NZ

Criteria for Allocating Learners to Facilitators

Key Principles

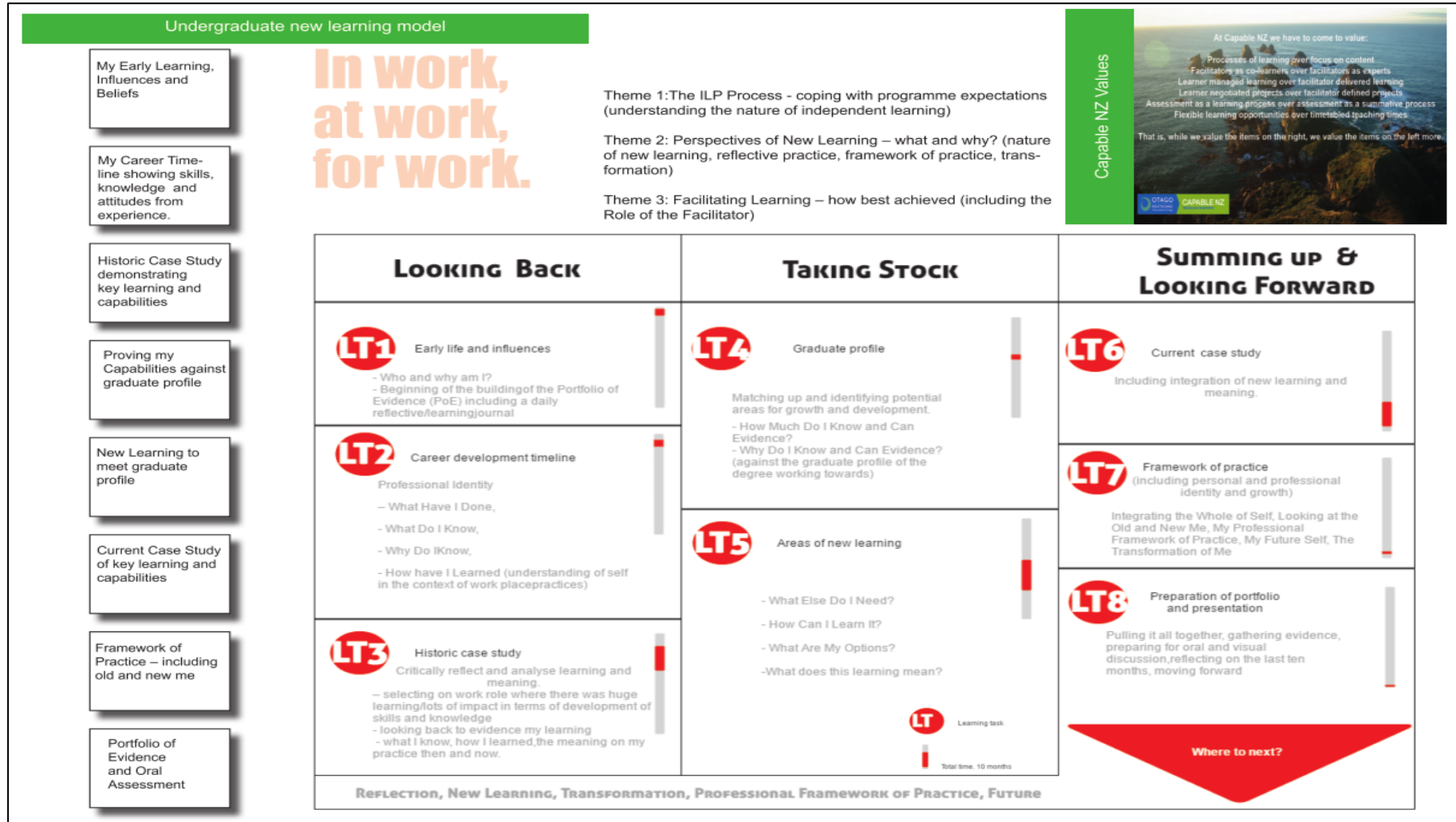
- That the learner's needs and expectations come first, wherever possible.
- Learners are provided with the facilitator who is the best match for their needs and preferences. This means providing a facilitator with expertise in the discipline area if possible; providing a facilitator to enable some face to face interaction, and preferred gender or ethnicity or age expectations.
- Honour the facilitators who have secured their own learners, i.e., allocate that learner or an alternative learner if facilitator decides they are not the best person for that particular learner.
- Allocate facilitator who has been requested by name from the learner.
- Allocate learners to facilitators subject to:
 - The four principles above
 - Ensuring that the facilitator with particular expertise is available throughout the year for learners who need that expertise. Note: it is not rational to load an employee facilitator with learners outside of their specialist area until and unless it is apparent that workload targets will not be met. Otherwise, we end up without the specialist expertise later in the year.

