



MEMO

To: Richard D'Ath
CC: Miriam Bookman
From: Janne Song
Date: 19 January 2021
Subject: Report on changes to the English-medium literacy and numeracy standards following public consultation

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the feedback received on the draft English-medium literacy and numeracy learning matrices and standards ("products") during the public consultation, which took place 18 November–18 December 2020. The report sets out a summary of the feedback received and indicates what actions are appropriate as a result.
2. This report is limited to the English-medium products only. Public consultation for the Māori-medium products is planned for 9 February–5 March 2021 and will follow a similar but separate process.

Recommendations

Agree to the changes to the numeracy standard as recommended at **Annex 2**

Agree / Disagree

Agree to the actions arising from this report, as summarised in **Annex 3**

Agree / Disagree

How this report is organised

3. The report first sets out an overview of the quality assurance process we have undertaken in compiling this report. Next, it provides a summary of feedback we have received throughout this process, taking note of the actions we will be undertaking (or not) in response to the feedback.
4. The report then summarises our next steps to finalise the standards. This is an overview of the actions with an explanation of our processes for carrying them out.
5. There are three annexes to this report:

- **Annex 1** – Visual representations of the qualitative responses to public consultation
- **Annex 2** – Analysis and options regarding the numeracy standard
- **Annex 3** – Summary of actions arising from this feedback report, by theme

Overview of the MoE feedback process

6. As part of the NCEA Change Package, we are drafting new literacy and numeracy standards to directly credential literacy and numeracy. The new standards will become a requirement of the NCEA qualification from 2023. A key component of implementing the change is to draft the new standards so that they reflect foundational literacy and numeracy. This is approximately Level 4/5 of the National Curriculum, whereby students have control of Level 4 and are ready to work at Level 5.
7. Across 2020, two writing and feedback groups were convened to draft the English-medium literacy and numeracy standards, respectively. Those groups, facilitated by NZQA, developed draft learning matrices and standards (“products”) – two standards were developed for Literacy (Reading and Writing) and one standard for Numeracy. The groups included a range of voices from across the sector, as well as technical experts. NZQA also provided ongoing advice and support during this time. The approach of the writing groups were informed by advice the Ministry received from a Technical Advisory Group in 2019, as well as technical work carried out by NZCER to ensure that the standards are grounded in foundational aspects of the Learning Progressions Framework and Adult Learning Progressions Framework. The draft products were provided by NZQA to the Ministry on 15 September 2020.
8. In September 2020, the Ministry began the quality assurance process to seek feedback on the draft products. Feedback was sought internally across the Ministry and externally with key stakeholders. External stakeholders included NCEA Panels, who were established to ensure that the NCEA Change Package is implemented with the voices and perspectives of priority groups. Panels included; Māori, Pacific, Disability & Learning Support, and Pathways. Further groups included a workshop with the feedback groups, Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages Aotearoa New Zealand (TESOLANZ), the Minister’s NCEA Professional Advisory Group, and members of the Literacy and Numeracy Technical Advisory Groups.
9. Internal stakeholders included Pathways and Progress, Schooling Policy, Te Uepū Reo Māori, Tertiary Policy, Pacific Education Policy, Migrant Refugee and International Education. The Tertiary Education Commission also provided feedback.
10. In October 2020, we compiled the feedback from these stakeholders in a report. This feedback considered how reflective the products were of foundational literacy and numeracy, what they liked about the products, and what was missing from the products. This feedback set out a roadmap forward to strengthen the products.
11. The Ministry and the expert writing group, facilitated by NZQA, made changes to the standards and associated materials. During this time, we began the next stage of the quality assurance process to seek feedback on the draft process. The Ministry’s Operations and Implementation (O&I) team facilitated workshops during 23 – 29 October 2020 with students and teachers from a selection of Feedback Hub schools.
12. The schools were selected by O&I to cover a range of different contexts including; spread across North and South Islands, diversity in roll (including ethnicity, single-sex and co-ed schools), access to targeted programmes like Teen Parent Units and Gateway. The learners were a mix from Year 11 – 13 and the teachers comprised those with expertise in literacy

and numeracy as well as from across the curriculum. Copies of the Insight Reports generated by the O&I team can be provided on request.

