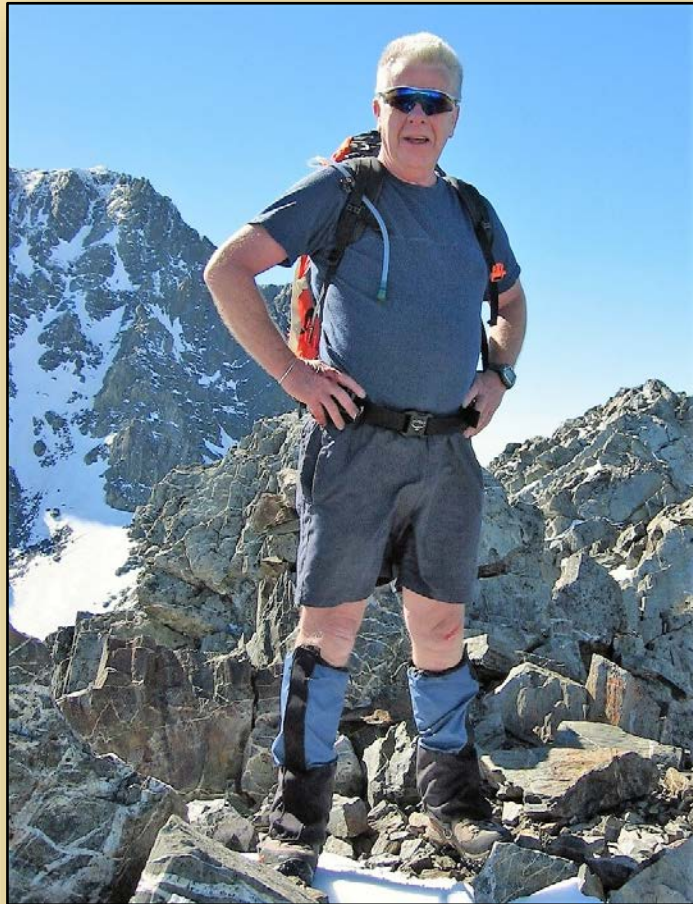


# **The role of the Assessor in the assessment process.**



*An advanced practitioner enquiry prepared for:  
Course Three, Master of Professional Practice, Otago Polytechnic.*

*Lindsay Smith*

*January 2019*

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**Qualification:** Master of Professional Practice

**Title of project:** **The Role of the Assessor in the Assessment process;** identifying the key factors which Assessors contribute to the success of the Assessment of Prior Learning practice within the Capable NZ programme.

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**Date of Submission** 4 December 2018

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**Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), or material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of an institution of higher learning.

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Date: ...9 January 2019.....

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	5
Introduction .....	8
Purpose of project .....	10
Project Methodology .....	10
Research Ethics .....	12
Māori Consultation .....	12
Research Findings .....	13
Historical perspective to education and assessment .....	13
Regulatory Framework for Assessment of Prior Learning.....	17
Assessment at Capable NZ.....	18
Maintaining quality assessment within Capable NZ.....	20
Independent Learning Pathway learner process.....	20
Graduate Profile documentation.....	21
The Role of the Assessor.....	22
Defining Transformational Learning.....	23
Literature review conclusion. ....	25
Research report –.....	26
Stage One - Academic professionals.....	26
Literature Review findings .....	30
Education Professional Interview Responses .....	31
Stage Two – Successful ILP Graduate Interview responses.....	39
Research data collection and collation report.....	43
Project Research Summary.....	45
Project deliverables .....	46
Assessment Model of Practice.....	46
Assessor Position Description.....	47

Assessors Attributes.....	50
Assessor Competency Framework.....	52
Assessor Process Framework.....	55
Assessment Support Documentation .....	57
Recommendations for further development; .....	63
Policy and Documentation Review .....	63
Peer Review Process Review.....	63
Weighting of evidence .....	63
Community of practice .....	63
New Assessor Induction.....	63
Conclusion and reflection .....	64
The Dasler Pinnacle Framework of Successful Practice.....	79
Acknowledgments.....	80
Bibliography .....	81
Appendix A – Stage Two Ethics Application.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix B – Stage One Ethics Approval.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix C – Stage Two Ethics Consent.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix D – Personal and professional resume .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix E – MPP Stage One Review of Learning.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix F – MPP Stage Two Learning Agreement .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix G – Presentation to Professional Practice Symposium, Dec 2018. ...	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix H – Published Scope article, Scope.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

*Cover: Summiting the 2315 m rock challenge “Dasler Pinnacles” on my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

*Kyle Beggs Photo*

## Executive Summary

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This Stage Three advanced practitioner enquiry set out to answer the questions raised in my stage Two Learning Agreement;

- What is the assessment process expected to achieve and what do the Assessors add to the overall outcome?
- Is the role one of an auditor to ensure standards are met or does the assessment and Assessor have a part to play in the learner's transformational learning?
- How does an organisation like Otago Polytechnic then use the answers to these questions to identify, recruit and retain effective Assessors?

As I began the project, I expected to confirm my observation, gained from seven years' experience as an Assessor, that the role's purpose is placed along a continuum ranging between quality assurance and learner support. And as I carried out the literature review phase of this project, it initially appeared that the process was biased towards the assurance end of the scale. The legislation, policies, procedures and guidance documentation available to an Assessor were almost entirely focused on the measurement of achievement against standards.

Further reading into the definition, history, practices and philosophies behind assessment began to show a wider view of the subject and described two distinct and opposing frameworks: Taylor's assessment of ability to carry out a specific task or Dewey's assessment of ability to make a contribution to the learner's community.

The literature also described two approaches to the assessment interview: a passive measurement to confirm the learner's achievement of specific standards or a more active approach where the assessors collaborate with the learner to ensure they give of their best and are encouraged to claim ownership of their knowledge as the basis for informing future actions.

As I entered the research phase of the project and began interviewing the first of nine experienced education professionals and six successful Capable NZ graduates, I had returned to my original thinking and sought to define the Assessor's place on the continuum between auditor and collaborator. After the early interviews, as I documented the key issues raised by the interviewees, I attempted to locate each of these issues along a hypothetical continuum but increasingly found comments which did not neatly "fit the boxes".

There was a third aspect of importance to both education professionals and the learners - the need for assessments to contribute to the unique, disruptive approach to education which is the cornerstone of Capable NZ's learner centred approach. Considering a way of referring to each of these three key issues, Assurance, Learning and Culture, I developed a new model of assessment practice and this created a framework to collate the research data received.



*Figure 1 Model of Assessment Practice. L Smith, 2018*

From the detailed, individual comments and responses, the research suggested themes and common issues, and these were grouped into a simplified report which was used to inform the creation of specific project deliverables. The purpose of these is to provide practical documentation to contribute to Assessor selection, training, development and practice, which in turn will improve the quality assurance, learner experience and growth of the Capable NZ kaupapa.

In parallel to the time spent on externally focused sections of the project, I spent regular periods reflecting on my own learning during this time and documenting this new knowledge and the resulting changes to my professional practice. Maintaining the adventure experience theme which has run throughout my Capable NZ learning since 2007, I have used Rock Climbing symbolism in the final step of this project which describes my new Framework of Practice shown on Page 79.

At the completion of this programme, I acknowledge that as the researcher, I will be a primary beneficiary of this project. My research, report development and reflection have created a better understanding of my roles and responsibilities as an Assessor, and by using this learning and personal development I will be able to carry out the assessments more effectively and ensure more students achieve transformational learning, in addition to achieving a formal certification.

As a result of this project, I have certainly gained greater clarity of my role as an Assessor, and have identified the impact of my professional practice on those being assessed, those I assess with and the many educational professionals who contribute to the success of the Capable NZ programme.

It is clear that my role as an Assessor is not to look back at a learner's experience and learning and to "mark" it but to work with the learner to help them to look forward to a future where they can use what they have learned to address issues, situations and challenges they haven't yet faced. Understanding this responsibility has subtly changed my professional practice in that my research and reflection have given me permission to actively engage in the learner's growth, to act with a new intent and to treasure the privilege of being a collaborator in the assessment. This understanding, and the results of the research, confirm the importance of my preparation for the assessment if I am to be able to contribute to the learner's transformation

I am confident that my research will also offer value to the wider Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) sector of tertiary education within Otago Polytechnic by helping leadership to more clearly understand the role of Assessors and to assist in the identification and development of those who could become effective Assessors.

This project has documented the roles, duties, skills and experience required of an Assessor who is able to ensure educational standards are maintained, who can contribute to the transformational learning experience of Capable NZ learners and who will maintain and develop the unique Capable NZ culture. The project has the potential to improve future learners' experience as the Assessors' role is now more clearly defined, and the selection of future Assessors facilitated. Ideally, Assessors will be able to better identify the actions and attributes necessary to enhance the learner's personal transformational experience.

## Introduction

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Capable NZ, an Otago Polytechnic School, has developed world-leading assessment methods which value the prior learning of individuals who want to become qualified. Ker (Ker 2017) describes how Capable NZ measures new learning, facilitated during the programme, and existing capability gained through years of work and life experience, against an actual qualification and gives academic credit through a fully personalised, Independent Learning Pathway (ILP).

ILP provides an assessment of existing learning against a whole qualification using the academic benchmark of a Graduate Profile. In addition, specialist programme Facilitators guide learners through critical reflection and self-assessment, as they progress on a journey of new learning and personal development, culminating in the creation of their own personal Portfolio of Evidence which is then presented, in person, to a panel of educational and industry professionals for assessment.

Following completion of my own ILP and gaining a Bachelor of Applied Management in 2007, I have been privileged to contribute to this process as an Assessor of undergraduate qualifications for the last seven years. Reviewing the impact of the Capable NZ process on my own professional practice, reflecting on the experience gained as a member of many assessment panels and recent post-graduation interviews with successful students, suggested that learners travel through three stages of learning. The first begins with their documentation of their experience as they create their Portfolio of Evidence. With the help of their Facilitator they develop that initial data collection into an appreciation of the learning derived from their experience and this growth signals the second stage. It is one of the key factors to be demonstrated during their presentation to the Assessment Panel. *“Experience is not enough, it is the learning gained from the experience which must be evident.”* (Evans 1988, P7)

Once that second stage has been reached, and requirements of the appropriate Graduate Profile have been demonstrated to the Assessment Panel, the learner is deemed to have passed and the qualification is awarded.

But in reviewing the Capable programme, there appeared to be a third level reached by some candidates in the weeks and months following their formal assessment; an active acknowledgement of ownership of their new learning and a change in behaviour based on the empowerment resulting from that ownership. It is this third level that signals that genuine transformational learning has taken place and which is the real measure of success of the Capable programme.



Learners who embark on the year-long Capable NZ pathway of study for an undergraduate degree usually have a clear expectation of the value of the qualification they will achieve. By definition, students using the Capable option will already have significant experience in their chosen career but, in many cases, have decided to gain their first tertiary qualification for an employment related reason.

During my seven years as a Capable NZ Assessor, sitting on the panel assessment process which completes the Capable NZ programme, I have noted that when asked to describe their reason for beginning the study, learners will frequently point to a specific issue which triggered the need for action. It may have been dissatisfaction in their current position, a vision of a higher-level career or a concern at their ability to compete against younger, more qualified job applicants in their industry. Recurrent restructurings, corporate take-overs and constant changes leave many mid-level managers feeling at risk without formal qualifications and they plan to use the Capable process to add a recognised and accepted label to their undocumented years of experience.

But while the need for formal recognition from employers may have been the primary motivation for the majority of learners, during the assessment a significant proportion talk of the added benefits they discovered during the process. They will frequently tell the panel members of a deeply personal, transformative experience which came from reflecting on their lives and the new things they learned. They are able to gain affirmation by placing their own experiences within established theoretical frameworks; they excitedly discuss academic readings which have pushed their boundaries, and can point to a new level of understanding of the major influences and influencers which impacted their personal and professional lives.

As each assessment ends with detailed feedback from the assessment panel members, you cannot help but wonder at the longer-term value of the new qualification for the learner and the impact of their success on the employment and personal expectations they had months ago when they began. I had been fortunate to gain an insight into the value of the Capable NZ programme when researching and writing an article for Scope in 2016. (Appendix H, Page 138). Interviewing two Māori learners for the paper, it was clear that their Capable experience had been genuinely transformational for them both, and I was keen to find out what part their assessment had played in their personal and professional growth.

## Purpose of project

As a Capable NZ Assessor, I wanted to better understand the value of the role, and the purpose of the assessment task itself in helping learners achieve true, transformational learning and during stage two of this MPP study identified three questions which established a framework for this project. The following areas were identified:

- What is the assessment process expected to achieve and, more specifically, what do the Assessors add to the overall outcome?
- Is the role one of an auditor to ensure Polytech and NZQA standards are maintained or do the assessment and Assessor have a part to play in the learner's transformational learning?
- How does an organisation like Otago Polytechnic then use the answers to these questions to identify, recruit and retain effective Assessors who are able to improve the contribution they can make to the transformational experience?

## Project Methodology

In order to attempt to answer these three questions, my project methodology was designed to test my own autoethnographic understanding against research from three key sources of information which, between them, appeared likely to hold the answers:

- Literature relevant to assessment, prior learning and transformational learning
- New Zealand education industry professionals with experience in APL
- Learners who had successfully completed their qualification using an IPL pathway.

I considered the research options available to collect the data needed to allow me to address the three issues identified and my early considerations were impacted by my marketing background and the models of research common in that business practice. Initially I developed a series of questionnaires which could be sent to randomly and independently selected members of the target audience. My primary concern was to gain statistically significant data while addressing the risk that my research would be biased because my personal opinions would flavour the questions and undermine the accuracy and value of the results.

But the randomly selected survey methodology first considered, risked missing the knowledge and opinion of key industry professionals if they were not were selected. Such research methodology would also limit opportunities to collect information auto-ethnographically and to acknowledge the importance of story-telling - my own, and those from the widest practical range of people impacted by the Capable NZ assessment process.

A mixed methodology approach was developed to allow me to address these risks by using self-reflection and personal interviews to identify the issues and outcomes from each person's perspective.

Initially, my research data came from a literature review of the wide range of factors associated with assessment. I then individually interviewed two groups of participants who, from their perspective, identified the importance and effectiveness of various aspects of the assessment stage of the Capable process. These groups ensured the data collected was representative of the issues and experiences of learners and stakeholders, not the researcher.

- **Group One** consisted of nine education industry professionals including Assessors, Māori Assessors, Facilitators, Quality Assurance professionals and the Capable NZ Leadership team. They were selected in discussion with my Academic Supervisor and were invited to attend a one-hour, individual interview. This interview identified their perceptions and key issues associated with the Assessment Phase of the ILP and discussed the Assessor's contribution to those issues.
- **Group Two** consisted of six successful learners who had completed the assessment process. They were selected by the Capable Administration Manager and were invited to attend a one-hour, individual interview. This interview identified their perceptions and their key issues associated with the Assessment Phase of the ILP and discussed the Assessor's contribution to those issues.

Although I developed a discussion framework for each of the interviewed groups, I did recognise the need to ensure that the issues and comments were driven by the attendees and avoided researching my own perspective and biases. For that reason, I did not pre-create questionnaires for either of the groups. The framework used for the research is shown on page 88, in the Ethics Application which is attached as Appendix A.

The literature review, research input from industry professionals and interview responses from successful learners, provided clear evidence of the attributes needed by an Assessor and the processes needed to support assessment and these are detailed in the research data collection and collation reports beginning on page 26. This research output has allowed me to develop practical documents which will assist everyone involved in future learners' independent pathways to provide effective and transformative assessments.

### Research Ethics

Full Category A Ethics Approval was required for this project and two ethics applications were submitted and approved. The first related to the interviews conducted with education industry professionals and the completed Ethics Form was approved by the Otago Polytechnic's Ethics Committee on 6 April 2018. The second application related to the research conducted with successful capable NZ graduates and that application was approved on 20 July 2018. The application and the approvals are attached as Appendices A, B & C, Pages 83 - 95.

### Māori Consultation

Earlier work completed for the Scope article suggested that there may be specific aspects of the Capable assessment process which align with Māori educational kaupapa and a better understanding of the assessment process may be useful in enhancing that alignment. The Otago Polytechnic's Kaitohutohu office reviewed the project and identified potential benefits for Māori and following a successful meeting, we agreed on a process for ensuring Māori representation in the two interview groups.

Following these recommendations, I was able to interview two Māori education professionals with specific experience in assessing Māori learners within the Capable NZ setting and two Māori graduate learners and their general and specific Māori perspective contributions are included in this research report and informs the material and recommendations presented.

## Research Findings

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This research report presents the results of the research carried out under six key headings:

- A historical review of educational assessment so as to understand the development of the assessment process.
- The policy and legislative framework for assessment in New Zealand.
- The Otago Polytechnic and Capable NZ assessment documentation and the process mapping available to Assessors.
- Definitions for Assessment and Transformative Learning
- Findings of experience and expectations from key industry professionals associated with Assessment of Prior Learning
- Findings of experience and expectations from successful learners who have completed an Assessment of their prior learning.

### Historical perspective to education and assessment

The Capable New Zealand process of facilitated learning is considered “disruptive education” by Otago Polytechnic Chief Executive Phil Ker and it is useful to understand the history underpinning the programme in order to identify the place of the Assessor in the professional practice and process.