Procedure for Allocating

- Allocations are made by Programme Leader (PL) of specific programmes.
- PL consults with the potential facilitator before making an allocation.
- Where appropriate PL consults with others, e.g., lead assessor, experienced facilitator, subject matter specialist
- When PL is on leave, the Head of School makes the allocation decision applying the principles.
- PL ensures that subject to the principles employees are allocated learners to make sure that workload targets are met by the end of each academic year.
- Contractors are allocated learners on a round-robin basis subject to the allocation principles.
- PL advises administration team by email of the allocation made, including facilitator
- Administration team maintains a database of allocations - showing for each facilitator - date of allocation, the reason for allocation, progress towards workload target, available to all staff, e.g., shared drive.

As a general guide above load should be approved where specific learners request a particular facilitator or the facilitator is the only one available at that time with the right expertise.

ILP (CANVAS) MAP



My Early Learning, Influences and Beliefs

My Career Time-line showing skills, knowledge and attitudes from experience.

Historic Case Study demonstrating key learning and capabilities

Proving my Capabilities against graduate profile

New Learning to meet graduate profile

Current Case Study of key learning and capabilities

Framework of Practice – including old and new me

Portfolio of Evidence and Oral Assessment



Shirley Kerr started at St John as a volunteer paramedic, and has worked her way up to a national position in charge of compliance and quality in first aid training. Although Shirley has had more than 30 years of experience with the organisation, she used to feel inferior and in awe of anyone who had a higher education. Then a friend introduced her to Capable NZ.



While his Black Caps teammates put themselves to the test against Sri Lanka, star player Grant Elliott celebrated another achievement. His broken arm may have kept him off the sports field, but it meant he could attend graduation. New Zealand cricket superstar and living legend Grant Elliott graduated from Otago Polytechnic, Friday 11 December 2015, with a Bachelor of Applied Management through Capable NZ.



From rugby tackles to corporate battles. Hale T-Pole started his journey of learning as his professional rugby was finishing. He wanted to gain a qualification that acknowledged his life as an athlete, as a coach, mentor, sports marketer, as well as his community practice – giving back to young people and making a difference.



Vicki Yarker-Jones is a nursing educator whose eclectic career is evolving to include private practice in counselling. She says "at any given moment in life you are the sum total of your experiences". In her portfolio for her Bachelor of Social Services (counselling), Vicki explored her refraction model of counselling (along with importance of being grounded in place, the importance of imagination, steampunk, and being purple).



Kiri Sloane-Hobson first encountered Capable NZ as part of a programme being recommended by her employer. Having recognised great value in the reflective process to achieve a qualification, she decided to continue her learning journey. Kiri enrolled on the Bachelor of Applied Management programme and in Spring 2015 was successful in being awarded the qualification.

It's learning Jim, but not as you know it: targeting individual learning 'through work, for work, at work'.

Glenys.Ker@op.ac.nz
Samuel.Mann@op.ac.nz

Reflection

To look to my future meant I needed to reflect on my past.

Key learning was the importance of reflection – made me stop and think, reflecting and articulating knowledge, different theories, and a bicultural perspective

Making explicit who and why I am was cathartic

Perspectives of New Learning

I learned to navigate my way through ambiguity

Finding the alignment in what I did, why I did, how I did and relating this to other models

I started to find validation for my professional skills and my personal way of being

Transformation

The biggest impact is within

I see myself differently now

Transformative doesn't describe the depth of change and the long term implications – it's bigger than that

This was an opportunity to tell my story, to turn the volume up a little bit

Capable NZ gave me the opportunity to 'look at my blueprint and change it'

Framework of Practice

I now believe in myself and I put processes around it

I was fit for sport, now I'm fit for life.

