

# Smoothing the path to transition

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## What we found

The following key findings emerged from our research:

- Secondary teachers' understanding of the university sector needed urgent revision. With the exception of recently-graduating teachers, or teachers who had recently upskilled through graduate study, secondary teachers were largely unaware of the extent to which tertiary education has changed (pedagogy, tertiary teachers' literacy and IL expectations, learning delivery methods, and assessment) over the last 20 years. They were largely unaware of the range and complexity of assessment forms in tertiary education and the increased demands on students' ability to independently interpret and manage complex tasks.
- Teachers under-estimate the centrality of information literacy in the transition. Information literacy emerged as a central theme in our research, and we subsequently adopted the ANCIL framework as a way of integrating information literacy into the curriculum.
- The impact of NCEA on the transition space is complex. A key finding of this research is that, while teacher perceptions of the management of NCEA have potentially detrimental impacts on the integration of literacy and independent learning strategies in classrooms, the NZ Curriculum and NCEA, particularly following the realignment, have the potential to realise and support the aims of this project.
- The sole focus of many senior secondary students is passing NCEA: while school-based success is obviously important, teachers also need to encourage their students to look past school qualifications to the skills they will need to develop in preparation for tertiary study.
- Providing a peer tutor makes a difference to students' perceptions of the transition. We initiated a peer-support system, using young university students, trained in non-directive peer tutoring methods, to support student learning. However, students perceived the greatest value of this initiative lay in unscheduled discussions about what university was like, the skills required, and how to overcome obstacles.

## What we recommend

### Secondary schools

- There is a need for in-service PLD for senior teachers of text rich secondary school subjects focusing on contemporary academic and information skills teaching within the NCEA context, using the ANCIL framework.
- Pre-service programmes should introduce compulsory instruction in literacy pedagogic content knowledge required for effective instructional practice.
- Measures should be taken to promote NCEA as a qualification that requires teachers to explicitly instruct students in the processes that nurture critically literate thinkers in disciplinary settings, reading and writing skills at advanced academic levels for academic success, and efficient and effective researchers.

- Further exploration is needed into ways to promote the flexibility of NCEA as a tool within which teachers can plan safely for programmes of learning in the context of annual accountability and performativity protocols.

### **Tertiary institutions**

- A mechanism for educating tertiary teachers about the NCEA and the NZ curriculum is needed.
- Tertiary institutions need to actively engage with their catchments' secondary institutions, beyond promotion, recruitment and induction days, in order to reach common understandings about each other's educational setting, pedagogic practices, expectations and academic demands.
- Tertiary institutions consider using academic induction and peer tutors as a way of supporting transitioning students who are at risk (eg first in family) during the senior high school years.

### **Across sectors**

- More pedagogical consistency is needed across the sectors.
- At a policy level, a smoother transition between sectors needs to be considered. We recommend the use of the ANCIL framework to achieve this.
- At a local level, we need to find new ways to bring schools and tertiary institutions together, to share information, expectations, practices, and pedagogy.

### **Research**

- Further investigation into teacher identity, attitudes and beliefs related to literacy is needed across sectors.
- Further research is needed to extend the methods of this research into a broader range of schools
- Further research into the ANCIL framework as a way of enabling transition is needed, particularly within the tertiary sector.
- Future research is needed to extend our findings into the tertiary sector.