For much of early human history, education was focused on earning the skills to survive and the only assessment was the life or death outcome of your success in learning. Young people were entered into apprenticeships to more experienced tribal or village members, often in gender-based roles, where they learned by watching and doing so as to be able to achieve mastery of the means of delivering Maslow’s Physiological needs of food, water, clothing and shelter (Maslow 1943).

The clear focus of this teaching was on creating an effective and efficient contributor to the community and success in achieving the required skills were measured by success in delivering a useful outcome; a hunter could deliver food to the village; a farmer could deliver crops and a weaver could create durable clothing. Any sense of formal, classroom teaching as we would understand it was then limited to a more ‘discipleship’ model where the necessary skills, and sometime arcane information was passed from the ‘priest’ to the acolyte.

Even as late as the 1700s, education was not considered a specialist professional discipline and the role of “teacher” in a village or town was unknown, except in the houses of the elite where tutors were employed to maintain the superiority of their children over others by schooling them in language, literature and mathematics. But as towns grew, and the growing middle class could see the value of education for their children, communities created the teaching roles and used existing organisations, such as local government and the church, to hire and manage teachers.

Clergy were considered ideal choices for this role because of their extensive education and ability to create compliant citizens to support their society within the moral frameworks of religious instruction and civic responsibility. The teacher was considered a servant of the community, and where there was any form of formal assessment, it was usually led by a community appointed Supervisor and aimed at measuring the success of the teacher in delivering citizens, rather than any measurement of student skills or outcomes (Robert J. Marzano 2011).

As the Industrial Revolution created larger urban areas throughout the Western world in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the number, size and complexity of schools grew, as did the demand for teachers who held subject specific expertise and for ‘principal’ teachers with the administrative skills to manage these schools. (Tracy n.d.). About this time, it was acknowledged that clergy didn't necessarily have the knowledge base to make informed judgments about teacher effectiveness. Tracy explains, "*Rather than simply understanding the mores of the community, the supervisor now needed to have subject area knowledge and teaching skills*"

By the mid-1800s there was a growing realisation that those appointed by the community to supervise schools had responsibility for ensuring teachers were taught how to teach. Blumberg (Blumberg 1985) notes that at this time supervision began to focus on improving instruction for teachers and he offers the example of the 1845 document titled *The Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools of the State of New York* which proposed the idea of bringing teachers together for one day of instruction – an early example of today's teacher-only day.

As education progressed through the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, two competing views of education came to epitomise the transition of teaching from the old to the new and this change was best typified by the views of Americans Dewey and Taylor. John Dewey believed democracy was the underpinning of human progress and he argued that schools should be organised so that students could practise citizenship and further develop the ideals of democracy (Dewey 1938). He espoused ideas such as a student-centred education, connecting the classroom to the real world and integration of content areas, as ways of transitioning students from their passive role as learners to the active role they would need to play as citizens.

Frederick Taylor's influence on education came from a scientific view of management, believing that measurement of specific behaviours of factory workers was perhaps the most powerful means to improve production. By studying the various ways a task could be performed, the "*one best method*" could be determined (Taylor 1911, reprinted 2007). According to Taylor, these principles could be applied to discrete tasks such as shovelling coal and to more systemic tasks such as the selection of workers, development of training programmes, and processes for dividing labour. Taylor's ideas resonated with engineers and business owners, and colleges of engineering and business were well positioned to infuse his principles into their courses and educators began to view measurement as the ultimate tool for a more scientific approach to schooling.

Originally published in 1916, Cubberley's book "*Public School Administration*" described how Taylor's principles could be used to manage schools in the same way factories are managed:

*"Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of twentieth century civilization and is the business of the school to build its pupils according to the specifications laid down."* (Cubberley 1929, P 229).

Based on the factory metaphor, Cubberley laid out a set of principles for school administrators that emphasised measurement and analysis of data to ensure that teachers and schools were productive. In the third edition of his book, *Public School Administration*, Cubberley provided specific examples of how a scientific approach could be applied by a supervisor when visiting teachers' classrooms and the modern focus on measurement, data collection and performance assessment against formally defined standards began.

In New Zealand today, that tension between the views of Taylor and Dewey remains and colours the selection, implementation and analysis of assessment tools within our education system. Generally speaking, the politically right-wing parties have favoured the views of Taylor and, over the past nine years, introduced national standard assessment for pupils at all levels. The results of these assessments were publicly published in league tables comparing the results of all schools in New Zealand. A recent Minister of Education proposed a step further, where the achievement results of each teacher would be analysed, and their reward and recognition would be calculated based on their students' success in the national standards.

The recently elected left-wing coalition takes a different view and one of their first actions following the election was to scrap assessment against national standards, with a view to developing their view of an education system to prepare people for the future.

Rather than a focus on the three Rs of the previous government, the Labour Party's election manifesto listed a range of what are generally known as softer skills. *"We will need to be resilient, creative, and adaptable, have great communication and interpersonal skills, and be prepared to work collaboratively as well as independently."*

*Students and teachers have become overloaded with assessment and the accumulation of credits, often meaning our kids miss out on important life skills. We need to be scaling back the excessive emphasis on constantly assessing students and scaling up our commitment to practical life skills that they need, in the workplace, in their day to day lives, and as members of the community."* (Party 2017).

This tension between the approaches of Taylor and Dewey comes into clear focus in the assessment of achievement within the frameworks of the taught programme of a "traditional" educational institute and the Assessment of Prior Learning in disruptive educational environments such as Capable NZ and identifies one of the core questions of this research.

Does our assessment focus on measuring achievement of Taylor's "One Best Method" or does it aim to identify the totality of the learner's ability to contribute to their community?

The question becomes even more relevant when considered in the face of the changing employment outlook in New Zealand, and indeed the world. In 1984 Charles Handy wrote *The Future of Work* (Handy 1984) in which he discussed the increasingly rapid disappearance of traditional jobs, employment and career structures and the need to tailor our education to face these challenges. He described the English education system, with its Taylor-based focus on giving people specific skills for specific jobs as a "disabling system" where half the students left school as failures.

Handy's answer was a return to the Dewey approach where education is aimed at preparing people for life, whatever that might mean and for whatever employment or unemployment options that might offer. I was fortunate to attend a Handy workshop in the 1990s and heard him expound the theory that education should provide for opportunities which do not even exist today, because we cannot imagine what technology will deliver in 15 years' time. You cannot teach the students the specific skills needed for these jobs, but you can teach them how to be creative, consultative, collaborative and curious - the key aspects of the Independent Learning Pathway offered by Capable New Zealand.



## Regulatory Framework for Assessment of Prior Learning

While proud of its creative development of learner focused qualifications, the Otago Polytechnic understands that it must operate within well-defined legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks and has documented a range of formal policies to ensure an Assessor does apply their professional practice within these boundaries and limitations.

In New Zealand, funding for tertiary education comes from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) which leads the Government's relationship with the tertiary education sector in New Zealand. They invest nearly \$2.8 billion into tertiary education each year to ensure New Zealanders are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for lifelong success and it is their funding rules which guide what education is paid for by the government.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is responsible for ensuring that tertiary education organisations continue to comply with the statutory policies and criteria after initial programme approval and accreditation is granted.

Compliance is confirmed through periodic external evaluation and review which provide an independent judgement of the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of all non-university tertiary education organisations (TEOs).

NZQA judges educational performance by the extent to which the educational outcomes achieved by the TEO represent quality and value for learners and the wider community and this is evaluated by answering questions focused primarily on the quality of learning and teaching, and the achievements of learners. Judgements on capability in self-assessment indicate how effectively an organisation uses self-assessment information to understand performance and bring about improvement.

Through periodic external evaluation and review TEOs are held accountable to their students, employers, funders, quality assurance bodies and other interested parties. The review process also provides information to support improvement across the tertiary education sector.

In order to meet the TEC and NZQA directions, the Otago Polytechnic has a significant range of formally documented policies which determine the procedures and protocols which guide the Polytechnic's operation. These are detailed on the organisation's website at [www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/](http://www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/).

When considering the Capable school, and the assessment process in particular, the following policy, **Recognition of Prior Learning, AP0501.10** describes the nature of recognition of prior learning and the relevant policies for its application and administration, including issues of enrolment, fees, appeals and academic results.

Specific guidance for an Assessor comes from the section headed Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) This states, *“The applicant must provide evidence that the learning outcomes in the target course have been acquired from relevant experience in the workplace, community or other settings and/or courses that have been completed elsewhere. An APEL assessment would consider the whole of a person’s learning from experience. This may result in a mix of outcomes including cross credits, credit transfer, advanced standing or a complete qualification assessment and credit where appropriate.”*

Further guidance comes from the policy **Assessment, APO900.06** which sets out policies and procedures which govern assessment within the Polytechnic to ensure that all assessment is learner-centred, valid, fair and consistent. This policy details four key factors:

1. Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process and will be learner-centred. Assessment, including assessment of prior learning (APL), measures student learning towards achieving the stated learning outcomes of a particular course and/or programme.
2. Assessment will take many forms and use a variety of methods to enable learners to provide evidence congruent with learning outcomes.
3. Assessment must be transparent, fair and relevant and must not create any unnecessary barriers to learning progression. The purpose of assessment is to be made explicit to learners at all times.
4. Assessment events and methods must be valid, reliable and practicable.

It is clear that the Assessor has a formal responsibility to ensure that there is a clear, valid and reliable evidence trail to support the decision made. Ideally, an independent Assessor, reviewing the portfolio, presentation material and assessment report would achieve the same decision as the assessment panel.

### Assessment at Capable NZ

This project focuses on the Otago Polytechnic’s Capable NZ summative assessment process which is held at the completion of each learner’s period of study and personal reflection. For a period of ten months, the learner has worked through the process to prepare themselves for assessment. The assessment is required to provide reliable and valid results, as described in the Legislative Framework, the Polytech’s policies and quality guidance documentation but it must also meet the Capable New Zealand culture which prides itself on learner focused education.

Frequently learners presenting to Capable NZ will talk of their previous difficulties at secondary or tertiary level education, where their learning style failed to align with the educator focused structure of the institution where they were “given” knowledge by the experts and then “tested” as to how well they had understood and retained that knowledge. The Capable NZ process shows a learner-focused approach where a Facilitator supports the learner to identify knowledge already gained and to identify areas for growth and methods of achieving that growth. Assessment of learners from this framework is notable in that it positively seeks to understand the learner’s strengths rather than to identify the things a learner doesn’t know.

As a result, the Capable assessment process is much more closely aligned to Wood’s definition of educational measurement which has been designed to find out ‘How well’ rather than ‘How many’. Wood’s definition of educational measurement is that it:

- *deals with the individual’s achievement relative to himself rather than to others;*
- *seeks to test for competence rather than for intelligence;*
- *occurs in uncontrolled conditions and does not produce ‘well-behaved’ data;*
- *looks for ‘best’ rather than ‘typical’ performances;*
- *is most effective when rules and regulations characteristic of standardized testing are relaxed;*
- *embodies a constructive outlook on assessment where the aim is to help rather than sentence the individual. (Wood 1986, 194).*

Before commencing this research project, my own development as an Assessor at Capable NZ led me to understand that the assessment process at Capable was different, in that it had to be both institutionally and learner focused. My “apprenticeship” into Capable assessment ensured that I was able to provide auditable evidence of achievement while allowing for the flexibility of educational experience driven by the learner.

My early management experience, and Deming’s continuous improvement cycle of “plan, do, check, act” had created a very measurement focused approach to assessment of performance. (Deming 1993) But my later exposure to what I have called “psycho-social” management practice grew a greater appreciation of the wider factors at play when considering an individual’s achievements and by bringing both together, like the Red Queen, I am now able to do “six impossible things before breakfast” and can both measure how many and how well in a Capable Assessment.

But what I was unable to identify was any formal documentation detailing how to make such impossible decisions, how to weight the comparative importance of how well and how many and what considerations and competencies were needed to give certainty to assessment decisions.

### Maintaining quality assessment within Capable NZ

The specific policies and procedures relating to assessment are also detailed in the Capable NZ Academic and Operations Process Manual and are the responsibility of the Capable NZ Assessment Committee.

The Capable NZ Assessment Committee is responsible for;

- Monitoring the implementation of OP assessment policies within Capable NZ.
- Monitoring the overall assessment processes used in each academic programme.
- Ensuring that assessment processes and assessment instruments are clearly aligned with programme outcomes and appropriate criteria are in place to enable consistent application of assessment instruments.
- Responding, via the student representative, to learner feedback.
  
- Consulting with academic coordinators to implement a moderation process that will assure fair, transparent, valid and reliable assessment in all programmes
- Advising programme coordinators and programme leaders of the outcomes of the moderation process.

While the entire quality framework is well documented, there is a need for a review of much of the Otago Polytechnic and Capable NZ material to achieve better alignment between the policies and the learning framework in place. For example, many policies refer to Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) but the current Capable NZ actual processes and practices are focused on the much more active Independent Learning Pathways engagement with learners.

### Independent Learning Pathway learner process

The operational and quality management processes guiding Capable NZ are detailed in the Capable NZ Academic and Operations Process Manual. This document, and the associated policies and procedures it links to, give guidance to Capable NZ staff and contractors to allow them to carry out their roles effectively, while meeting the needs of learners, Otago Polytechnic and qualification issuing authorities.

## Graduate Profile documentation

The achievement standards for each of the individual undergraduate qualification programmes supported by Capable NZ are described in detail in the document Graduate Profiles and Assessment Matrices dated January 2015. Similar documents are available for every other qualification.

These documents provide clear direction to the Assessors and Assessment Panels, describing the generic abilities each successful candidate will be able to demonstrate. The document also details the competencies required for each of the qualifications' majors, where applicable, and provides guidance for the panel in setting a grade level for each learner's achievement.

The final decision and the report prepared by the Assessment Panel should be referenced to evidence of the learner's abilities to meet the standards defined in the relevant Graduate Profile, the associated Major and give evidence of the reasoning for the grade awarded.

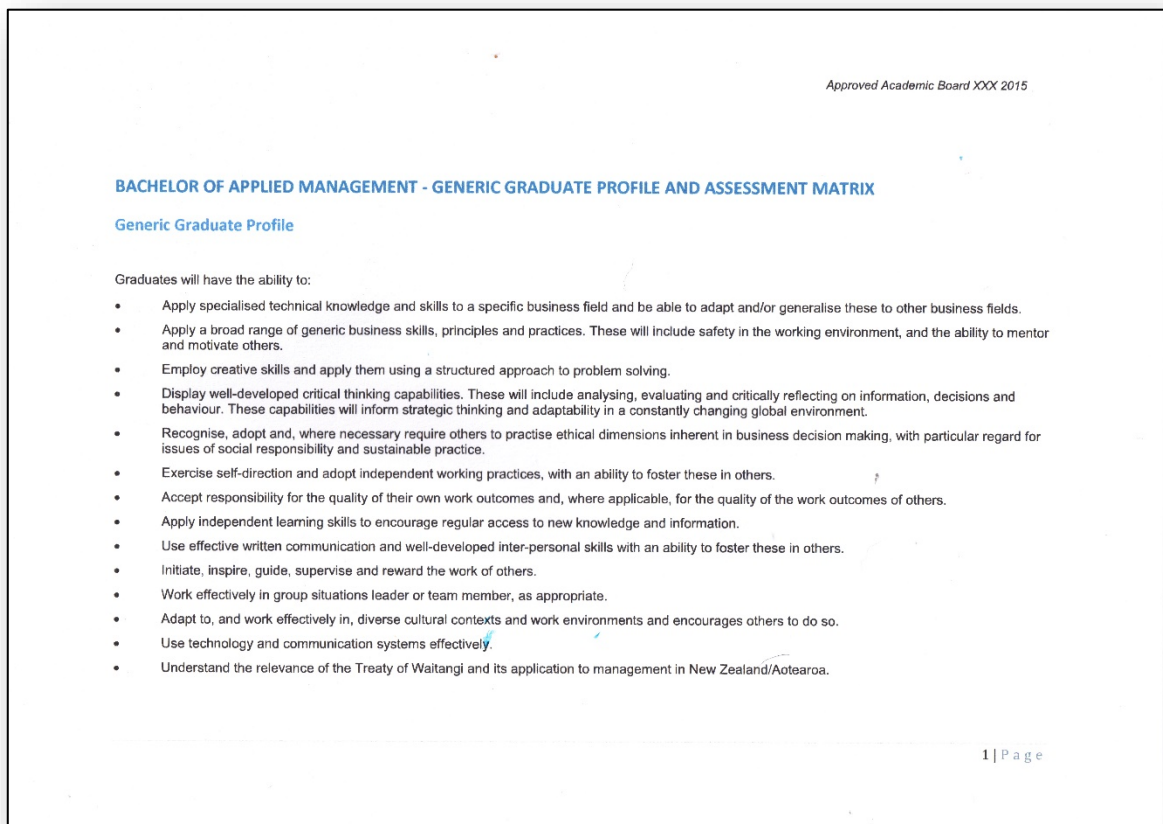


Figure 2 Example of Graduate Profile overview. Otago Polytechnic document 2015

### The Role of the Assessor

The policies and processes described above, and further readings to better understand the role of the Assessor, reinforced the literature's focus on the assessment or audit aspect of the Assessor's role. The majority of Otago Polytechnic's policies and the research papers I initially read refer to the need for the Assessor to have appropriate technical skills so that they can judge the quality of the learner's knowledge.