I have an increased self-awareness personally and professionally

I practice with intention and integrity

My personality and my skills are unique to my way of being and I now have the ability to use them appropriately in the right context

Future

Opened my eyes, made me think more broadly, ability to learn more, now more employable

I still don't wear \$300 boots

I explode with skills and knowledge

Less encumbered now – I didn't realise how much weight I was carrying from the past

Appendix 7a: Email from Learner Hale T. Pole (Post-assessment)

On 30/09/2016, at 12:40 PM, Hale T-Pole <haletpole@gmail.com> wrote:

I started this journey to gain a qualification that matched my 18 year career and involvement in professional rugby. After finishing my years of top level playing at the Rugby World Cup 2015, I was looking for something that formalised my many years of playing, coaching, managing teams and in more recent years in my job working as a player/agent for a sports marketing company, taking on roles representing players on PIPA, (the Pacific Island Players Association) and Base (youth employment training centre)

The Bachelor of Applied Management was an ideal fit for me! A qualification that respected the experience I have gained through real life involvement with my sport at a top level, and which supported my learning by teaching me academic concepts and theories that I realised I've been applying without really knowing it. This qualification has brought together my practice with theory.

My assignment was titled "From Making Tackles to Corporate Battles" and subtitled, "How Rucks and Mauls prepared me for Boardroom Walls". What I realised having reflected on my journey is that I actually did know quite a bit about some of the concepts I have been taught...but I had not been put in touch with the appropriate research as I had not been in a formal learning environment since I have left High School.

I started out thinking that it would be nice to achieve this qualification and that I would "suffer" through the more academic aspects of it. I had genuine doubts about whether I would achieve it especially since English is my second language. And what I learned was that there is a place for academic concepts in real life working environments. I have learnt not to be afraid and dismissive of what research can tell us about market forces or social trends. I can adopt these ideas and they help me operate as a person working in between corporate leaders and upcoming players. It has given me a huge sense of achievement in an area that I felt was out of reach for me in the past.

Appendix 7b: Email from Hale T. Pole's wife Joanna Campbell

(Post-assessment)

On 30/09/2016, at 11:25 AM, Joanna Campbell <joannaleacampbell@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Glenys, as Hale's wife and onlooker to Hale's journey....it might be better to start at the end...

The other day, (after his presentation), Hale came home with sense of pride in himself and his achievement that I have not seen in him before. This is a man who has stood on the most famous Rugby fields around the world, facing the fiercest opponents in the most challenging sporting situations. He has needed to make big sporting judgment calls in real life with a rugby ball in his hands and millions of people watching...accepting failure at times, public humiliation, (on a scale that you and I cannot relate to), but of course also celebrating wild successes too. He is proud of his achievements on the rugby field but he does not think he is above others and he is more than aware of his areas of weakness or areas that he is yet to improve on like formal education. So don't for a minute think that I haven't seen him in situations where he should be very proud of himself... after all he has achieved things that you and I will never...But...when he came home the other day...his eyes were glowing....and there was a sense of "yes...I can do this...actually...I just did it"! It was different from sporting successes...**he had a sense of more completeness**...he is not just a rugby player from Tonga who can run in a straight line...he has also achieved a measure of academic success...something that was missing...

He is a well-known public figure who is humble in his upbringing and lifestyle but most of all in his achievements...for if you know anything about Hale you will know that his achievements are shared with the gifts he believes are provided by God. So he glowed for about 24 hours but he is back to being humble again... ha ha...

Along the way...he got started with his usual confidence...starting wasn't too hard for him and he has a way of putting things that require priority first so he simply made time and got stuck in...he is the sort of person who will ask for help so that is what he did...getting in touch with his facilitator to get more help to get to the next level...he probably related to this like a sportsman would to a coach..."how can I do better coach"...But there were struggles...simply using technology...learning to navigate the tools on word documents and other programmes like spreadsheets, adding images to documents, making tables, where to save everything so he can find files again, turning things into PDF's and emailing them, learning to use PowerPoint and all the different options that are available...it doesn't take much for a simple man like Hale to become very frustrated by things he can't do...after all...prior to this he has only ever done what he is good at...So challenging himself in areas that are not his strengths...asking for help to put things into logical English....etc...The big picture was achievable...but the steps along the way were very frustrating....But...he has learnt these things and has an appreciation of the efficiency others work with who do this daily...

He engaged in learning about research concepts that relate to the world of business...but he did not realise how they mattered until he had to stand in front of a panel of people who would be judging him, to explain the link between his learning and his application in real life...he has learnt about how research can be useful to daily life situations....

