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BCATS Literacy and Numeracy Resource Development.

Improving literacy and numeracy in the New Zealand workforce is a priority for all Industry Training Organisations (ITOs).

While a number of ITOs associated with BCATS have been involved in these programmes for some time and have developed or are developing a range of effective approaches in response to the literacy and numeracy needs of their industries, other ITOs are only now beginning to explore and develop strategic solutions to address this problem.

The results of surveys conducted indicate that literacy and numeracy skills of the construction workforce are considerably poorer than the New Zealand workforce in general.

The way workplaces and jobs are structured is changing and the introduction of new technologies, flatter organisational structures, and increasing health and safety requirements are driving up literacy, numeracy and language requirements for an increasing number of occupations.

Secondary schools have an important role to ensure that their students leave school adequately prepared to meet the literacy and numeracy demands needed in different work roles and industries. To assist schools and students understand these demands ITOs in association with Workbase (an Auckland-based literacy specialist organisation) have developed specific literacy profiles for a range of work roles. Literacy profiles can assist schools to identify the relationship between skills for work and NCEA unit standards and achievement standards. These profiles can be found on Workbase's website www.workbase.org.nz

The introductions of self paced learning packages for industry training has been adopted by an increasing number of ITOs and offer another training alternative for industry sectors. Training packages, as the name implies, consist of a number of components packaged together and combine nationally recognised competency unit standards, and resource and assessment material to support and assist training delivery.

Designed to be both flexible and accessible these packages can be customised to meet the requirements of an industry while meeting the requirements of a national qualification.

The numeracy and literacy standards contained in the BCATS domain will provide flexible learning opportunities and increase access for students to learning that is appropriate to their needs and enable them to realise their potential.

BCATS Secondary Schools Pilot Programme

The BCATS Pilot Programme got under way in the participating schools from the start of term 2 on Monday 23rd April.

The purpose of the BCATS Pilot Programme is to evaluate the suitability of the draft

resource, assessment and support material for the draft new unit standards that are currently under development.

While the draft new units have similar common assessment tasks to those contained in the existing Elementary Construction Skills domain, it was necessary to extend the content to accommodate the requirements of the other members of the BETA group.

For example:

The ECS unit standard 12927: *Use basic woodworking tools for elementary construction work.*

Will be replaced with:

CC 203 *Identify, select, use and maintain hand tools used for construction purposes.*

(CC 203 is only a temporary code used by the development team until the unit is registered on the framework at which point it will be allocated a more familiar NZQA identifying number.)

Similarly other ECS unit standards will undergo changes so that they better reflect a wider construction-industry range of tools, materials and processes.

During the pilot, participating schools will be asked to complete a comprehensive evaluation of the resource and assessment material that they are trialling. All comments and feedback will be collated, analysed, and assist in the pre-moderation process before being submitted to NZQA for registration.

The pilot will also provide the opportunity for unit and achievement standards from other secondary school curriculum areas to be evaluated for their suitability and content.

Once the pilot is completed and the feedback analysed, decisions will be made on the final structure of the qualification/s in the domain and the content of the unit standards, resource, assessment and support material.

As indicated in a previous newsletter, the BCITO is committed to introducing the BCATS qualification/s from the beginning of 2008 and will ensure that all of the resource, assessment and support material will be available to schools and tertiary providers before the start of the 2008 year.

BCATS Resource Development

As part of the resource package that will be provided to schools and providers, we intend to produce a tutor's manual that will provide teachers and tutors with a comprehensive range of aids to assist in the delivery of the units in the BCATS programme.

There are some really great results flowing out of existing programmes run by schools and TEO's throughout the country. So if there is something special that is working for you and may benefit others, feel free to let us know and if it is appropriate, we'd love to include it in the manual.

Likewise, if you have some great projects (plans, drawings, specs, photos, descriptions etc), we'd also love to be able to include them and recognise those schools and students who submit them.

Background Information

The number of new contacts on the BCATS database has increased considerably over the last couple of months and there may be some people who would like to receive some overview and background information on the BCATS programme.

If you require this information please contact:

Les Wilson

Project Manager

Building, Construction and Allied Trade Skills (BCATS)

les.wilson@bcito.org.nz
(027) 483 2998

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