Johnson and Geal describe the commonly accepted audit view of the role. "You should be selected as an Assessor because you have some basic characteristics. These are an ability to: observe accurately behaviours and the impact of those behaviours, be objective in your observations, record the observations accurately and assess the observed behaviours against the required criteria and objectives. (Johnson 2014).

Robin Day and Faiyaz H. Devjee described this evidential focus in some detail in *Otago Polytechnic's Experience in Establishing a Centre of Assessment of Prior Learning*, by setting out the framework needed to ensure that the learner's material is current, relevant, repeatable, authentic, verifiable, equitable and sufficient. (Day n.d.)

These readings appeared to provide an early answer to my project question, "is the role of the Assessor an auditor or do they contribute to the transformational learning", particularly when considered in conjunction with the legislative and policy frameworks directing an Assessor. Clearly our role is to provide assurance that the evidence we have gained is sufficient to establish with confidence that the learner has met all the requirements of the assessment.

But Ker (Ker 2017) is quite clear that the role of the Capable NZ programme is to provide a platform for transformational learning and so the question then becomes, what can an Assessor do to contribute to the transformational learning? Is there a part for the assessment panel and assessment process in the transformation, or is that aspect of the Capable programme the responsibility of others?

## Defining Transformational Learning

Transformative Learning Theory was developed and first presented by Mezirow and Marsick in 1978 in a collaboration which gave birth to the theory. Since then Mezirow has written so extensively that it has become ‘his’ theory (Mezirow 1991)

“Transformative learning is understood as 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”. In describing how the transformation occurs, Mezirow’s Transformational Learning Theory lists of four main components, “Experience, critical reflection, rational discourse and action” and these components mirror a successful learner’s progress through the Capable NZ programme.



Figure 3 Mezirow's four stages of transformation; diagram by L Smith, 2018

Every learner will have amassed sufficient *experience* to pass the Capable programme’s entry screening and will then work with their Facilitator to document that experience and complete a *critical reflection* of the learning coming from that experience. It is the new learning which comes from this process which forms the core of the successful Capable experience.

Stevens, Gerber and Hendra explain how Facilitators foster critically reflective practice by challenging learners to pick an event and ask themselves what happened. Second, they need to analyse and interpret the event by asking themselves such questions as, “Why did things happen this way? Why did I act the way I did? How did the context affect the experience? Did past experiences affect the way I reacted?” Third, people have to make sense of the event by asking themselves, “What have I learned from this event? How can I improve? How might this change my future thinking, behaving, interactions?” (Stevens 2010, P5).

But in order to move to the third stage of Mezirow’s theory, the learner must enter into a “rational discourse” to describe, defend and internalise their new understanding of their experiences before they can use these understandings to guide future actions. Rational discourse is the essential medium through which transformation is promoted and developed.

However, in contrast to everyday discussions, it is used “*when we have reason to question the comprehensibility, truth, appropriateness, or authenticity of what is being asserted or to question the credibility of the person making the statement.*” (Mezirow 1991, P77).

Clearly Mezirow provides an explanation of the contribution an Assessor makes to transformational learning. The Capable NZ assessment and Assessors provide the forum for that discourse and their actions in that forum contribute to the transformational learning. By challenging the learner's comprehension and authenticity of knowledge, the assessment creates a forum where evidence of achievement can be collected for quality assurance purposes. But the assessment also creates a forum where the learner can claim personal ownership of their learning and it is that internalisation of the learning from experience which gives the learner the confidence to use that knowledge to inform future decision making and actions.

Having established that Mezirow's *Rational Discourse* contributes to transformational learning, I was interested to learn what an Assessor actually did during the assessment; what actions trigger a rational discourse? And what's the difference between a rational discourse assessment and an assessment which steps through a list of pre-prepared questions in order to find out where the learner has gaps in their knowledge?

My own recent management experience working in mental health had led me to develop the term *psycho-social management*. This is an acknowledgement that there are often a range of factors in play in any discussion between two or more people and further reading confirmed by own belief that there was a relationship aspect to the assessment process. Gallagher wrote that traditionally, the assessment of the competent practical performance of professionals places a high level of confidence upon the ability of a second party to judge whether students are able to apply theory in practical contexts. More often than not, the specific assessment tool has a clear focus on the conduct of skills to meet explicit performance criteria. (Gallagher 2010).

When such assessment tools are designed there is also particular challenge to counter the potential for conscious or unconscious bias on the part of the Assessor. Gallagher argued that in the conduct of any assessment the Assessor is as much an integral part of the assessment as is the student and Mezirow's perspective has clear implications for the role of the Assessor in the preparation, conduct and outcome of the assessment of practice-related activities.

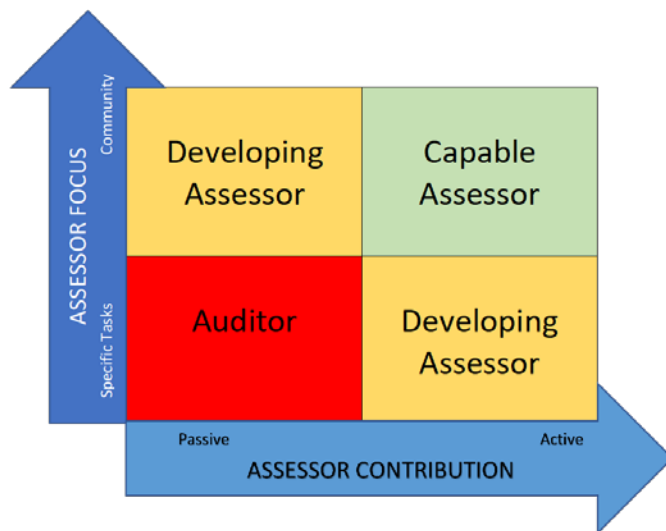
This project is particularly focused on the last two components of Mezirow's process, where the learner's completed portfolio and presentation to the Assessment Panel form the *rational discourse* and the Assessment Panel's actions create successful internalisation of the claimed learning, thereby providing the learner with the courage to take *action* post-graduation.



### Literature review conclusion.

My literature review led me to create the visual below, describing the four quadrants of Assessment practice; are we measuring Taylor's specific skills or Dewey's community contribution and are we doing the assessment as a Johnson auditor or an active, Gallagher participant in the Assessment? Are we measuring Wood's "how well or how many"?

The literature review suggests that a passive Assessor with a focus on task measurement is acting as a quality-control auditor with no contribution to transformative learning. A learner-focused



Capable NZ Assessor however, actively participates in the Assessment to encourage the learner to give of their best, to take ownership of their learning, so as to gain the transformation needed to act differently in the future.

An ideal Capable NZ Assessor is able to move equally through all four quadrants within any Assessment, meeting quality control requirements while collaborating with the learner to assist them to achieve transformative learning and a better future.

Figure 4; showing the four quadrants of Assessment. L Smith 2018

Having established the literature-based framework for assessment, the research

phase of this project moved to investigate the role of the Assessor in completing Mezirow's stages by discussing the Assessor's actions, attributes and competencies with industry professionals with experience of assessment and with learners who had their experience and reflections assessed.

The aim of this research was to ask, "how does a successful Assessor contribute to the required rational discourse and what can they do to give the learner the "courage" to claim ownership of their learning as a platform on which to base future actions".

## Research report –

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In this section I detail the feedback I received from the interviewees who contributed to my project as described in the methodology section on page 10. Throughout this section I have tested my own autoethnographic views of assessment against those expressed through the interviewees' comments and sorted the results into the framework of practice which developed as I reflected on the material I had received.

Given the open-ended questioning used to guide the interviews, it was not desirable to report findings with a tabular, mathematical methodology; each interviewee created their own issues of importance and answered them in a free-form manner. I have chosen to record their feedback by using "direct quotations" to describe their comments on the issues identified and to aggregate points of commonality with the numbered Research References. These common issues were then used to inform the project outputs, creating linkage between the research and the recommendations on which they are based.

### Stage One - Academic professionals

My Learning Agreement identified Academic Professionals as a vital source of primary information for input into my research. I considered several options to collect the research data required and selected an inductive, interview methodology as the means of collecting that information. While my initial thought was to conduct the research using a deductive survey methodology, as discussed in my introductory section, that option carried the limitation of restricting input to answering the questions I asked, rather than focusing on the issues and responses the professionals considered important.

My final choice was to identify which industry professionals to interview and that selection was driven by the need to interview those who could make a positive contribution to the research and who would be willing to share their knowledge and personal reflections with me. Guiding my selection was my own experience of working alongside these people within the Capable NZ setting and my own reflections on the differing viewpoints they had expressed during discussions in recent years.

In addition to those working within the Otago Polytechnic's employment framework, either as a staff member or contractor, I interviewed a Head of Department, with significant educational experience and responsibility for assessment, from a New Zealand university.

In total, I was able to interview 9 industry professionals with direct experience of the assessment of prior learning and the matrix below demonstrates the wide range of knowledge they were able to contribute to my research. In addition, I interviewed 6 successful graduates.

Interview Matrix	Experienced Assessor	IPL Programme developer	Maori Education perspective	IPL Programme facilitation	External to Capable NZ	Capable NZ Graduates
	8	4	4	6	3	6

Figure 5; Matrix of interviewee experience. L Smith 2018

In each interview, I began by asking the interviewee what issues they thought important to discuss in the hour available, and then followed their direction by discussing the issues they raised. There were certainly clear similarities running through all responses; in particular a pride in the alternative educational opportunity offered by Capable NZ and a determination that standards be maintained for the good of the programme, the Polytechnic and the learner. But there were also differences across a range of issues and by capturing these I was able to identify areas where clarification, standardisation or process improvement may be of value and these issues are included in my report below.

Initially, the industry professional interview responses reinforced my view that assessment has two main purposes – to ensure each learner meets the required standard and to contribute to the learning process begun with the facilitated learning.

But in reviewing the recordings, transcripts and notes and attempting to categorise the material into either academic standard or learner support themes, it became clear that there was a third aspect to the Assessment process; the need to recognise and enhance the unique learning culture provided by Capable NZ. The interviews strongly suggested that my original continuum hypothesis was too limiting. From the perspective of the interviewees, an assessment doesn't simply sit somewhere along a continuum between academic standards and supporting a learner in their learning process. The professionals interviewed suggested that a successful assessment also contributes a third aspect; maintenance of and contribution to the unique Capable NZ culture. The research responses were clear, that in the opinion of the industry professionals interviewed, an Assessment could meet all the requirements of the legislative, quality and academic frameworks guiding the Independent Learning Pathway and could be supportive in contributing to a learner's growth, and yet not be considered successful if the Capable NZ kaupapa was damaged to achieve the result.

Why did these educators consider Capable Culture to be so important? Because their comments suggest that the unique educational paradigm developed by Capable over the last 17 years is at the heart of the Independent Learning Pathway offered to students and which is the foundation of the long-term success of the organisation and its teaching programmes. Those I interviewed believe that a Capable NZ learning experience is learner focused at a level not achieved by any other organisation in New Zealand. In order to maintain that unique approach to learning, the Assessment and Assessor must be able to work with the learner to present their evidence of achievement in their own unique way while understanding how to re-present that material to meet the evidential requirements set by the Polytechnic and the Educational standards.

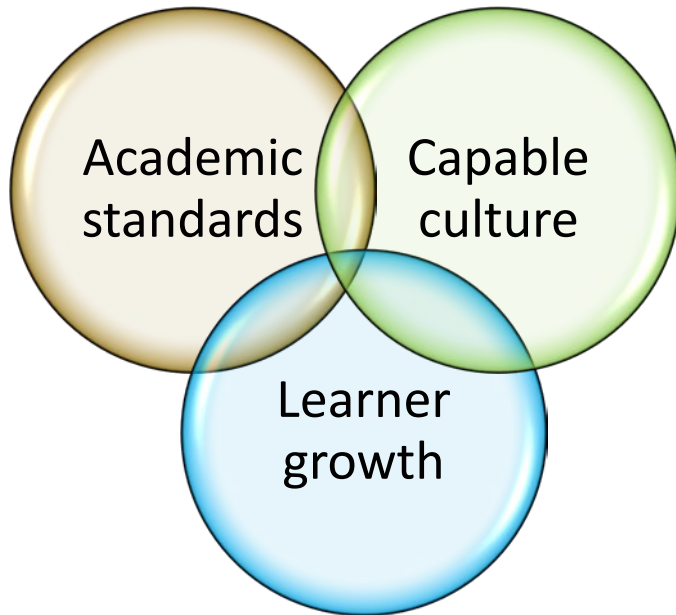


Figure 6, the three core factors of assessment. L Smith 2018

In *Beyond Testing: Towards a Theory of Educational Assessment*, Gipps explores the wider concept of measuring educational development and her paper unlocks the answer to the basic question at the start of this research. My starting point of a continuum model of assessment as either measurement or learning contribution reflects the traditional model of education where the education professional has the knowledge and power and passes that to the student. (Gipps 1994)

Gipps, referencing Woods “how well – not how many” suggests an ideal educational assessment process where the tester and pupil collaborate to produce the best performance of which the pupil is capable, rather than withholding such help to produce a statistically typical performance. It is this partnership between the learner and the members of the Capable NZ team which allows such a collaborative approach throughout the Independent Learning pathway. An Assessment or Assessor who does not, or cannot, collaborate with the learner, is not operating within the Capable NZ approach to education and is therefore missing a key aspect of the experience.

Once this third aspect of Assessment was acknowledged, the recorded research comments more naturally flowed into the categories shown on the Venn diagram above and I was able to further develop the understanding of this Assessment framework to the point where I created a framework of practice for assessment. This can be used to demonstrate the three areas for consideration during assessment, and to describe the competencies required of each Assessor for each area and to capture the policies and practises needed to support that area.

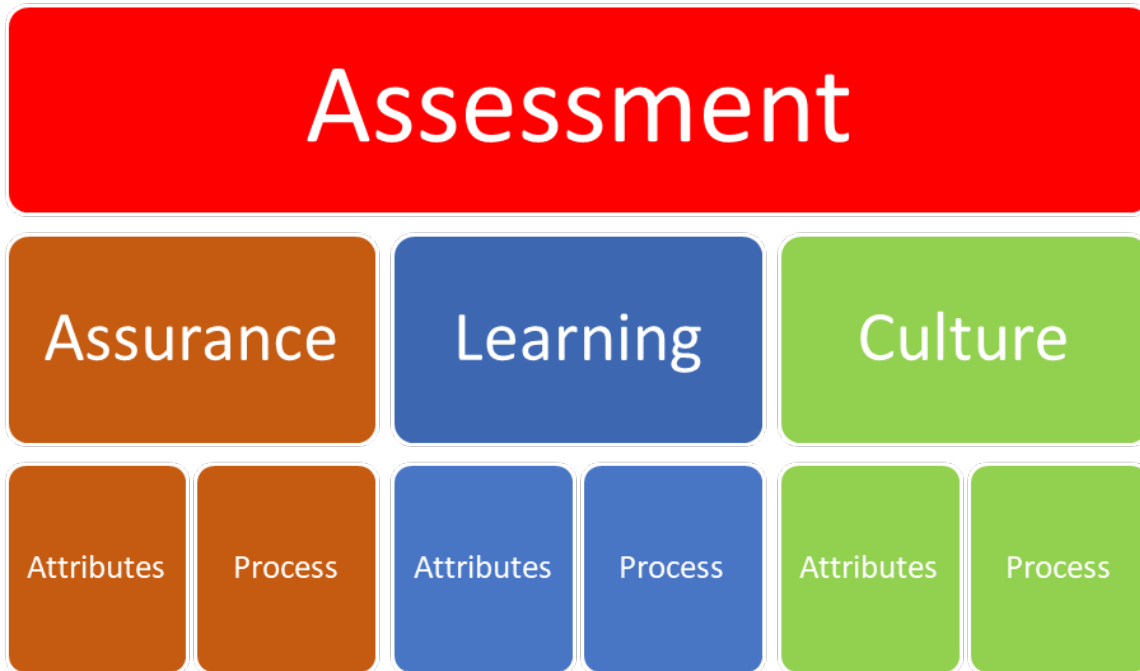


Figure 7 Model of Assessment practice. L Smith 2018

For example, considering the Assurance aspect of the assessment model above, the panel should be able to demonstrate it has met the industry standard for assurance and their results should be valid, consistent, authentic, fair and repeatable. The panel should be supported by, and effectively use, industry standard quality assurance processes. They should have policies and processes which not only ensure standards are being maintained but include evidence of a continuous programme improvement.

In order to achieve a quality assessment decision, at a personal level, an Assessor must have the skills and experience needed to make qualitative judgements of complex material and the Polytechnic should have evidence of those skills and experience to inform quality decisions. At an individual Assessor level, the Polytechnic should be able to point to evidence of the Assessor's competency and growth – from an effective induction, through support and training, to personal and professional reviews.

This Capable NZ model of Assessment recognises the three key aspects of assessment, which in turn create a skeleton on which to detail the attributes needed by an Assessor and the processes needed to support the assessment.

Having established a model of Assessment, this became the framework for reporting the research. Each key factor, new learning or valuable output from each interview was noted and tabulated below, sorted under the three headings of Assurance, Learning and Culture. In order to capture the information, while maintaining the agreed privacy for the respondents, I have identified specific comments by using quotation marks and a number <sup>(Respondent 1)</sup> for each participant. Wider themes or common comments, and my own autoethnographic responses are show below as more general statements.