He practiced his presentation many times...he realised he wasn't making sense in the beginning and needed help to re-focus his ideas. He has learnt that others (including me) have good ideas and can help...that achievement is the sum of not just one's efforts but of a collective effort...

Hope that makes sense Glenys? ...this is just another achievement that will help him move forward and believe he is more than a rugby player...he can also play in the game of life...in the game of business...

Appendix 8: Email from Parent of Learner

From: Colin Gibbs <colin.j.gibbs@gmail.com>
Date: 29 June 2015 7:18:53 pm NZST
To: <PKer@op.ac.nz>
Subject: Hi Phil

Kia ora Phil

I hope you are well and surviving those Dunedin winters... yes, I've been there before Auckland!!! (having said that, didn't I hate it when outsiders always mentioned Dunedin's winters!)

I thought I'd take the time to mention how impressed we were of Otago Polytechnic firstly in terms of the graduation ceremony we attended at the time we met you in Dunedin Koru lounge, and secondly the positive significance of your RPL programme at OP. My apology is that this response has been so long in coming.

Both my wife, Catherine (whom you met, and is ex Waikato University), and I who is ex-every institution, found the graduation ceremony full of dignity and respect. It was a wonderful occasion, and we speak this time as parents. So full marks Phil!

More importantly to me, however, was the value I placed on the Capable NZ programme. As an education consultant I work with many institutions. I spend a lot of time trying to lead tertiary academics into new and fresh ways of thinking—thinking outside of the conservative and habitual into the reality of the present and the circumstances of the future.

As a consultant, I spend a lot of time turning academic viewpoints from one of neutrality and pessimism into optimism and opportunity, not just in terms of teaching and programmes but also in research. My experience of the Capable NZ programme has become one of those case studies I use to open academics' eyes to possibilities and realities of students. So thank you Phil for that.

On a personal level, I watched (as every parent does) my 'child' work at university in her early adult years, and she succeeded, and then for life to take its own course in life, as it does, such that study was no longer possible. This 'child' grew into a successful manager in a large corporation, managing a significant division of NZ Post, dealing with the multiple human resource issues such as the earthquakes on people's lives in Christchurch and a company that needs to be radical in the way it addresses a changing market place. She does that leadership and did so without a degree... now she does it with a degree, and there is a sense of completion for her and a sense of being able to articulate and research into her management practice beyond the day-to-day responses that managers are so inclined to do.

As a result, our daughter, Safka Gibbs, is a key person in the evolution of that organisation. Her study at Otago Polytechnic has empowered her to appreciate and value, even more than she did, that her beliefs, values, and perspectives are critical in how she manages her work's demands. That, I believe, is a function of tertiary education, and Otago Polytechnic has achieved it in my belief. And so, for us, it was with great pride when we saw that an institution such as Otago Polytechnic was willing to recognise the worth of such vocational history and experience.


So, Phil, I am thankful, first as an educationalist which seems pathetically more legitimate, but more so as a parent, of what you and Otago Polytechnic have provided. Be encouraged!

Ka kite ano


Colin

Appendix 9: Mercury Bay Informer – Capable NZ Graduate, Luana Tupou

press clip



Mercury Bay Informer
Wednesday 22/03/2017
Page: 10
Section: General News
Region: Waikato, NZ
Circulation: 5500
Type: Community
Size: 455.00 sq.cms.



slice
CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

Z's Luana Tupou first in her family to obtain a tertiary qualification

Three years ago Andrew McLean, the Z service station retailer for the eastern Waikato, recognised the potential in Luana Tupou when he appointed her as the site manager of Z Whitianga.

A year later Andrew nominated Luana for a Z scholarship to undertake studies towards a newly introduced Bachelor's degree in Applied Management through the Otago Polytechnic. Luana's was one of only a few Z employees accepted into the degree programme and on Friday 10 March she and Nathan Taramai, a Z operations manager based in Christchurch, graduated in Dunedin.

Luana is the first member of her family to obtain a tertiary qualification. "I was humbled when Andrew nominated me for the scholarship," she says. "I undertook to make him and my family proud. I remember flying to Wellington for an induction day, that's when it really dawned on me that I was given the opportunity of a lifetime."