The research results below detail the research findings from the interviews and show a **Research Reference** numbered link to the simplified table of results on pages 43 and 44. This table was subsequently used to develop the project outputs.

But before detailing the responses received from the 15 interviews completed, I also used this framework to capture the key findings from my literature review, so that these could also be used to inform the project outputs.

## Literature Review findings

### 1. Assurance - To ensure academic standards are maintained

There is significant documentation available to guide Assessors in the legislative and policy frameworks required. These documents are held on the OP's website and are readily accessible. *Research reference 1, page 43*

Capable NZ has Operational Manuals and Graduate Profiles available to give operational assistance to Assessors and Assessment Panels. *Research reference 1, page 43*

Detailed Graduate Profiles for each qualification are provided to each Assessor to ensure conformity of marking. *Research reference 1, page 43*

NZQA offers a generic assessment unit standard 4098. *Research reference 1, page 43*

Johnson (Johnson 2014) describes the competencies required by an effective Assessor as the ability to: observe accurately behaviours and the impact of those behaviours., be objective in your observations, record the observations accurately and assess the observed behaviours against the required criteria and objectives *Research reference 2, page 43*

## 2. Learning – Assessors’ contribution to transformational learning

Transformational learning is clearly defined by Mezirow as learning which creates a new way of viewing the world, which in turn prompts a change in future practice. *Research reference 3, page 43*

Mezirow describes the process needed to guide a student to achieve Transformational Learning and his four steps provide a well-accepted research foundation on which to base Capable’s Assessment programme. *Research reference 4, page 43*

## 3. Culture - To recognise the learning provided by Capable NZ

Capable NZ’s disruptive education is best typified by the Dewey’s approach of transitioning students from their traditionally passive roles as learners to the active roles they will need to play as citizens. *Research reference 5, page 43*

Gipps describes an ideal educational assessment process where the tester and pupil collaborate to produce the best performance of which the pupil is capable. *Research reference 6, page 43*

The Assessors and assessment are there to guide learning and are not there to identify what the learner doesn’t know. *Research reference 7, page 43*

### Education Professional Interview Responses

#### 1. Assurance - To ensure academic standards are maintained

There was unanimous agreement that the assessment and the assessment panel members have a primary responsibility to ensure that the required academic standards, policies and expectations are achieved by every graduating learner. “The Assessors in the room must be very clear on the criteria the learner has to meet and show that the learner actually meets that”<sup>(Respondent 4)</sup>. *Research reference 1, page 43*. The only value in any qualification comes from widespread trust in the quality of the qualification issued and the interviewees frequently commented on how the assessment and Assessors are the “gatekeepers to quality”<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup>. *Research reference 2, page 43*.

Those interviewed considered the Assessment process as a useful reality check on the learner’s authenticity. They commented that it is possible for a portfolio to meet all the academic requirements set in the Graduate Profile but not truly represent the reality of the learner’s lived experience. *Research reference 8, page 43*.

The assessment ensures the learners can show how their learning is integrated into their professional practice; “can they articulate their knowledge, and do they own it – or are they just going through the motions”<sup>(Respondent 12)</sup>.

In order to achieve a quality decision, each Assessor must have strongly developed skills and experience in the assessment process so as to be able to create repeatable, reliable results which will be accepted and valued by the industry and the learner. The skills, attributes and competencies suggested were recorded and formed the basis for the creation of the Attribute and Competency tables as outputs from this report. **Research reference 9, page 43.**

The Otago Polytechnic has a policy of using a panel approach for assessment, allowing appointment of Assessors with academic and subject matter frameworks and the interviewees noted the value in this approach when the Assessors act as a team and respect the other panel members’ contribution. A professional with experience of assessment external to the Polytechnic shared his views on the importance of the panel members’ experience and skills. “They must be knowledgeable, which can be gauged with reference to their own work and they must be experienced, which is demonstrated by their reputation”<sup>(Respondent 11)</sup>. This University based professional understood the learning potential from a good assessment and the need for panel members to have more than academic skills. “Research has shown that new Assessors frequently mark very harshly and that’s why we would never have more than one new Assessor on a panel.”<sup>(Respondent 11)</sup> **Research reference 10, page 43.**

The research identified a need for Assessors to be able to synthesise complex evidence from a range of sources. While the portfolio contains the strongest evidence of alignment with the Graduate Profile, a skilled Assessor considers the presentation slides, learner commentary and more subtle evidence when reaching a decision. “While a portfolio may not appear to meet the strictly academic standard for such writing, what we don’t know is what happened in the presentation room to fill the gaps”<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup>. **Research reference 11, page 43.**

During the interviews, many identified a lack of clarity as to how to “comparatively measure”<sup>(Respondent 5)</sup> the value of the evidence presented. One professional suggested that “for under-graduate qualifications, 70% of the evidence should come from the written material and 30% from the oral presentation”<sup>(Respondent 3)</sup>.



However, others were much less proscriptive commenting that the Assessors must be able to “demonstrate evidence of achievement of the Graduate Profile without too much importance being placed on the source of the evidence”<sup>( Respondent 9)</sup>. **Research reference 12, page 43.**

Interviewees noted the importance of a Facilitator’s preparatory discussion relating to Graduate Profile, detailing the standard to be met. An external industry professional’s comments reinforced the importance of Facilitators. “While Assessors complete a summative assessment at the end of the process, the Facilitators are carrying out formative assessments every time they meet with a learner to discuss progress.”<sup>( Respondent 11)</sup> **Research reference 13, page 43.**

There is also a possible lack of clarity in the grading system. Assessors tend to use the panel’s discussion of comparative experience and although guided by some documentation relating to specific qualifications, this tends to be quite subjective in its wording. Further development and consideration may be useful to ensure gradings are repeatable and consistent across all assessment panels. **Research reference 14, page 43.**

There was a similar divergence in opinion of the Portfolio presented for assessment. While some Assessors assume that the portfolio has passed the standard once it has been peer reviewed, others expressed reservations in taking the document at face value. The current peer review process does not include a feed-back loop, so the Assessor has no information relating to recommendations made by the reviewer, nor do they know if the recommendations were acted on. “while the Peer-review may pick up an issue, of methodology say, and feed that back to the Facilitator, there is no onus on the learner to say that it has actually been done”<sup>(Respondent 12)</sup>. This casts some doubt on the absolute value of the document to the evidence trail. As a result, Assessors have developed their own responses to the Portfolio document. Many regularly check references, links and evidence included and all noted “areas of apparent weakness in the evidence chain”<sup>(Respondent 5)</sup>. **Research reference 15, page 43.**

Commonly, during the assessment, Assessors will probe for further evidence to address areas of concern in the written work, using the learner’s ability to respond to questioning as valuable evidence of competency. Other Assessors however, have used a strategy of referring their perception of a “hole in the portfolio”<sup>(Respondent 7)</sup> back to the Facilitator for discussion with the learner.

While this gives the learner the opportunity to close the hole, it also “raises a risk where the Assessors are advised that the learner will cover the issue in their presentation”<sup>(Respondent 7)</sup> and one professional gave examples where this did not occur, and the panel were not able to award the qualifications.

But the issue remains, “if an external moderator looks at the portfolio, how do we get across to them that it was covered in the presentation”<sup>( Respondent 5)</sup>. Currently Assessors rely on covering such issues in detail in their reports, but these are not held alongside the graduates’ portfolios and an external reviewer reading the portfolios would not have access to the entire evidence trail on which the qualifications were awarded. **Research reference 15, page 43.**

A lack of complete pre-assessment information in a timely manner was often identified as a key area of risk. Experience from the interviewees led to a belief that a well-presented portfolio, complete and delivered well before assessment day could be considered an early indicator of competence and a positive indicator of success. On the other hand, the professionals with direct assessment experience considered a late portfolio as a red-flag, given the frequent link between lateness and problematic assessments<sup>(Respondent 4)</sup>. There is a general understanding, and notes in the Learner Guides, that portfolio material should be presented for peer review four-six weeks before assessment and the final, total evidence package be lodged two weeks prior to assessment, but this is time-standard is not monitored or actively enforced. **Research reference 16, page 43.**

At the completion of the assessment process, once the final decision has been made, the Lead Assessor is responsible for preparing a report and the professionals interviewed for this research were clear that the report was the critical step in the evidence trail. The Assessment Team’s report is the “executive summary”<sup>(Respondent 4)</sup> of the evidence available to the panel. Where evidence of achievement of the graduate profile is perhaps not included in the Portfolio, the report should indicate the source used by the panel to measure compliance; the presentation slides, the presentation narrative or the learner’s response to panel questioning. **Research reference 17, page 43.**

There was general agreement that the assessment report offers an opportunity for Lead Assessor development. Where a potential Lead Assessor has been identified, there is value in them creating draft reports for a period as a training tool.

These drafts can then form the basis of discussion with the panel's Lead Assessor, to ensure the "apprentice" is creating appropriate and acceptable evidentially based report to the required standard. *Research reference 18, page 43.*

One experienced professional suggested that the process we carry out should not be referred to as "assessment but as credentialing, issuing qualifications following a review of a learner's background and legitimacy"<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup>.

## 2. Learning – Assessors' contribution to transformational learning

The interviewee's responses provided a clear description of the assessment's contribution to the learner's transformational learning; "a successful assessment gives the learner permission to take ownership of their knowledge"<sup>(Respondent 3)</sup>. *Research reference 19, page 44.* Once the learner reaches that acceptance, they have a platform on which to build action plans to change future behaviour – the definition of Mezirow's transformational learning. Mezirow's "Rational Discourse" was described by one professional as the process where the learner uses the Assessment to "defend and clarify their thinking"<sup>(Respondent 11)</sup>. Probing by the Assessors allows the successful learner to demonstrate their depth of knowledge, not just to the panel but to themselves as well. "We are there to assure ourselves, the authorities and the learner that they have delivered the goods against an explicitly stated criteria"<sup>(Respondent 10)</sup>. *Research reference 20, page 44.*

One external professional compared the Capable Assessment process to their process where a Doctoral student defends their thesis in discussion with a panel. In a reasonable percentage of the examples he gave, the student is made aware that they have passed before the panel defence has begun but the process continues as part of the transformational learning process. "The defence discussion not only shows them the breadth and depth of their understanding, it often clarifies their future thinking and actions"<sup>(Respondent 11)</sup>. *Research reference 20, page 44.*

Effective Assessors "honour the learner's work by being well prepared and by genuinely listening to the story unfold"<sup>(Respondent 12)</sup>. *Research reference 21, page 44.* Interviewees talked about the Assessors being "present" in the room and being able to generate a skilful collaborative discussion. "We throw the ball and watch how they respond. Rather working through a pre-prepared set of questions, an effective Assessor catches the returned ball and throws it back again to elicit the next response from the learner"<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup>. *Research reference 22, page 44.*

Although no respondent used Roulston's (2010) term Reflective Interviewing Technique, experienced professionals did link the Capable Assessment philosophy to Piaget's theory of Constructivist learning; a belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction as opposed to passively receiving information and having their knowledge tested in an exam setting. Learners are the makers of meaning and knowledge. Reflective Interviewing is a technique often used in mental health settings where the interviewer is there to guide the interviewee to find their own answers from within their own experience; a very Capable description of the Assessment panel. *Research reference 23, page 44.*

While many interviewees clearly described the quality assurance aspects of assessment, the Capable NZ professionals also described the importance of Assessors having relationship building strengths. One interviewee talked about "the value of psychological training for Assessors. These are people who have the skills to get alongside people, are people focused with humanistic and constructivist views as opposed to technical views of the world"<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup>.

### **3. Culture - To recognise the learning provided by Capable NZ**

Many learners who choose the Capable NZ learning pathway do so because their lifetime's experience of education is less than positive. Capable NZ appears to offer a genuinely learner focused alternative and interviewees spoke of the critical importance of constantly reflecting on our own behaviour as Assessors in maintaining that learner-centric approach. *Research reference 25, page 44.*

They stressed the importance of ego-less assessment. The process is not about the Assessor but the Learner. This is not an opportunity for the assessment panel members to show off their vast knowledge to reinforce their superiority over the humble learner. "The Assessor needs expert emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, the ability to park your knowledge at the door, it's not about you, it's about them"<sup>(Respondent 3)</sup>. . *Research reference 25, page 44.*

One professional introduced Paulo Friere's work which at its core divides education into two groups; education to reinforce conformity or education to set a learner free to transform their world. *Research reference 25, page 44.*

A Capable assessment must not return the learner to past experiences when the "expert" at the front of the classroom set out to find what they didn't know and built traps into questioning to demonstrate their weaknesses.

“Within a Capable assessment, there is no room for the deficit thinking which typifies the educational experience of so many Capable learners”.<sup>(Respondent 3)</sup>

This is considered particularly important for Māori learners, recognising the strength of the Capable approach in allowing learners who may have “failed” in the traditional education setting to tell of their real word “success” in their own way – thereby demonstrating achievement of the graduate profile.<sup>(Respondent 6)</sup> . **Research reference 25, page 44.**

Ker’s unpublished Four Principles of Facilitation equally apply to assessment, Fit, Relationship, Skills and Experience, and Learner First are important in the maintenance of the Capable culture. In discussing these principles with an experienced Māori assessor, they were able to give direct links to the specific attributes needed by an assessor. If we are to be truly learner focused, the Polytechnic should be able to offer assessment options in Te Reo, both written and verbal where required. But just as important is the need for non-Māori Assessors to understand the particular requirements and complexities of a Māori world-view of education and to be able to reflect on their own competency level. Four levels of competency were listed; from knowledge of simple Māori words and phrases through to complete understanding of the kaupapa Māori framework of experience and they commented on the need for all Polytechnic staff to be developing through the levels.<sup>(Respondent 10)</sup> . **Research reference 26, page 44.**

There was a common theme of a requirement for respect at the heart of the Capable experience. A learner focused assessment must be non-judgemental, and an Assessor must have sufficient self-awareness to put aside personal prejudices and biases and not allow these to colour their deliberations. “We sometimes assess people we don’t like, or we don’t like the industry they work in. We need to see that in ourselves and consciously put those personal thoughts aside”.<sup>(Respondent 12)</sup> . **Research reference 27, page 44.**

Relationship based assessment is at the heart of the Capable NZ experience. Assessment of the portfolio provides only part of the story and the Assessor must have the ability to create a space for the whole story to unfold. “Every moment is important; pre-reading, pre-assessment chat and advanced therapeutic probing techniques are required to bring out the best in the learner, while allowing them to use the techniques that reflect their learning, their story and their world view”.<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup> . **Research reference 27, page 44.**

While Capable works hard to ensure each Facilitator is selected to ensure a good fit with their learner, as detailed in Ker's paper, there was agreement that there should be a sufficiently wide pool of Assessors available to offer options to achieve "fit" in this area as well. Currently, this is achieved by Facilitators suggesting Assessors for the panel, based on their view of the likely "fit" with their learner. *Research reference 28, page 44.*

The unique Capable model of ILP also offers a framework to ensure the quality of outcomes is maintained. In a more traditional education facility, Assessors would have their work regularly assessed through a formal moderation process and marks would be recorded as the basis for quality control. The professionals interviewed believed that within Capable, the Assessors' own standards of professional practice provided the framework for quality as all Capable staff work within a "Community of Practice"<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup> which self-moderates. *Research reference 29, page 44.*

This discussion of quality management frequently led to an exploration of Assessor selection and ongoing training and support. The professionals identified a range of competencies which they believe an Assessor should have before they start, and these are detailed in the Assessor Competency Table detailed later in this report. While many are those technical and relationship skills which would be expected, a less-expected common theme was the need for a clear understanding of the Capable Culture. "When thinking about getting the next Assessor, the person shouldn't be aligned to the traditional models of teaching because that's a traditionally hierarchical based view, with the teacher holding all the knowledge"<sup>(Respondent 4)</sup>. *Research reference 30, page 44.*

There was also support for the concept of a more planned Assessor Apprenticeship Programme to ensure quality standards are developed and maintained and effective, scalable succession planning established. *Research reference 31, page 44.*

There was acknowledgement of the importance of a form of mihi and not just for Māori learners. Early pre-presentation discussions begin the relationship process and give the Assessors the opportunity to explain who they are and to establish their credentials for the role.<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup> One of the experienced Māori Assessors suggested that while it was not appropriate for a non-Māori Assessor to give a mihi in Te Reo, it was not only appropriate but valuable, for that Assessor to use some form of personal introduction to set the scene. <sup>(Respondent 10)</sup> *Research reference 32, page 44.*

Given the very short time frame now available for the assessment process, every comment, question and action in the room contributes to the growth of the relationship with the learner and there was agreement as to the importance of “mindfully” building the connections. *Research reference 22, page 44.* The opening discussions are not simply light-hearted chat but conscious building blocks towards the collaborative partnership to come. A professional noted that “everything he does in that assessment is done with intention to draw out the narrative, to enable the learner and to grow the therapeutic relationship”<sup>(Respondent 9)</sup>. *Research reference 24, page 44.*

Professionals noted the value in creating a sense of occasion; balancing the need to set the learner at ease with the value of creating a sense of importance. The assessment should not be undervalued by suggesting that the completion of the portfolio guarantees success, but nor is it the inquisition. Interestingly, the University Professor advised that over half their students are told that they have passed prior to assessment, where a thesis achieves high standards of quality. *Research reference 34, page 44.*

Practical issues and the setting within the room were also raised. There was discussion relating to the physical layout of the assessment room. In a truly collaborative assessment, it may be useful to remove the desks, or to at least ensure that the room does not reinforce a learner/expert opposition. Capable also needs to ensure that the room selected is an appropriate temperature, has fully working technology and contributes to the sense of occasion for the event. *Research reference 35, page 44.*

An interesting side-effect of a good assessment is the positive reinforcement of the Facilitator’s work. One spoke of how delighted they were to have their learners praised as it reflected well on their partnership.

### Stage Two – Successful ILP Graduate Interview responses

The second phase of data collection came from interviews with learners who had successfully completed an undergraduate qualification with Capable NZ and the methodology used to gain input is described on page 9. Each interview began with an open-ended question, asking “what were the important assessment factors from their perspective?”. Once these factors were established, the interview explored the issues in more detail. By the time that the third interview had been completed, it was clear that the learners’ responses were closely aligned to those of the professionals and could be categorised into the same three broad groupings of Assurance, Learning and Culture.

## 1. Assurance - To ensure academic standards are maintained

The learners interviewed all understood the importance of the quality assurance aspect of the assessment and all had an expectation that the bar to success would be set at a high standard. They not only expected the standard to be high but also wanted the process to be personally challenging. The learners interviewed certainly were not looking for an easy way to get a qualification and they expected Capable NZ to maintain standards for future students. “I understood that the Assessors were going to read my portfolio and mark me against clear criteria.” (Respondent 2) *Research reference 2, page 43.*

Learners commented on the need for standards to be maintained to ensure industry acceptance of the qualification they had gained and the need for Capable NZ to grow its own reputation to enhance the value of the organisation. In New Zealand there remains a culture which suggests Polytechnic qualifications are of lesser value than University equivalents and recent, highly public examples of sub-standard Polytech teaching are reinforcing that view. *Research reference 1, page 43.*

Those interviewed also commented on the link between the achievement of high standards and their own feelings of self-worth and the contribution that makes to their professional development. “It wouldn’t mean anything if it was easy” (Respondent 1). *Research reference 1, page 43.*

While all remembered being nervous prior to the Assessment, for most, the concern was not associated with passing, as all felt they had been well prepared by their Facilitators. *Research reference 13, page 43.*

## 2. Learning – Assessors’ contribution to transformational learning

The learners, without exception, remembered their assessment experience extremely positively and, in hind-sight, were appreciative of the contribution the Assessors had made to future learning. While at the time they did expect there to be an element of “testing”, there were frequent comments on the “conversational” (Respondent 8) nature of the assessment. *Research reference 20, page 44.*

The interviews showed that the learners had an unexpectedly sophisticated understanding of the independent learning pathway they had travelled and were able to reflect on the contribution the assessment process had made to their learning.



In their own words, each described the way in which the Assessors had reinforced their learning and allowed them to realise “just how far they had come”. “They gave me real confidence that I did know what I was talking about and that confidence has given me the confidence to do even more since then”<sup>(Respondent 14)</sup>. *Research reference 20, page 44.*

The learners found the professional discussion with the Assessors challenging, exciting and surprising. Far from being tested, they felt that they were being honoured and their professional experience acknowledged. “I became so interested in what we were talking about I had to remember to change the Powerpoint. I really appreciated how they were able to give me really constructive advice relating to my presentation and examples in my portfolio. That not only showed they had read my stuff in detail, but also showed they were interested in me and my future”<sup>(Respondent 2)</sup>. *Research reference 20, page 44.*

There was a common theme expressed, with some surprise, that their learning continued well after the assessment was complete. This was described in detail by one learner, who was clear that the real professional impact of the Capable NZ programme was not the qualification but the way his framework of practice had grown from being technically based to being reflectively based<sup>(Respondent 1)</sup>. *Research reference 36, page 44.*

This was perhaps the most powerful message from the learner interviews; their surprise at how the Capable NZ process and the Assessment conversation had changed their lives. Not only had each gained new, practical tools and knowledge, each had developed a new, reflective framework of practice which had deeply impacted their business and professional lives.

### **Culture - To recognise the learning provided by Capable NZ**

The successful learners selected for interview had one significant similarity; their Capable NZ qualification was the first formal tertiary education they had completed following secondary school and this may have influenced their appreciation of the independent learning pathway they had completed. All had had less than positive earlier experiences of education. This, together with financial and employment pressures, would have made it unlikely for them to enter a course of study in a traditional, classroom-based organisation and they certainly appreciated the opportunity to have a course which was driven by their needs. *Research reference 25, page 44.*

The assessment itself was experienced as a manifestation of the Capable NZ culture. All learners expected to come into the assessment to be “tested” on their knowledge and, despite support and assurance from their facilitators, all were nervous about what they

were going to go through. Their nervousness was not related to passing but to the potential for negative judgement from the Assessors. Even the most practical of the learners found the self-reflection deeply personal and there was some concern at “laying my life out in front of strangers”<sup>(Respondent 13)</sup>. **Research reference 25, page 44.**

All the learners interviewed confirmed the efforts the Assessors made to put them at ease and their appreciation at being supported to give of their best. “I really loved the experience of the face to face session. I came to the assessment feeling really nervous and they took the time to talk first, explain their backgrounds and put me at ease”<sup>(Respondent 2)</sup>. **Research reference 26, page 44.**

There was a real appreciation for the industry experience represented on the assessment panels and an acknowledgement of the work that Capable NZ had done to get the “right fit”<sup>(Respondent 1)</sup> for their panel. The learners consistently commented on the efforts that the Assessors had made to read and understand their Portfolios of Evidence and they were able to reflect on how powerful it was to have discussions based on the evidence they had presented. **Research reference 34, page 44.**

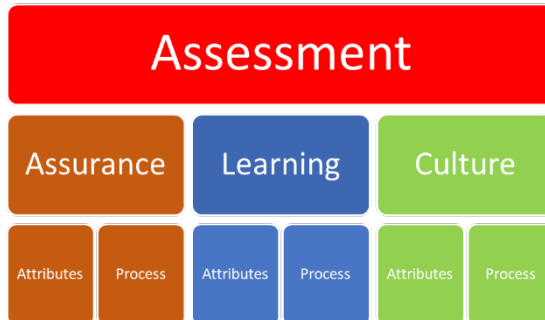
All interviewees commented on the value of the Assessors’ self-introduction. Not only did the chat put them at ease, it allowed the learners to gain an appreciation of the Assessors’ industry experience and created an understanding of the Assessors’ ability to have a professional discussion. **Research reference 27, page 44.** “Right from the start, one Assessor began chatting about running, having read my interest in my portfolio. From that moment we had a connection and that made it easy for me to tell my story.”<sup>(Respondent 8)</sup>

The learner interviews strongly supported Ker’s (Ker 2017) research findings into the value of the facilitated learning process and their responses reinforced the importance of the relationship with the Facilitator to their overall view of the Capable programme. A common theme expressed was the learners’ initial difficulty in coming to terms with self-directed learning and all, to varying degrees, began by expecting much more direction, teaching and examples of what they were supposed to do. **Research reference 26, page 44.**

Even well after graduation, one learner continues to struggle with the unstructured nature of the facilitation and assessment processes. “I had expected the Assessors to have a comprehensive range of questions pre-prepared relating to my material and was a bit surprised when they didn’t”<sup>(Respondent 15)</sup>.

### Research data collection and collation report

The final stage of the research section of the project was the arrangement of the key points from the data received from the interviews into the framework of assessment practice which I had developed. Each statement recorded in the interviews as a **Research Reference** was characterised as either an attribute or a process under the three core headings of Assurance, Learning or Culture. Attributes are the competencies required by Assessors and Processes are the materials required to support the Assessors in their deliberations, reporting and administration.



This method of data capture allowed me to turn the research data into useful guidance for the outcome stages. The tables below detail the collation of the Research References, allowing me to ensure that the material gained from the research phase could be used to inform my own learning and to underpin the creation of the project's deliverables.

Assurance	
Attributes	Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Skill in demonstrating standards have been met.</li> <li>2. Maintain confidence in assurance process</li> <li>9. Strongly developed skills and experience in assessment</li> <li>11. Ability to synthesis complex evidence from a range of sources</li> <li>13. Recognition of the Facilitator's formative assessments.</li> <li>17. Ability to write a compelling report which provides clear evidence of the learner's alignment with the Graduate Profile. Consideration of other sources of evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear documentation of standards, and policies and Assessors have these available</li> <li>8. Reality check on portfolio</li> <li>10. Panel selection process to ensure assessment experience, academic and subject expertise</li> <li>12. Capable-wide Agreement as to assessment of evidence required</li> <li>14. Clarity of grading system would be beneficial</li> <li>15. Clear process for Peer Review required. Recommend development of Peer Review Feedback loop.</li> <li>16. Ensure timeframes are met to allow Assessors time to fully read evidence and to take corrective action where required.</li> <li>18. Formal development of Assessor apprenticeship programme.</li> </ul>

Learning	
Attributes	Processes
<p>20. Understanding of Mezirow’s four steps and the Assessor’s contribution to the “Rational Discourse” element.</p> <p>22. Being present in the room, with a focus on the learner</p> <p>23. Ability to collaborate with the learner to support them to deliver their best.</p> <p>24. Relationship building strengths</p> <p>36. Understanding of the long-term impact of the Assessment on the learner’s practice.</p>	<p>19. Transformational learning defined</p> <p>21. Assessor well prepared with thorough understanding of learner’s evidence.</p>
Culture	
Attributes	Processes
<p>5. Familiar with Dewey’s community learning philosophy</p> <p>6. Able to collaborate with learner to achieve best outcome</p> <p>7. Avoid “deficit thinking”</p> <p>25. Understanding of the philosophy underlying the Capable NZ approach. Egoless assessments.</p> <p>26. Apply Ker’s Four Principles to Assessment.</p> <p>27. Relationship based assessment</p> <p>32. Understanding of tikanga Māori and an ability to meet cultural needs of all learners.</p> <p>34. Understanding of the value of creating a “sense of occasion”.</p>	<p>28. Ensure Capable NZ has an appropriate pool of Assessors to meet fit with learners.</p> <p>29. Develop a “moderation” models which balances Capable NZ approach with NZQA need for evidence.</p> <p>30. Create Induction Manual to ensure new Assessors are trained and aligned to Capable NZ culture.</p> <p>31. Create an Assessor Apprenticeship model to identify and develop succession plan.</p> <p>33. ensure appropriate tikanga training is available for Assessors</p> <p>35. Ensure facilities and technology are available and appropriate.</p>

## Project Research Summary

The information gathering stages of this project consisted of:

- A literature review of assessment
- A review of the policies and practices relating to assessment
- Research of issues, perceptions and processes from my own experience and from the perspective of industry professionals and successful graduates

This information gave rise to a three-level model of assessment practice, comprising Assurance, Learner and Culture, which in turn created attribute and process descriptions for each aspect of assessment.

Using this information resulting from the research phase of the project, the deliverables agreed in my Learning Agreement have been developed:

1. An Assessment Framework of practice, describing the Assessment of Prior learning within the unique Capable NZ setting. (Page 46)
2. A Position Description for a Capable NZ Assessor. (Page 47)
3. An Attribute Description for a Capable NZ Assessor. (Page 50)
4. The Competency Framework for Capable NZ Assessors. (Page 52)
5. A Process Framework for a Capable NZ Assessor.(Page 55)
6. Assessment Support Documentation. (Page 57)
7. Recommendations for improvements to Capable NZ Assessment Practice. (Page 63)

## Project deliverables

Assessment Model of Practice.



The findings of the research completed during this project suggest there are three areas of focus for an Assessment Panel, working within the Capable NZ framework.

**Assurance.** Collecting and analysing the available evidence and reporting the learner's achievement of the standards required. Supported by the Assessor's professional knowledge, skills and experience in assessment practice and by the relevant assessment policies and processes.

**Learning.** Actively supporting the learner to complete Mezirow's rational discourse of their evidence and to claim ownership of their learning supported by the Assessor's professional knowledge, skills and experience in educational relationship practice and by the relevant learning documentation.

**Culture.** Contributing to kaupapa Capable by ensuring a truly learner focused experience. Supported by the Assessor's professional experience within a Capable NZ framework and by the relevant assessment documentation, policies and processes.

## Assessor Position Description

Modelled on the Position Description for a Lecturer from the Otago Polytechnic's website, I used that standard format to create a Position Description for an Assessor. I used the collated research material described on Pages 43 and 44 to populate the relevant sections of the table.

### **Capable NZ Assessor** **Profile and Expectations**



### **OUR VISION and VALUES** Our people make a better world Kia tū ki te tahi

<b>Caring</b> <i>Manaakitaka</i>	We value people, communities and the environment
<b>Courage</b> <i>Whakamanawanui</i>	We are bold in shaping a better future
<b>Accountability</b> <i>Takohanga</i>	We are responsible and act with integrity
<b>Empowerment</b> <i>Whakamana</i>	We inspire and enable others to succeed

## OVERVIEW

The Assessor is an industry/professional practitioner with demonstrated experience and expertise in their field. The Assessor develops and provides current and innovative learning opportunities within the context of the Capable NZ learning environment and learning needs. Assessors will hold a relevant undergraduate qualification or a relevant industry/ professional qualification appropriate for the level of assessment being undertaken and will have current involvement in trade, professional, industry or community activities in their field.

They will apply assessment practices to promote, facilitate and to determine the effectiveness of student learning, taking into account the range of contexts in which learning can occur within the Capable NZ framework.

### 1. Assessment of Student Achievement

#### Expected Outcomes – Kā hua tūmanako

- Apply effective assessment skills, including the planning, and marking of the summative assessment within the Capable NZ learning context.
- Provide feedback to students on achievement of Graduate Profile.
- Assess learning in a variety of settings, including the workplace and practice contexts.
- Assess prior experiential and theoretical learning.
- Report and grade summative assessments reliably and in a timely manner, and ensure results are recorded accurately in accordance with Polytechnic requirements.
- Ensure external and internal moderation of assessments is carried out as per the moderation plan and documented appropriately; and moderate other lecturers' assessments as requested, providing constructive feedback.
- Participate in student appeal processes, ensuring student concerns are heard and appropriate actions are taken.

### 2. Scholarly Activity

#### Expected Outcomes - Kā hua tūmanako

- Engage in scholarly activity appropriate to professional discipline and assessment practice. This will include a range of activities, (e.g. reading, writing, conference participation, consultancy, action research) which will result in an understanding of, and ability to contribute to, critique and debate related to their discipline and to the practice of assessment in further/higher education within their teaching team/programmes; and to put that into effect within their assessment practice.
- Maintain own discipline currency and the ability to integrate new discipline knowledge effectively into assessment and learning practices.
- Critically reflect on practice as an Assessor, and
- Continuously improve and develop assessment practices as a result.

### 3. Quality Outcomes

- Practise always within the quality standards of Otago Polytechnic's policies and procedures.
- Maintain professional standards

### 4. Teamwork Act in a collegial manner and participate in Department and Otago Polytechnic events

- Contribute actively to the improvement of the direction and operation of the Capable NZ team and Department, including participation in Committee/project teams and attendance at meetings and functions.
- Contribute to Department processes
- Contribute to Department publications (newsletters, handbooks etc) and promotion and marketing activities.
- Be respectful and professional in dealings with other staff.
- Provide open and honest feedback when requested, both to individuals and on organisational processes or issues.



**5. Administration** - Take responsibility to ensure administrative processes are completed in a timely fashion and with least effort.

- Complete administrative requirements in relation to reporting assessments in a timely and accurate manner.
- Plan for own workload, personal and professional development and performance reviews.
- Meet legislative requirements.
- Regularly examine own work practices to ensure personal effectiveness and efficiency.

**6. Health and Safety** - Ensure that all practicable steps are taken to ensure own safety and the safety of others in the workplace on or off campus and comply with all Health and Safety legislation, guidelines and policies.

- Observe safe work practices, rules and instructions relating to work and study, and be pro-active in hazard management.
- Ensure that activities, or failure to take action, do not cause harm to oneself or other persons.
- Maintain current knowledge of the use of safety equipment.
- Be proactive in the reporting of unsafe conditions or equipment, and of accidents or incidents on and offsite.

### **7. Professional Development**

- Develop and regularly update (at least yearly) personal and professional development plan, in conjunction with programme manager/coordinator/HOD.
- Actively pursue own professional and personal development with a view to:
  - Maintaining currency in subject area(s).
  - Developing further expertise in subject area(s).
  - Enhancing assessment effectiveness.
  - Enhancing personal effectiveness.
- Undertake training as required to meet legislative requirements and specific Polytechnic staff requirements eg Health and Safety training.
- Initiate and respond to feedback from students and peers using institutional feedback processes.
- Seek and use available resources to improve assessment effectiveness.

## Assessors Attributes

Modelled on the Capable NZ documentation detailing the practical attributes required of a Facilitator, this table establishes a range of practical attributes which informed the creation of the Assessor Position Description and will guide employment of future Assessors.