A total of 15 Z scholarships have been awarded to date. Christine Langdon, Z community manager, says the scholarships make a positive difference in communities by supporting the career aspirations of local frontline staff. "More than 3,000 Kiwis are employed at Z service stations across New Zealand, so our commitment to communities needs to start at home by helping our retail staff access higher education."

Luana's degree programme consisted of assignments and a major project. She had to travel to Wellington twice to present her assignments and project to a panel of moderators. Her degree was designed to be completed through part-time study over a period of two years.

"I was fortunate with my project as the Z service station in Whitianga was extensively revamped last year," says Luana. "With it came exciting new retail opportunities, specifically the sale of coffee and food. It allowed me to do my project on the establishment of a 'sales culture' among the staff I have responsibility for."

Approximately six months into her degree programme, Luana suffered a major setback when she was diagnosed with cancer and had to undergo extensive surgery and treatment. Her father also passed away during that time. "Z and the Otago Polytechnic were fantastic," she says. "They were happy to give me enough time off to recover and get my head back in the right space. I was adamant to make up the time I lost. I wanted to graduate with Nathan, as we both started our degrees at the same time. I dedicated most of my weekends to my studies. I'm really glad I persevered."

Sharing Luana's graduation with her were her mother and two of her sisters. Andrew also travelled to Dunedin to celebrate with her. "Z paid for my mother to go with me to Dunedin," says Luana. "It was so special to have her and my sisters there with me. And the effort Andrew made to be at my graduation was really humbling. The morning before the graduation ceremony, all of us who were about to graduate marched in our regalia though the Dunedin CBD. Andrew walked all the way next to me on the sidewalk. He shared in my joy every step of the way."

What Luana didn't know, was that she obtained her degree with distinction. She only found that out when she received her degree certificate. "That was really the icing on the cake," she says. "But the thing I will always remember was being capped on stage. All I could think was, 'Wow! Is this really me?'"

"I had tremendous support - from my family, from Andrew, from the Z Whitianga staff. My degree is as much theirs as its mine.

"I started with Z Whitianga as a part-time forecourt attendant. That was quite some time ago, before Andrew became the retailer. And look at me now. Thank you Z, and thank you Andrew, for believing in me."

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Page 1 of 2
Ref: 745523157

press clip



Mercury Bay Informer
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slice
CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS



Z Whitianga's Luana Tupou on her graduation day in Dunedin.

Appendix 10: Capable NZ Graduate, Grant Elliot

Grant Elliott: 20 facts worth knowing about the 'cult hero' in New Zealand cricket