<b>Assessor attributes</b>	
<b>Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Assessor – holds at least same level academic qualification as that being assessed. Has extensive experience in educational assessment.</li> <li>• External Assessor – has extensive experience in field/industry of the qualification being assessed and may hold relevant qualification in field</li> <li>• Has psychology/counselling/mediation skills to allow effective relationship building with learner and other panel members within the short time available for the assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has undertaken appropriate training including observing assessments. Understands programmes of learning and levels of qualifications and the intellectual level that candidates need to reach and demonstrate.</li> <li>• Understands the ILP within a Capable NZ kaupapa and professional practice pedagogy.</li> <li>• Understands the active contribution an Assessor makes to the transformative learning process. Is able to work collaboratively with the learner to achieve the best possible outcome.</li> </ul>
<b>Role and Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands graduate profiles and NZQA levels. Meets service provision expectations and uses marking rubric and report template to ensure consistency. Meets training expectations – understands assessment principles and processes. Lead Assessor ensures reliability and validity of assessment process</li> <li>• Works collaboratively with other assessment panel members to ensure robust assessment process while maintaining the Capable NZ framework of practice. Lead Assessor facilitates panel assessment process within that framework.</li> <li>• Has highly developed relationship building skills Maintains confidentiality of assessment process.</li> <li>• Reflects on assessment processes with other Assessors</li> <li>• External Assessor moderates from practice/expert context</li> </ul>
<b>Selection and Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable Assessors will be contracted through Capable NZ Head of School and will be listed on Assessor Database (name, qualifications, expertise, level to assess, CV, training)</li> <li>• The relevant programme leader will decide on Assessors for each panel noting recommendation from Facilitator; Capable NZ administration team will manage arrangements for assessments.</li> <li>• OP staff employed elsewhere in the organisation may provide assessment services as part of their substantive paid position. Alternatively, a contract will be established between Capable NZ and their home school/service area.</li> </ul>

<b>Service Expectations for Lead Assessor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares thoroughly for assessment; reads preliminary documentation; familiarizes self with graduate profiles(s), NZQA level descriptors and marking rubric</li> <li>• Confirms panel membership with Capable NZ team administration (discussion initiated by facilitator eight weeks prior to planned assessment date)</li> <li>• Facilitates the assessment process including Assessor-only discussion and consensus decision-making and ensuring reliable and valid assessment</li> <li>• Provides indicative result to learner</li> <li>• Drafts assessment report within five days of assessment using appropriate template; seeks feedback from other panel members and facilitator</li> <li>• Receives feedback within 48 hours and makes changes; sends draft to Capable NZ Administration for formatting/checking</li> <li>• Submits final result/grade table to Capable NZ Administration with final report</li> <li>• Provides feedback to facilitator on behalf of assessment panel (may be verbal and at time of assessment or may be written at a later date)</li> </ul>
<b>Service Expectations for panel members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares thoroughly for assessment; reads preliminary documentation; familiarizes self with graduate profiles(s), NZQA level descriptors, marking rubric</li> <li>• Participates in assessment</li> <li>• Contributes to draft assessment report written by Lead Assessor; provides feedback to lead Assessor within 48 hours of receipt of draft report</li> </ul>

## Assessor Competency Framework

Competency Standards define professional practice, provide guidance for the professional performance of effective assessment and act as a framework for professional development. In developing this competency framework, I modelled the documents on Ker's Facilitator example, and used my research to set out the level required for each area of competency to help Assessors articulate their level of expertise.

	<b>Developing Assessor</b> <i>(Entry-level competencies required)</i>	<b>Competent Assessor</b> <i>(An effective and reflective practitioner)</i>	<b>Advanced Assessor</b> <i>(Critically reflective leader of prof. practice)</i>
<b>Assessment Practice</b>	<p>Is knowledgeable of core theories, skills and the cultural and contextual influences relating to assessment of the qualification area.</p> <p>Has the knowledge and experience to understand assessment processes, in line with Capable NZ, OP and NZQA expectations.</p> <p>Understands Graduate Profiles and Grade Table templates and can translate the learner's evidence in alignment with these requirements.</p> <p>As a Panel Member, is able to consider evidence from a range of sources and use this to contribute to a report which provides evidence of a learner's achievement.</p> <p>Actively develops knowledge and skills for effective practice and maintains evidence of that personal development programme.</p>	<p>Is knowledgeable of, and articulates, a range of theories and models relating to assessment of the qualification area.</p> <p>Has the knowledge and experience to understand culturally appropriate, robust assessment processes, in line with Capable NZ, OP and NZQA expectations.</p> <p>Is able to critically interpret Graduate Profiles and Grade Table templates and translate the learner's evidence in alignment with these requirements.</p> <p>Is able to synthesise complex evidence from a range of sources and can use this to prepare a draft report for a Panel Chair's approval if required.</p> <p>Actively develops knowledge and skills for effective practice and maintains evidence of that personal development programme.</p>	<p>Is knowledgeable of, and articulates, a range of theories and models relating to assessment of the qualification area, providing guidance for developing Assessors.</p> <p>Has the knowledge and experience to develop and review culturally sound, robust assessment processes to achieve Capable NZ, OP and NZQA expectations.</p> <p>Contributes to the creation of Graduate Profiles and Grade Table templates.</p> <p>As Panel Chair, synthesises complex evidence from a range of sources and use this to prepare a report which provides evidence of a learner's achievement, maintaining confidence in the Capable NZ assessment process.</p> <p>Leads others in developing knowledge and skills for effective practice and maintains evidence of that personal development programme.</p>

<p><b>Learning Support</b></p>	<p>Knowledgeable of adult learning theory and the contribution of assessment to the learning transformation process.</p> <p>Understands approaches to assessment which recognise the diversity of adult learning, reflective practice, identity and culture. Understands the impact of tikanga on assessment.</p> <p>Develops and maintains relationships with learners and other panel members and can use those relationships to build learner confidence.</p> <p>Maintains an attentive presence throughout the assessment process, recognising the importance of every interaction to the relationship building.</p> <p>Understands the questioning, listening, summarising, analysing and feedback skills which can be used to assist the learner gain ownership of their knowledge.</p> <p>Understands the long-term impact of the Capable NZ programme and the assessment event on learner's personal and professional practice.</p> <p>Understands professional standards, ethics, and boundaries to interactions with learners and assessment associates.</p>	<p>Knowledgeable of a range of adult learning models and theories relating to the learning transformation process.</p> <p>Understands and applies varying approaches to assessment which recognise the diversity of adult learning, reflective practice, identity and culture. Supports learner use of tikanga Māori in their assessment.</p> <p>Develops and maintains effective relationships with learners and other panel members and can use those relationships to build learner confidence.</p> <p>Maintains an attentive presence throughout the assessment process, and actively uses every interaction to build the relationship with the learner.</p> <p>Understands and effectively practices the questioning, listening, summarising, analysing and feedback skills to assist the learner gain ownership of knowledge.</p> <p>Acts to ensure the Capable NZ programme and the Assessment have a positive, long-term impact on learner's personal and professional practice.</p> <p>Consistently applies professional standards, ethics, and boundaries to interactions with learners and assessment associates.</p>	<p>Demonstrates expertise in a range of adult learning models and theories relating to transformational learning.</p> <p>Provides leadership and coaching in varying approaches to assessment which recognise the diversity of adult learning, reflective practice, identity and culture.</p> <p>Models best practice in building effective relationships with learners and other panel members and can use those relationships to build learner confidence and panel effectiveness.</p> <p>Maintains an attentive presence throughout the assessment process, and actively uses every interaction to build the relationship with the learner.</p> <p>Can lead others in developing skills in effective practice: including tikanga Māori, questioning, listening, summarising, analysing and feedback skills to actively support the learner.</p> <p>Contributes to improving the Capable NZ programmes and assessments, so as to have a positive, long-term impact on learners' practice.</p> <p>Consistently applies high professional standards, ethics, and boundaries to interactions with learners and assessment associates.</p>
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<p>Capable culture</p>	<p>Understands the Capable NZ framework of deficit-free thinking.</p> <p>As a Panel Member, contributes to a “learner focused experience” which recognises their unique approach to learning and the learning they have achieved as a result of their Independent Learning Pathway.</p> <p>Has an understanding of tikanga Māori and the implications that may have for each learner’s ILP.</p> <p>Practices in a culturally safe and appropriate manner, recognising and respecting each learner’s unique background and contribution.</p> <p>Understands and applies Ker’s Four Principles of Facilitation to Assessment.</p> <p>Contributes to a relationship-based assessment which collaborates with the learner to achieve the best possible outcome.</p> <p>Contributes to the importance of the occasion of assessment and acknowledges the input of all who have created learner success.</p>	<p>Understands and practices within the Capable NZ framework of deficit-free thinking.</p> <p>Delivers a “learner focused experience” which recognises their unique approach to learning and the learning they have achieved as a result of their Independent Learning Pathway.</p> <p>Understands and appreciates tikanga Māori and the implications that may have for each learner’s ILP.</p> <p>Practices in a culturally safe and appropriate manner, recognising and respecting each learner’s unique background and contribution.</p> <p>Understands and applies Ker’s Four Principles of Facilitation to Assessment.</p> <p>Able to create a relationship-based assessment which collaborates with the learner to achieve the best possible outcome.</p> <p>Provides leadership in recognising the importance of the occasion of assessment and acknowledges the input of all who have created learner success.</p>	<p>Contributes to the continuous improvement of the Capable NZ framework of deficit-free thinking.</p> <p>Demonstrates expertise in delivering a “learner focused experience” which recognises their unique approach to learning and the learning they have achieved as a result of their Independent Learning Pathway.</p> <p>Models understanding and appreciation of tikanga Māori and the implications that may have for each learner’s ILP.</p> <p>Provides leadership in culturally safe and appropriate practice, modelling and respecting each learner’s unique background and contribution.</p> <p>Understands and applies Ker’s Four Principles of Facilitation to Assessment.</p> <p>Can lead others to create a relationship-based assessment which collaborates with the learner to achieve the best possible outcome.</p> <p>Provides leadership in recognising the importance of the assessment process and its potential to add to the Capable NZ market positioning.</p>

## Assessor Process Framework

My research also identified Process Support Competencies and I have documented these below to provide guidance for the professional performance of effective assessment and to act as a framework for professional development. This competency framework sets out the level required for each practical and process area of competency and is designed to help Assessors demonstrate their level of expertise.

	<b>Developing Assessor</b> <i>(Entry-level competencies required)</i>	<b>Competent Assessor</b> <i>(An effective and reflective practitioner)</i>	<b>Advanced Assessor</b> <i>(Critically reflective leader of prof. practice)</i>
<b>Assessment Practice</b>	<p>Has knowledge of NZQA, OP and Capable NZ policies and procedures relating to Assessment.</p> <p>Has copies of current Graduate Profiles, Grading Tables and other documentation relating to Assessment.</p> <p>Maintains currency with Capable NZ process and procedure requirements.</p>	<p>Maintains current knowledge of NZQA, OP and Capable NZ policies and procedures relating to Assessment.</p> <p>Maintains current knowledge of Graduate Profiles, Grading Tables and other documentation relating to Assessment.</p> <p>Maintains currency with Capable NZ process and procedure requirements.</p>	<p>Maintains current knowledge of NZQA, OP and Capable NZ policies and procedures relating to Assessment.</p> <p>Maintain current knowledge of Graduate Profiles, Grading Tables and other documentation relating to Assessment.</p> <p>Contributes to the development and review of the relevant processes and policies.</p>
<b>Learning Support</b>	<p>Prepares for each assessment by reading, analysing and reviewing the learner's portfolio of evidence, noting any areas of potential concern.</p> <p>Where concerns are significant, discuss with the Lead Assessor, in time for the learner to have an opportunity to address.</p> <p>Where less significant, note to inform questioning during assessment.</p>	<p>Prepares for each assessment by reading, analysing and reviewing the learner's portfolio of evidence, noting any areas of potential concern.</p> <p>Where concerns are significant, discuss with the Facilitator, in time for the learner to have an opportunity to address.</p> <p>Where less significant, note to inform questioning during assessment.</p>	<p>Prepares for each assessment by reading, analysing and reviewing the learner's portfolio of evidence, noting any areas of potential concern.</p> <p>Where concerns are significant, discuss with the Facilitator, in time for the learner to have an opportunity to address.</p> <p>Where less significant, note to inform questioning during assessment</p>

Capable culture	<p>Develops knowledge and skills for effective assessment practice and maintains evidence to support any review of OP or Capable NZ.</p> <p>Informs Capable NZ of personal development achievements to support them to maintain a pool of appropriate Assessors to give options for selection to “fit” learner’s needs.</p>	<p>Actively develops knowledge and skills for effective assessment practice and maintains evidence to support any OP review.</p> <p>Informs Capable NZ of professional development achievements to support them to maintain a pool of appropriate Assessors to give options for selection to “fit” learner’s needs.</p> <p>Contributes to the OP and Capable NZ profile by engaging in scholarly activity.</p>	<p>Provides leadership for others in developing knowledge and skills for effective assessment practice and maintains evidence to support any OP review.</p> <p>Informs Capable NZ of professional development achievements to support them to maintain a pool of appropriate Assessors to give options for selection to “fit” learner’s needs.</p> <p>Provides guidance to Capable NZ with the selection and training of developing Assessors.</p> <p>Models best practice by actively engaging in scholarly activity so as to contribute to the OP and Capable NZ profile.</p>

These Assessor Competency and Process Frameworks have been circulated to the Capable NZ educational professionals who contributed to my research and their comments, corrections and enhancements have been included in the tables presented above.



## Assessment Support Documentation

The Otago Polytechnic, and Capable NZ, have developed a significant range of documentation to give support and guidance to Assessors and I have used this project to collate these into a more readily accessible format. The information below will be incorporated into the re-write of the Capable NZ Academic and Operations Manual underway as part of the GUTS project and was workshopped at the Capable NZ Planning Retreat in December 2018. Further information will be added during January and February 2019, in order to complete the document by the deadline of March 2019. The information below is a sample of the material being collated. In order to maintain their professional practice standards, Assessors should be familiar these documents and ensure that they are referring to the current version. Assessors use their Otago Polytechnic logon to access this information.

Section One – Support Resources		
Information	Description	Location
Governance, Vision and Values and Strategic Goals	Otago Polytechnic's core documents which guide the operations of the organisation.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/our-vision-and-values/">www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/our-vision-and-values/</a>
Council Policies	Otago Polytechnic's formal policy documents which detail the Council's policies for the organisation.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/">www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/</a>
Management Policies	Otago Polytechnic's formal policy documents which detail the management performance of the organisation.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/">www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/</a>
About OP	Page provides valuable links to useful information relating to a wide range of topics.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/about-op">www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/about-op</a>
Otago Polytech People	Page lists OP's Organisation Chart, the Departments, Teams and individuals who contribute.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/teams">www.op.ac.nz/hub/teams</a>

Information	Description	Location
Academic Policies	Otago Polytechnic's formal policy documents which detail the academic performance of the organisation.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/">www.op.ac.nz/about-us/governance-and-management/policies/</a>
Otago Polytechnic Academic Manual	The Academic Manual details the Otago Polytechnic's Academic Quality Management System.	<a href="http://insite.op.ac.nz/Polytechnic Documents/OP AQMM Issue 8a February 2014.doc">http://insite.op.ac.nz/Polytechnic Documents/OP AQMM Issue 8a February 2014.doc</a>
Otago Polytechnic's online tools.	Page provides links to OP's online tools, applications, reference sources and "how to" videos.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/op-tools">www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/op-tools</a>
Otago Polytechnic Communities	This page provides links to the Committees, Communities and Projects which guide OP's operation and improvement.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/communities">www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/communities</a>
Tuhono	Your personal Otago Polytechnic homepage, which shows links to your emails and material, current OP news and useful information.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/">www.op.ac.nz/hub/</a>
Service	Once you have logged on to the OP Hub, you can access the Service tab to log an issue or find a solution.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/">www.op.ac.nz/hub/</a> prod-service.microsoftcrmpartals.com
Health and Safety	This page provides a link to Vault – the Health & Safety recording and reporting tool.	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/op-tools">www.op.ac.nz/hub/staff/op-tools</a>

<b>Section 2 - Capable NZ Quality Programmes</b>		
<b>Information</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Capable NZ Academic Governance	Academic governance describes a framework that regulates academic decisions and academic quality assurance within Capable NZ	<a href="J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\Academic Committee">J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\Academic Committee</a>
Capable NZ Academic Committee	The purpose of the Capable NZ Academic Committee is to establish and monitor the academic quality processes, manage the Ethics process and Cat B approvals and ensure all all NZQA and Otago Polytechnic quality assurance processes are completed	<a href="J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\Academic Committee">J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\Academic Committee</a>
	The Capable NZ Assessment Committee manages the pre and post-assessment moderation.	<a href="J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\Academic Committee\Assessment committee">J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\Academic Committee\Assessment committee</a>
	The Professional Practice Learning Agreement Review Panel is responsible for all professional practice learning agreements.	<a href="#">?</a>

<b>Section 2 - Capable NZ Academic Programmes</b>		
<b>Information</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Independent Learning Pathway - <b>Graduate Profile</b>	Doctor of Professional Practice	<a href="J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\DPP\DPP\DPP approval NZQA">J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\DPP\DPP\DPP approval NZQA</a>
	Master of Professional Practice	
	Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice	J:\Shared\CAPL\Office - General\GDPP\Student and Staff Resources
	Bachelor of Applied Management	

<b>Section 3 – Capable People</b>		
<b>Information</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Capable NZ Staffing	Up to date list of all the staff and contractors who contribute to Capable NZ	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/hub/teams/learner-experience/capable-nz/">www.op.ac.nz/hub/teams/learner-experience/capable-nz/</a>
	Position descriptions and role responsibilities for all the Capable NZ team.	

<b>Capable NZ Learner Programmes</b>		
<b>Information</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Getting learners started	Capable NZ Enquiry Form	<a href="http://capable.nz/apply/enquiry-form">http://capable.nz/apply/enquiry-form</a>
Independent Learning Pathway Course Overview	Doctor of Professional Practice	<a href="http://capable.nz/study/doctor-of-professional-practice/">http://capable.nz/study/doctor-of-professional-practice/</a>
	Master of Professional Practice	<a href="http://capable.nz/study/master-of-professional-practice/">http://capable.nz/study/master-of-professional-practice/</a>
	Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice	<a href="http://capable.nz/study/graduate-diploma-in-professional-practice/">http://capable.nz/study/graduate-diploma-in-professional-practice/</a>
	Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice (Health & Safety)	<a href="http://capable.nz/study/graduate-diploma-in-professional-practice-ohs">http://capable.nz/study/graduate-diploma-in-professional-practice-ohs</a>
	Bachelor of Applied Management	<a href="http://capable.nz/study/bachelor-of-applied-management">http://capable.nz/study/bachelor-of-applied-management</a>
	Bachelor of Applied Management (Business Excellence)	<a href="http://capable.nz/study/bachelor-of-applied-management-business-excellence/">http://capable.nz/study/bachelor-of-applied-management-business-excellence/</a>
	NZ Diploma in Business Administration	<a href="http://www.op.ac.nz/study/tanz-ecampus/new-zealand-diploma-in-business-administration-and-technology-level-5/">www.op.ac.nz/study/tanz-ecampus/new-zealand-diploma-in-business-administration-and-technology-level-5/</a>

## Recommendations for further development;

### Policy and Documentation Review

Capable NZ is undertaking a formal review process to ensure the policies and processes in use support current practice as part of the GUTS project, and this was reported at the December 2018 Capable NZ Planning Days. Following this project, a formal change process should be created to advise Assessors when changes have been made to policies, practices or Graduate Profiles and access to the current copy of this core information should be simplified.

### Peer Review Process Review

The current Assessment process comes at the completion of the facilitated learning, when the learner's portfolio has been peer reviewed, and the peer review comments discussed with the learner. This project has identified an area for potential improvement. Currently, Assessors do not have access to the Peer Review comments, nor do they know if the learner has undertaken any of the remedial action recommended. This issue becomes particularly problematic when the learner delivers the "final" portfolio outside the required timeframe, leaving little time for discussion within the Capable NZ team. If the Assessment process required the Facilitator to include a copy of the Peer Review Report with the Portfolio sent to the panel, Assessors would have the value of the information.

### Weighting of evidence

It may be useful for the Assessors and the Academic Board to consider if we need agreement as to standard weighting of evidence from portfolio, slides, other evidence and presentation, or do we maintain flexibility; with the requirement that the report clearly describes the evidence used to reach the conclusion

### Community of practice

It would be useful to consider the benefit of regular meetings of Assessors to create a forum for improving our community of practice.

### New Assessor Induction

It will be valuable to create a more formal induction programme for new Assessors, covering the assurance, learning and culture expectations and detailing sources of support information, administrative processes and Health and Safety requirements.

(18,000)

## Conclusion and reflection

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Reading back on my Stage One Review of Learning, I see that I felt that my development had reached a place of unconscious competence. With a degree of self-justified arrogance, I claimed that years of experience, learning and reflection had given me three sets of *kite*, Māori baskets of knowledge, and each was crammed full of the tools I needed to face my personal and professional life with a degree of confidence.

Relying on my advancing years as a base for that confidence in my competence, I claimed I had achieved Gladwell's (Gladwell 2008) 10,000 hours, making me an expert in my areas of endeavour and with this self-belief firmly established, I began the research phase of the MPP with a sense of confidence. All I had to do was to read the available literature, ask a few questions, and my hypothesis would be confirmed.

My belief was that an excellent Assessor, carrying out an effective assessment, was operating somewhere near the mid-point of a continuum between the role of an auditor and an educator. In any assessment, there were two things we had to do as Assessors; ensure that the learner's achievement had met the standard and use our skills to support the learner to give of their best in the presentation as a step towards future changes in personal and professional behaviour. And early readings tended to confirm my position. On the one hand there was a huge range of material available setting out the quality assurance requirements of an assessment with a raft of competencies listed.

Although considered by many to be disruptive education, the documentation describing Otago Polytechnic's Capable NZ programmes was very clear about meeting the requirements of the educational authorities. In many ways this need to meet the standards was obvious; New Zealand has a history of high-profile executives being outed for having gained their roles with internet-printed qualifications. And several Polytechnics themselves have gained a less than stellar reputation for issuing dodgy qualifications to students who barely entered a classroom.

If the Polytechnic's Bachelor of Applied Management, for example, was seen to be a pay your fee and get your degree programme, then it would quickly lose any value and the entire Capable NZ school, indeed the whole Otago Polytechnic market position would come under challenge. So, the reasoning behind the documentation became very understandable.



Those who worked so hard to establish the programme were rightly defensive of what was being offered and were determined that the quality of the successful learners could not be questioned.

This stance was complicated by the educational authorities changing policies and demands. Early Capable policy documents had a focus on ensuring the learner met the requirements of the Graduate Profile, by being given Recognition for their Prior Learning (RPL). The Capable Team were required to compile enough evidence to show that the learner had, thanks to their wide experience, already gained at least the same level of knowledge as a graduate who had attended classes for three years. This was my experience of Capable NZ, when I successfully gained my own Bachelor of Applied Management back in 2007. I had to demonstrate subject matter competency to the level of a new graduate by giving actual examples of my skills gained from my experience to that point. I did have to show that the learning was conscious; it wasn't enough just to have a great list of experiences. My presentation demonstrated that I had been able to turn experience into learning.

When I began assessing in 2010, that was my framework of practice. Did the learner show that they had the same knowledge as a taught student? This framework was further reinforced by my pre-Capable assessment experience in earlier roles, where my NZQA Assessor certification had taught me how to evaluate evidence to correlate with the requirements of Unit Standards. At its most direct, could I tick the box to show that the learner had demonstrated the achievement of the unit standard.

But this focus changed during 2010, when TEC funding for the Polytechnic's programmes became based on what a student was taught; what new learning could they demonstrate. As well as showing how they met the requirements of the graduate profile, the Polytechnic was also expected to be able to show what they had done to add to a learner's knowledge.

Although subtle, this change began my own questioning of the role of the Assessor; what was I there to do. Although the standards against which I was assessing were clearly detailed in written Graduate Profiles, I began to question what role I had, if any, in contributing to the new learning. It also came at about the time I began chairing assessment panels and I was keen to understand the broader expectation of the role. The documentation available at the time was almost entirely focused on the "quality assurance" aspects of assessment – Assessment Panels were there to record evidence of achievement.

I also became much more aware of the Capable NZ “learner focused” positioning statement which suggested that while the endpoint of the learning pathway might be clear, the learner had significant freedom as to what road to take to get to that endpoint, indeed they even had the freedom to select their own mode of transport.

As I gained experience in assessment, I was fortunate to have had the guidance of two mentors, each with their own stake in the formation, development, growth and achievement of the Capable NZ programme. Robin Day was my direct mentor as I worked through the early years of my apprenticeship as an Assessor. He had shown how we could work with the learner to bring out their best evidence of achievement and how to document that achievement as evidence to meet the requirements. And Glenys Ker as programme head and frequent fellow Assessor, taught me the importance of allowing the learner to tell their own story and in her own research has documented the Four Principles necessary for effective learning.

Consequently, when beginning my literature review for this project, I was aware that Assessors were more than educational auditors and had some part to play in the overall learning pathway. Early academic readings confirmed the thinking behind my model but appeared to skew the continuum towards the evidential audit end of the scale and the reason for this became clear as I read of the history behind the recent move to RPL programmes worldwide. In England in the 1980s, RPL was introduced as a way of addressing a shortfall in professionals by fast-tracking them through entry level qualifications to allow them to move much more quickly into the next level of tertiary education. There was considerable academic and industry scepticism as to the validity of the RPL qualifications and significant effort went into maintaining high standards of assessment. As a result of this focus on quality processes, reviews of the students’ later success showed they achieved at a higher rate than “classroom” learners and thus, the standard for high quality RPL assessments was introduced and has been maintained.

Having established examples and reference material to support the quality end of the continuum, I continued reading, looking for evidence of the Assessor’s role as part of the Capable NZ learning team. If I was to do more than measure the learner against the standard, I had to identify an educative role, where I moved from being a passive “auditor” to an active contributor to the learning process.

My personal tendency to look for deeper significance was rewarded when I read of Mezirow’s enactionist theories and Gallagher’s research into the impact of the assessment process on the person being assessed.

These authors suggested that assessment was not a passive “audit” process but that the relationship aspect of the conversation between everyone in the room has a profound contribution to the success of the outcome. Clearly, what we did as Assessors can change the outcome of the assessment and the assessed. The question became, are we assisting the learner to achieve their best or are we making it harder for them to reach the standard.

This in turn raised the question, what’s the point of the assessment. Isn’t it enough that the student knows the required information. Why does it take someone external to tell them what they know – or is the Assessor’s role to point out that they don’t know – so they can take remedial action.

After reading Mezirow, for the first time I found I could identify a specific task which an Assessor must deliver if the learner is to have the transformational experience expected by the Polytechnic and Capable NZ. The Assessors provide the “Rational Discourse” during the assessment. This professional conversation allows the learner to present their evidence, explain and defend it, during a collaborative discussion with the Assessors. At the successful conclusion of the assessment, the learner has their learning acknowledged, is able to internalise their achievement and can claim their experienced based learning as their own. According to Mezirow, it is the self-recognition of achievement which gives the learner the empowerment necessary to change future behaviours. As an Assessor, I have a responsibility to actively collaborate with each learner in this Rational Discourse as well as meeting my quality assurance obligations.

Interestingly, the history of assessment shows it was not originally based on any measurement of the quality of the student but was designed by funding agencies to ensure that the educators were doing what they were paid for. A literature review of the history of assessment, and discussions with experienced industry professionals, slowly began to unlock an issue which has been troubling me at a personal level for some time; what is education there to achieve?

My own lifetime of educational experience, captured in my Stage One Review of Learning, clearly shows an eclectic approach to learning; what do I need to know to progress, what do I need to know to stay ahead of the bunch, what professional resources do I need to add and what do I need to know to satisfy my interest? But in recent years I have noticed New Zealand’s education system increasingly narrowing to focus on “what do you need to know to get a specific job”.

My daughter spent five years gaining a veterinary degree and her course of study didn't deviate from that outcome by one single paper. My son at 14 was asked to specify his long-term career, so that he could select three years of subjects for NCEA to deliver him ready for the next stage of academia at University. And NCEA itself appears to be much more interested in teaching the students how to pass and tick the credit boxes than in inspiring them how to think, be creative or how to contribute to their own, and their community's, wellbeing.

As I read of the history of assessment and learned of the two schools of thinking described by Taylor and Dewey early in the 1900s, I began to see that my own thinking reflected the tension they described. Are we teaching a student to give them a specific set of tools to do one job or are we creating an educational framework which allows them to grow their contribution to their community?

This choice was highlighted for me in 2017, when standing for The Opportunities Party in the General Election. Their education policy proposed a significant reduction in assessment and measurement of specific three Rs, NZEA type credits and national standards. Instead, they argued for a major change to re-focus education on creating a base on which students could learn the four Cs, communication, creativity, cooperation and critical thinking; skills needed for an uncertain future. Rather than the National Party's focus on Taylor's approach of increasing measurement of standards, TOP preferred Dewey's belief in the wider value of any education to a community.

Then came one of the many lightbulb moments of this project. The Otago Polytechnic management, and Capable NZ, constantly refer to their organisations' "disruptive education" and "learner focused" approach. For much of my time I have taken these statements at face value, with my understanding largely coloured by my marketing background. Of course, the Polytechnic is "customer focused", it allows learners to create a personal, independent learning pathway, so that they can meet the national standard by following their own course. Other educational organisations detail the course and the outcome a learner must follow, but the Otago Polytechnic only details the outcome; how learner focused and different is that?

But that view misses the true disruptive approach and learner driven experience. The Otago Polytechnic's Capable NZ philosophy isn't aimed at assisting a learner to tick Taylor's boxes for a specific career pathway. Instead it offers every learner an opportunity to recognise their own value to their community and to give them the confidence to use that recognition to transform their future contributions.

For me, that understanding of the philosophy clarified and subtly changed my understanding of the role of the Assessor in the overall process. If the Polytech's approach is aligned to Taylor's scientific measurement model, then there is a considerable weight placed on an Assessor to measure and report on the learner's achievement of the standard required for a specific task. Assessment is looking back to confirm standards have been met. But if I am assessing within Dewey's community contribution model, I have a responsibility to work collaboratively with the learner to help them identify the attributes they have which can form the basis for their future action. Assessment in this milieu is interested in looking forward, the very essence of transformative learning.

This change in understanding has led me to prepare my first ever, peer reviewed, academic paper which I will present at an educational conference in December 2018 and the questions I will put to the audience are at the core of my opening hypothesis and learning from this project. "When we are assessing learner achievement, are we looking for attainment of explicit unit standards or evidence of the learner's past, present and potential for contribution to their community?" Are we measuring "how many" or "how much"? Are we measuring yesterday or tomorrow?

My literature review has taught me that for much of history, assessment of educational achievement focused on noting the student's readiness to make a contribution to their community; could they hunt, weave or cook to the standard needed to take part in these activities. But in my literature research I discovered how, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Taylor argued for the scientific management of education, where every task could be analysed, the best method identified, and that method taught to a worker. From there came an educational pedagogy focused on teaching the explicit skills needed for any role - which culminated in New Zealand in the development and introduction of NCEA, Unit Standards and National Standards.

My wider research into the socio-political framework surrounding education considered how the previous National Government's education policy was increasingly directed to the teaching of a list of unit standards and the measurement and national publication of achievement of these standards to the exclusion of all else. If it wasn't on the list, it wasn't measured and wasn't important. But it does appear that the alterative viewpoint is once again being valued, as the Labour coalition government acts to return to Dewey's community focused education.

My research and personal experiences appear to confirm that one of the core disruptive factors offered by Capable NZ is a return to a Dewey aligned philosophy aimed at assisting a learner to identify the totality of their ability to contribute to their community rather than focus on measuring their achievement of Taylor's "One Best Method" for any task.

As I progressed with my reading and began to review the early results of interviews with the industry professionals, I found my original premise was being stretched as I struggled to align the research material with the simple hypothesis of an Assessor acting somewhere along a continuum between the learner and the educational authorities. The evidence was clear that there was a third force at work in the equation; the Otago Polytechnic's disruptive and learner focused, Dewey aligned philosophy.

This third assessment requirement became increasingly obvious as I attempted to arrange my reading and professional interview responses in a way which allowed me to document the competencies required to be an excellent Assessor. It seemed perfectly possible to support the learner to provide the evidence required by the educational authorities but do that in a way which could potentially have a negative impact on the Polytechnic's core philosophy. My initial response to this apparent dilemma was to sort each of the reported Polytechnic's needs with either the educational evidence end of the continuum or the learner's needs at the other.

As I worked through the classification of the early data collection from the professionals, it became obvious that I was forcing the data to fit the model and the Otago Polytechnic's Capable NZ programme was an explicit player in the assessment operation. An assessment should meet the legislative and policy needs of the educational authorities, work with the learner in a cooperative manner to actively contribute to their transformative learning and maintain the Otago Polytechnic's critically important philosophy. Anything less than the three-pronged approach had the risk of pulling Capable NZ back into line with all the other educational institutions throughout New Zealand.

The question then became, what specific attributes do the Polytechnic and Capable NZ have which need to be protected and, from there, what does the Assessor need to do to ensure that these attributes are maintained, grown and treasured?

The next lightbulb was switched on when I was reading a paper to gain better understanding of Treaty issues and came across the relatively well-known term “kaupapa” which, in the context of the material I was reading, seemed to encompass a depth of meaning which was beyond the “it’s the way Māori to do things”. The wider definition of kaupapa Māori listed: Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society. (Maori Dictionary 2018)

It occurred to me that *kaupapa Capable* defined the third pressure point in the assessment process; the complex set of philosophies, behaviours, cultures and policies which make the totality of the professional practice of the organisation unique. An Assessor must understand the kaupapa and use that to guide their actions, behaviours and contributions to an assessment and an Assessor without understanding of the totality of the kaupapa is not able to fully contribute to the unique Capable NZ experience.

This understanding has direct implications for the employment of Assessors. A Capable NZ Assessor must have the technical skills needed for the assurance leg of the assessment stool. They must understand their role in contributing to the learner’s pathway and the psychological skills and personality to collaborate with the learner to bring out their best. A skilled Assessor from almost any educational background will be able to meet those two attributes. But to be a Capable Assessor, they must also have a commitment to kaupapa Capable; ideally from a lived experience but at the least, having a willingness and openness to learn the approach required.

Writing about *kaupapa Capable*, following a research interview with an experienced Māori Assessor, triggered a further area of self-reflection relating to my true understanding of Māori tikanga and my rights or obligation to use te reo phrases. At the basic level, the question balances the obligation on me as a New Zealander to do my bit to maintain te reo as a living language as part of my everyday life, with the worry that my understanding of the language is often superficial.