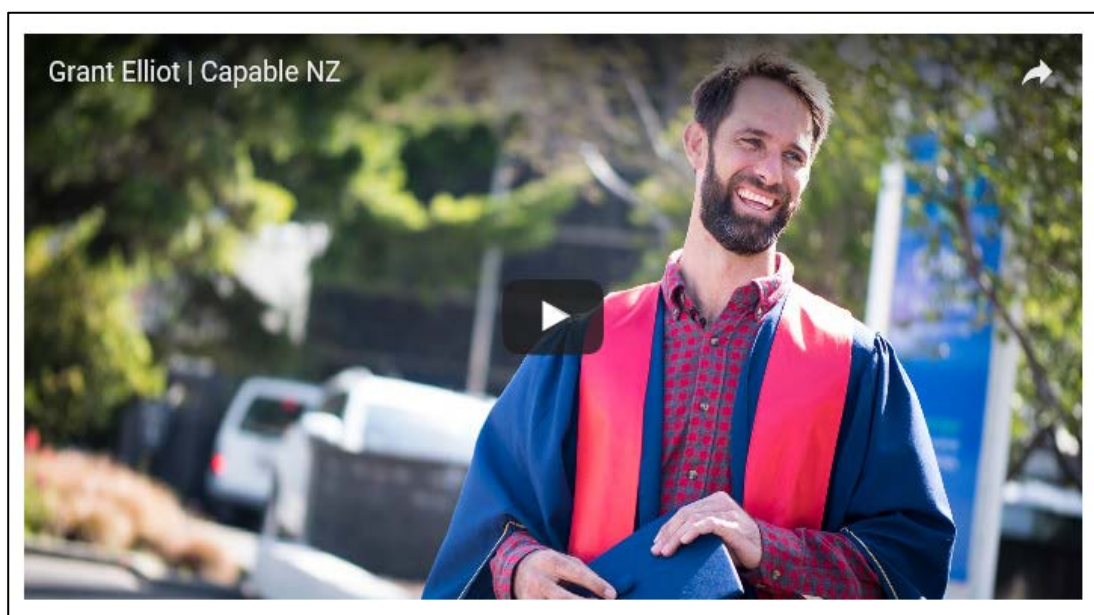
By Abhishek Kumar

Born March 21, 1979, Grant David Elliott is the former New Zealand all-rounder in ODIs and Tests. However, he is yet to take a call on his T20I career. He is famously known for his finishing off an intense World Cup 2015 semi-final with a six against Dale Steyn. Elliott represented New Zealand in 5 Tests and 83 ODIs before retiring. He scored 1,976 runs in ODIs at 34.06 and also scalped 39 wickets. He was born in South Africa but currently plays for New Zealand. On Elliott's 38th birthday, Abhishek Kumar brings out some interesting facts:

(Abridged)

17. Graduated at 36

Elliott graduated from Otago Polytechnic in December 2015 with a Bachelor of Applied Management through Capable NZ. Elliott was quoted in a report from wellington.scoop.co.nz saying, "I always wanted to get a degree and started doing a Bachelor of Commerce when I was 19, but then professional cricket took over. The Bachelor of Applied Management through Otago Polytechnic has helped me realise I have skills that are transferable for when I do make the transition from sport, and the knowledge that I can achieve and progress in any job I choose." He further added saying, "The Bachelor of Applied Management has given me the confidence to enjoy my cricket more as well so I can go out there and play the sport with a smile on my face instead of dreading what might happen after my sporting career is over."



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CricketCountry.com

<http://www.cricketcountry.com/articles/grant-elliott-20-facts-worth-knowing-about-the-cult-hero-in-new-zealand-cricket-587706>


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Appendix 11: Capable NZ - Bachelor of Applied Management



OTAGO
POLYTECHNIC
Te Kura Matatini ki Otago

CAPABLE NZ
Valuing your experience



Bachelor of Applied Management > via Independent Learning Pathways

The Bachelor of Applied Management degree is awarded to students with recognised knowledge and skills as an experienced practitioner in a specialised area of management or the wider field of general management and leadership. People with substantial experience and learning in one or more of the following fields may be able to obtain all or part of this degree via **Independent Learning Pathways (ILP)** through Capable NZ. Usually applicants are in current relevant employment or practising in their chosen field.

- Adventure Tourism Management
- Human Resource Management
- Sales and Marketing
- Business Information Systems
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Sport Management
- Business Transformation and Change
- Operations and Production Management
- Strategic Management
- Event Management
- Māori Organisational Leadership
- Sustainable Practice
- Hotel Management
- Project Management
- Tourism Management

What is ILP?

ILP is an internationally-recognised, academically valid way of acknowledging the learning that individuals have gained through their extensive experience. Capable NZ provides an alternative pathway to gain a formal tertiary qualification.

Skilled facilitators help learners explore their own experiential learning, taking a holistic, integrated view of the expected outcomes in the graduate profile of this qualification. In the innovative ILP process, learners identify, demonstrate, articulate and reflect upon the understandings and skills they have developed through work and other relevant learning experiences. This is an opportunity to explore all aspects of work (paid and unpaid) and shape these into a Practice Framework. Our ILP process provides learners with an opportunity to grow professionally in competence and confidence. Reflecting upon experience can also offer valuable personal development as well as enabling learners to gain a qualification.

If you think you match the description of someone with the level of competence, knowledge, and skills required for professional leadership and management as described here and are interested in gaining this qualification through ILP, then contact Capable NZ (see details on reverse of this sheet).

Is ILP the pathway for me?

As a graduate of the Bachelor of Applied Management you will be self-aware, motivated, flexible and an evidence-informed practitioner.

You will grow in understanding of your management and leadership practice whilst continuing to learn through the ILP process, and be able to contribute to the development of new knowledge and to your profession. You will demonstrate the ability to apply specialised technical knowledge to a specific field, as well as a broad range of generic business skills, principles and practices, including safety in the work environment. Displaying well-developed critical thinking capabilities, you will employ creative skills and apply them in an organised approach to problem solving.