For example, my use of the phrase “*mihi*” to describe the introductory statements at the beginning of the assessment is both correct and incorrect. When a Māori uses a mihi to introduce themselves, they are describing the obvious – who they descend from, where they are from and what family links they have. As a non-Māori I can get that bit and can introduce myself within a similar framework.

But what I am missing when I introduce myself or hear a mihi, is the deeper understanding that only comes from a culture based on personal history. For a Māori, a mihimihi is not just about locating the person in a place but locating them in history and, perhaps more importantly, recognising the impact of that history on today's relationship.

I can improve my own te reo to the point where I can understand the words being spoken in a mihi, but I need to learn much, much more if I am to have any hope of coming close to understanding the relational impact of what I am hearing. Sam Neill's excellent television series on Captain Cook included many examples in programme two.

In this programme, Māori being interviewed explained how historical linkages, debts and obligations were carried forward to today's generation and the recital of a mihimihi reminds those present of those linkages, debts and obligations. But more than a historical reminder, Neil's interviews highlighted the need to understand the potential impact of the linkages and obligations on the current conversation. As I have progressed through this study, I have come to accept that while I can hear the words in a mihimihi, and perhaps increasingly be able to translate them, I have little understanding of either the below the surface history the words convey or their consequences for today.

From time to time I am touched by situations where the deeper meaning comes to the surface and I get a glimpse of the layers which lie below the superficial. I will never forget assessing a woman with an almost unbelievable history of abuse at the hands of the Department of Social Welfare in the 1970s. For what was, I suspect, the first time in her life she openly discussed her deepest hurts, while showing how she overcame these to reach the graduate profile for a degree. In the 1970s I was a Department of Social Welfare Social Worker and was part of the processes and policies which caused her so much pain. While I personally did not deal with her as a Social Worker and wasn't directly responsible for her harm, I was part of her history and my understanding of her history was a valuable contribution to my ability to assess her growth and learning.

While I have focused on the use of the term mihimihi in this reflection, the word is a very simple example of the complexity of dealing with the unknown. In the very short time allowed for an assessment, the Assessors need to work to create a relationship with the learner but need to understand that there will be layers that we haven't identified and would struggle to relate to even if we did. Is the learner reluctant to expand on an example because they have a lack of knowledge in that area, or are we attempting to draw out more information on an experience or relationship that may be painful?



Do I always have to have the question answered or is it enough for me to recognise I am missing something and to mindfully accept that there may be a layer of complexity in an assessment that I am not able to resolve?

A further step in my professional development growth came as a result of my research interview with a university professor who has parallel careers in a scientific discipline and in educational assessment. Our early conversation was coloured by his scepticism of the entire Capable process and much of his questioning I found challenging and confronting. How could the Polytechnic possibly issue degree level qualifications without the student having achieved a minimum number of classroom hours of instruction? But as our conversation progressed, both of us began to see strong parallels between our Capable processes and their university's own doctoral procedures.

In both, a learner uses their prior knowledge and experience to create new learning – which is documented in a portfolio of evidence. In both settings, the learner is supported, by a Facilitator or Supervisor, but the learning is their own responsibility and is largely self-directed. Neither doctoral nor Capable student are “given” information to learn; they have to find it for themselves.

And, to end the process, the University learner submits their portfolio for marking and then academically defends their writing in front of a panel; while at the Polytechnic the portfolio is submitted for Peer Review before being presented to a panel for what we call assessment. As the similarities between the processes were acknowledged, we began to discuss common issues and the varying or similar approaches to resolution of these issues.

By the end of the interview we had reached a range of agreements: the need for professional leadership from panel chairs to encourage but balance the input of members, the need for organisations to acknowledge that panel members have developed an effective, specialist, professional practice, the need to prepare learners for the assessment process, the requirement for panel members to be highly skilled in synthesising complex academic subject matter, even personal information, the need to recognise that assessments, even summative ones, should be seen as learning experiences and agreement that while we both find it easy to collect evidence of achievement of the descriptive standards set, evidence for the more subjective standards comes from our professional judgement. He was also generous in sharing his solutions to common problems and, where appropriate, these have been added to my research.

Moving closer to the end of my educational professional research phase, as I was beginning to give shape to documenting my findings and linking them to recommendations, I spent an hour with the Capable NZ's quality review team as they prepared the organisation for the 2019 review. While they were questioning me to find evidence of alignment between my practice and the organisation's legislative quality requirements, I identified several opportunities to use my project to more directly benefit Capable NZ.

This was a useful reminder that this is not just an academic exercise aimed at getting me a higher-level qualification, this is a real-life, problem solving project which will be a failure if it does not result in improvements to assessments in the future. The measure of success is not the award of an MPP, but real changes in my own professional practice and that of the wider Capable NZ team.

My project's outputs should include actions, understandings and processes which:

- Add value to future learners' learning pathways
- Add tools and insights which can be used by Capable NZ team members
- Add credibility and value to the Otago Polytechnic
- Add to the impact our we all have on our own community.

If I am truly to embrace Dewey's philosophy of education to grow community contribution, then this work and my own professional practice must reflect that clarity of focus.

And if I needed any reminder of the importance of the Capable NZ approach to learning, it came with my first interview of a successful learner. I had assessed this learner many month's ago for a highly technically focused qualification and, based on my experience during the assessment, expected sound, factual information with significant attention to detail. But this was not a learner who had demonstrated personal insights during their assessment and I had little hope of research material based on reflective practice.

As we chatted prior to the start of the formal interview, I asked about his upcoming move to a new position in another city. Did he think his qualification had helped him gain the role? After a thoughtful pause he replied no, it wasn't the qualification which impressed his new employers, it was his ability to reflectively review his technical work and to consider the human impact of this technical work on his team members and customers.

He then went on to describe the personal transformation he had experienced as a result of the Capable NZ programme and process and discussed in detail the impact of his learning on his operational, professional and personal approach. With little questioning from me, he talked about how he answered his prospective employer's questions during the interview and how he linked his answers to their needs by reflecting on his experiences and the resulting learning. As he talked it became obvious that, without using the words, he was detailing the ideal transformative learning experience and Mezirow's four steps, culminating in the creation of a new view of the world which allowed him to act differently. It wasn't the new degree which gave him the new job, it was the new him that he had found and unlocked thanks to the Capable NZ programme.

Continuing with the interview, we began discussing the assessment itself, and the part that it contributed to the Capable NZ programme and he was able to explain how his reflection of the assessment from today's viewpoint differed from his experience on the day. While his detailed responses are captured in the research section of my project, it was his realisation that for him the real impact of the Capable NZ programme came in the weeks and months after completion which had become his key positive.

As I progressed with my graduate learner interviews it became clear that the first experience was not an isolated example but, to varying degrees, the common outcome of those going through Capable NZ's ILP programme. In every interview, the successful graduates explained that the real value of the qualification was not the piece of paper, or even the external recognition gained by a formal qualification, but the life changes they had made. They were clear, the changes were partly from the new factual learning – theories, policies and practical examples – but the more important learning was their new ability to look within. An ability to reflect on what they had done in the past, an ability to apply that reflection to the situation they were currently facing and an ability to make decisions for future actions in a mindful and meaningful way; the ultimate description of Mezirow's fourth stage.

What became even more powerful, was the recognition that this mirrored my own experience where, at the end of the assessment, I was entirely focused on having passed the "exam". I now had my learnings confirmed with the issue of a piece of paper and could stop working and worrying and return my focus to my day to day job, not realising that the real value was yet to come. None of us graduates could remember the exact moment of realisation of this value, but one described how one day he found himself facing a significant issue at work.

But before spending time thinking of solutions, he found himself reflecting on similar, earlier problems, the factors, the impacts and the things he learned from the experience. Only after this self-aware analysis did he allow himself to begin addressing the current problem; an exact description of my own experience and that of the other graduates' interviews. For all of us, the graduation was not the end point, as there subsequently came a growing understanding that we had changed our method of operation and had this new tool of reflective consideration to guide future decision making.

Capable NZ is clearly doing far more than giving learners recognition for the highly technical, business specific tools they need to do their job. Capable NZ is showing learners how they can use those specific tools more effectively to make an actual difference within their organisation – and within their private lives.

And in terms of my initial research questions, the interviews with the graduates strongly reinforced the three-factor role of Assessors; the learners expected the Assessors to measure them against high standards, they described how the Assessors' conversations and feedback gave them the confidence to claim their knowledge and they clearly valued the unique Capable NZ experience which changed their professional practice in a way no other tertiary institution could.

At a personal level, this learning created a new awareness of my responsibilities as an Assessor; what I do matters, and it matters to the learner most of all. If the Capable NZ programme and the assessment changed the personal and professional life of every single graduate I interviewed, then I have a responsibility to treat the collaboration with them with the utmost respect. I am not there to test their knowledge, but to add one more step in their personal understanding of their ability to do better things and do them better in the future.

My role as an Assessor is not to look back at their experience and learning and to “mark” it but to work with the learner to help them to look forward to a future where they can use what they have learned to address issues, situations and challenges they haven't yet faced. Understanding this responsibility has subtly changed my professional practice in that my research and reflection have given me permission to actively engage in the learner's growth, to act with a new intent and to treasure the privilege of being a collaborator in the assessment. This understanding, and the results of the research, confirm the importance of my preparation for the assessment if I am to be able to contribute to the learner's transformation.

But the Assessment also matters to those responsible for education in New Zealand from the Government of the day, through the TEC to NZQA and to the Polytechnic itself. These organisations want to be certain that every single graduate of a qualification within their purview enhances their reputation and makes a useful contribution to New Zealand and the world. My role as an Assessor is to have a personal quality culture which can provide the certainty these organisations require.

Understanding this responsibility has reinforced the need for me to have an explicit, personal quality assurance programme and to ensure it provides a strong evidence trail of compliance with the standards. From time to time, as an Assessment Panel Chair, I have had a challenge to the grade we have awarded, and for which I must take responsibility. Although these requests for review can be professionally confronting, I have come to appreciate the value of this MPP project and the impact it has had on my professional practice already. As an Assessor promoting the Capable NZ kaupapa, I must set aside my ego and turn the review request into a growth opportunity for the learner. First, I should ask myself about my conduct during the assessment; did my presence, tone, comments and actions create a clear impression of the learner's abilities and evidence or did I create a false expectation which has led to the current situation? Did my feedback clearly mirror our findings as a panel and did we support the positive aspects of the learner's evidence by describing opportunities for future focus? Rather than rushing to justify the Assessment Report or grade issued, I should be asking what I did contribute to the learner's request and what can I do to improve the current situation and avoid similar requests in the future.

Reflecting on a recent example of such a request, led me to also consider the other infrequent situation, where the panel does not consider that a learner has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate achievement of the graduate profile. During the period of review, when the learner has left the room following the assessment, the first question the panel usually asks itself is – “has the learner met the standard”. With the benefit of the new Framework of Assessment in mind, I can now ask myself “have I considered the totality of the evidence available”? If there isn't the required evidence genuinely available, then the next question becomes, “how can I work collaboratively with the learner to turn this into further learning”? Am I using my skills, knowledge and experience to creatively identify a process to support to learner to achieve the standard and add an appreciation of their achievement?

The Otago Polytechnic, and Capable NZ, are also critically interested in the outcomes of each assessment I carry out. My role as an Assessor is to make a positive reputational contribution to the Otago Polytechnic and Capable NZ so that they can continue to push the boundaries of education. From time to time, I should review my practice and ask, am I creating a risk to reputation, a risk to funding or a risk to their strategic planning with my involvement in each learner's programme? But I must also ask, am I assessing in a truly learner focused manner which reinforces the special way we do things round here? Understanding this responsibility has fine-tuned my professional practice by encouraging me to actively improve my own professional standards while working to embed myself in *kaupapa Capable*.

My fellow Capable NZ contributors also matter, and the process of interviewing so many for this project, and working alongside them and others over some years, has certainly reinforced my understanding of my responsibility to work with them in an entirely professional and supportive manner. Their generous contribution to my learning has resulted in a research output which confirms what is unique about Capable NZ, and what is so different from a traditional educational facility; we are genuinely part of one team, which works with the learner to achieve great things. Understanding this responsibility confirms the need to model the Assurance, Learner and Cultural competencies listed in my project report.

These responsibilities define the Capable NZ Assessor role and helped inform each of the outputs of my Project Report and each of the recommendations for enhanced policies or practices.

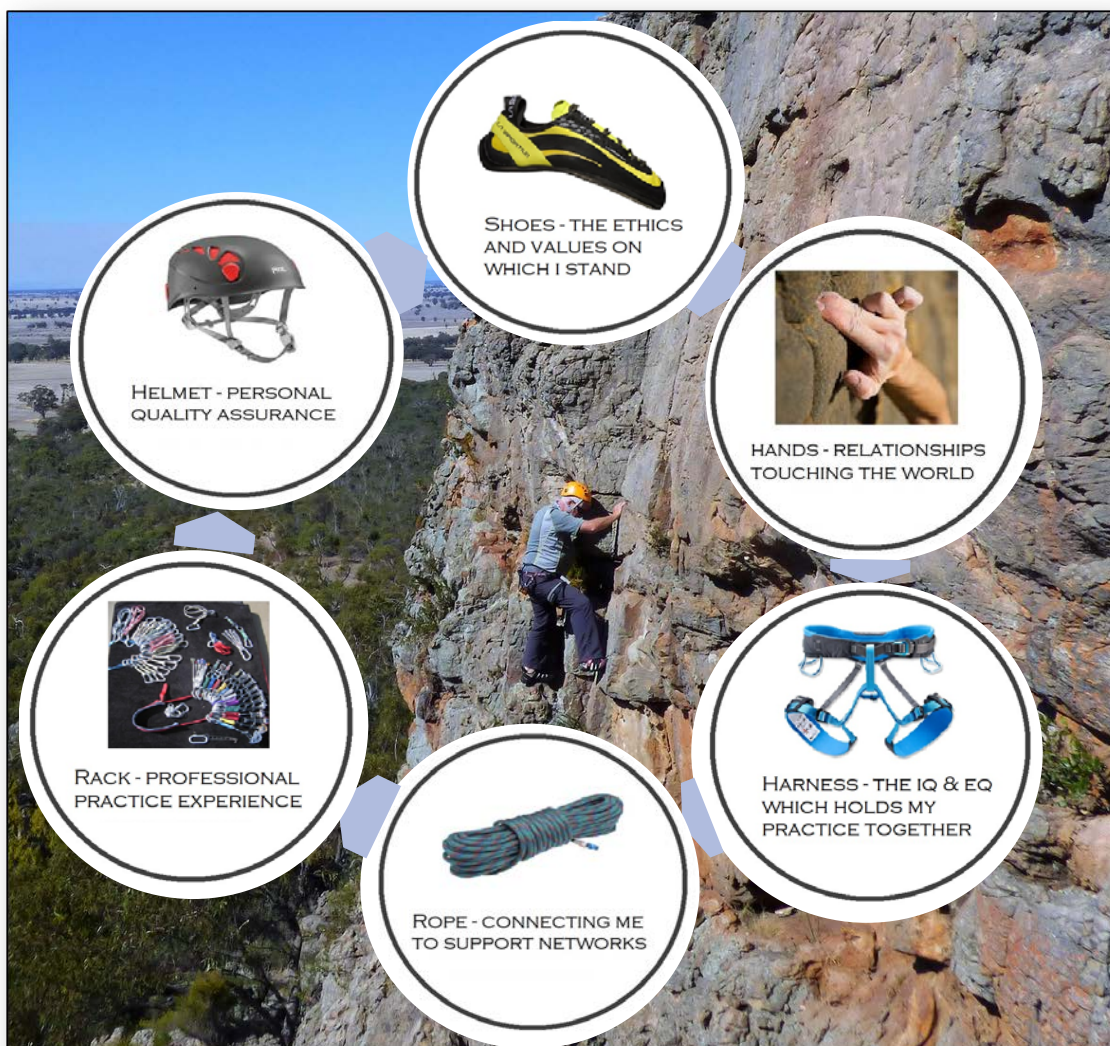
They also give me a much greater clarity of purpose and appreciation of the Framework of Practice I must use if I am to effectively meet my responsibilities as a Capable Assessor.

(6300)



## The Dasler Pinnacle Framework of Successful Practice

In 2008, shortly after completing my Bachelor of Applied Management, I free-soloed the 2300m Dasler Pinnacle, climbing without ropes or any safety equipment. Ten years later, awaiting assessment for the Master of Professional Practice, I have used rock climbing symbolism to define my professional practice as a Capable NZ Assessor, recognising that safe and effective professional practice is not simply based on talent but requires a range of supporting attributes and competencies to achieve success.



## Acknowledgments

I cannot end this Master of Professional Practice programme without acknowledging the Otago Polytechnic and Capable NZ who have made this outstanding experience possible. Their genuinely unique approach to learner-centred education has twice given me the opportunity to benefit personally as a learner and many hundreds of times as an Assessor listening to other learners' inspiring lives over the last ten years. This programme is a real New Zealand treasure, offering so much to so many.

Capable NZ, and my own Master of Professional Practice experience, would not have been possible without the experience, skill and intense passion of the team who contribute to Capable and who gave so much of themselves in support of my learning. Every member of the Capable whanau has helped in some way as I have worked through the last two years and I am very grateful for what I have been given and for the knowledge that other learners are treated equally as generously.



Lindsay Smith  
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