You will demonstrate a regard for social responsibility and sustainable practice, as well as an awareness of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in your own business context. Your abilities as an effective communicator will enable you to initiate, inspire, guide and reward the work of others. As a graduate of the Bachelor of Applied Management, you will be self-directed, an effective learner, and have developed a cohesive integrated model of practice inclusive of professional standards and reflective practice.

Comments from ILP graduates

“I truly didn't believe it until they said I'd finished and would graduate with the Bachelor of Applied Management. This recognition of my prior learning is just phenomenal and it's so relevant and so valid. I'd recommend Capable NZ to anyone.”

Shirley Kerr, Bachelor of Applied Management (Strategic Management)

“I've actually been able to apply some of the learning to stuff we're doing here because we're on a journey of change. We're in a period of growth and we need to understand how to get the best out of our people. I'm able to articulate some of that better because of the learning I did through Capable NZ.”

Stuart McDonald, Bachelor of Applied Management (Human Resource Management)

ILP process for experienced management and leadership practitioners

Step 1

Self-assessment

You will discuss your experiences, understandings, and goals with a Capable NZ facilitator to ensure that this degree is the appropriate qualification, and that the ILP process, which can be a demanding but rewarding one, is the most suitable pathway for you.

Step 2

Portfolio of Evidence

The compiling of a significant portfolio which includes:

- > a reflective analysis of early life and influences,
- > an overview of career timelines as they relate to specific management work practice,
- > 2-3 case studies including a review of deep insights using critical reflection and analysis,
- > a detailed analysis of new learning (theory, models, legislation, relevant texts),
- > a final summing up towards a cohesive framework of integrated practice

A Capable NZ facilitator will work with you throughout this learning journey to help you identify case studies from your work practice which highlight your experience, skills and insights. This is in preparation for the following intensive facilitated process. During this phase you will be guided to research relevant theory and explore relevant texts, as well as reflecting on your learning within these case study experiences.

Step 3

Facilitated Preparation for Assessment

In this stage you will work with your facilitator to express your understandings appropriately in developing your submission to the assessment panel. Capable NZ facilitators take a holistic approach to ensure all of your understandings are valued, explored through critical reflection and expressed in a way that demonstrates you meet the graduate profile outcomes and academic standards for the degree. During facilitation you will be supported in shaping and articulating your Practice Framework, and develop a professional Portfolio of Evidence that also includes your case studies. Facilitation can be at a distance and/or face-to-face. The time taken for this stage depends upon your requirements. This will then be peer reviewed prior to assessment.

Step 4

Assessment

There are two parts to the assessment:

- Portfolio of evidence
- An oral presentation

PORTFOLIO

You will submit a portfolio that contains the evidence of your learning gained from experience and prior learning. Your portfolio will also include selected case studies of your practice showing how you apply the knowledge, skills and tools gained from experience and prior learning.

ORAL PRESENTATION

In your presentation you will discuss with the panel key aspects of the learning you have gained from experience that you have described in greater detail in your Portfolio of Evidence. This process functions as a professional conversation with the panel where you present selected material in a holistic way demonstrating your knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the graduate profile assessment criteria. The panel may ask you questions that are designed to enable you to describe and explore aspects of your work with the panel. The assessment panel is made up of suitably experienced assessors who have expertise in assessing these learning pathways and usually includes an academic assessor and a practitioner, often from industry who has experience in the area that you are being assessed in. Following completion of the assessment the assessors will provide direct feedback on the outcome of the assessment and some feedback on key aspects of both the portfolio and the presentation.

Step 4

Report on Assessment

You will receive a written report of your assessment outlining the assessment process and findings of the panel including recommendations regarding the outcomes to award the qualification.

Step 4

Graduation

Your opportunity to celebrate your success and graduate with the Bachelor of Applied Management.

Endorsements

Please go to the following link to read about some of our successful learners:
www.capablenz.co.nz/our-stories/graduate-stories/



For more information

If you have further questions, please contact Capable NZ.
Phone 0800 762 786 Email info@capablenz.co.nz
Visit www.capablenz.co.nz

DISCLAIMER: While every effort is made to ensure that this sheet is accurate, Otago Polytechnic reserves the right to amend, alter or withdraw any of the contained information. The fees shown in this document are indicative ONLY. Both domestic and international fees are subject to change and are dependent on the development and implementation of Government policies. Please note that additional fees may from time to time be required for external examination, NZQA fees and/or additional material fees.

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