13. The draft products were then released for public consultation. This took place 18 November – 18 December 2020. The public consultation gave the wider sector and the public an opportunity to review the draft products and provide feedback on levelling; respond whether they feel the standards represent foundational literacy and numeracy, and whether the standards align with the Ministry's goal of excellence and equity for all learners, as well as the appropriateness of the standards.
14. We received 321 responses overall from public consultation, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative answers. Please see **Annex 1** for visualisations of the quantitative data collected through the public consultation process. The qualitative responses are summarised below.
15. Through these engagements, we were able to gain a better sense of the thoughts and feelings of the learners, teachers, school leaders and the general public and know that the products are heading in the right direction. These engagements also provided us with actions to make further changes to the standards and associated materials. Following these changes, the standards and associated materials will be sent to NZQA to be approved for the 2021 mini-pilot.

Overview of feedback and actions

16. The following section sets out a summary of the feedback received, from both the public consultation period and feedback hubs. Where themes have arisen, we have discussed those generally. We have also included references to specific pieces of feedback where appropriate. Actions are specified against each of the issues raised, and where no actions are necessary, this is also noted. This section of the report is divided into:
 - a. General feedback and actions across the literacy and numeracy products
 - i. Levelling
 - b. Low-level feedback and actions across the standards
 - i. Literacy standards
 - ii. Numeracy standard
 - c. Low-level feedback and actions across the supplementary materials
 - i. Additional actions for the supplementary materials

General feedback and actions across the literacy and numeracy products

17. Overall, feedback indicated broad support for the Literacy & Numeracy change, and in particular, for the fact that literacy and numeracy are being separated from other standards. The statements and expectations for students were well received by most.

18. The two biggest concerns were the need for teachers to be supported to teach literacy and numeracy, and the lack of exemplars available to illustrate the benchmark. Many teachers responded that they did not feel prepared to comment or give any feedback until they had sighted exemplars, e.g. of assessment tasks.
19. This was reflected in the qualitative responses to the public questionnaire (see **Annex 1**) – the only questions to which ‘Agree’ answers did not make up at least half of the responses were to the items asking whether the standards and supplementary materials “reflect the Ministry’s commitment to equitable and excellent outcomes”.

Action: Ministry to continue with the compilation of support materials and external development of teaching and learning guidance, with an emphasis on exemplars

20. There were also concerns voiced around how certain learner groups would be supported, such as ELLs and learners with learning disabilities; of concern also were the literacy levels required to achieve the numeracy standards, which we believe would have contributed to the answers described in the paragraph above.

Action: Progress work on alternative pathways/user groups, with a focus on the literacy demands of the numeracy standards as assessment is developed.

Action: Communicate to the sector the provisions for specific groups, as they are developed.

Levelling

21. Feedback to the levelling and articulation of the benchmark was mixed. Some thought that benchmark was too high, and that their students would “never” be able to achieve the benchmark. Others perceived the benchmark to be too low, and to be bringing down NCEA Level 1 literacy/numeracy expectations. The latter seemed to imply that there is a perceived consensus for what constitutes literacy/numeracy at NCEA Level 1 in the mind of the sector, though we note that there at present no agreed formal definitions for literacy and numeracy expectations in NCEA at the national level, except to refer to ‘Curriculum Level 6’.¹
22. With that said, it should be noted that, on the whole, the Learning Matrix documents were seen to demonstrate curriculum level 4/5. This was supported by key stakeholder groups, such as our Literacy & Numeracy expert feedback groups, and the New Zealand Statistics Association.
23. Some participants pointed out that having literacy and numeracy standards that are tied to NCEA Level 1 – but is at a curriculum level lower than Level 6 – contradicts the aim to have a coherent and clear NCEA Level 1 as part of the wider NCEA change programme.

Action: Working with RAS, frame comms messaging carefully to distinguish the literacy and numeracy standards from the Level 1 Achievement Standards, and to introduce the new benchmark for foundational literacy and numeracy.

¹ [NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements » NZQA](#)

Low-level feedback and actions across the standards

Literacy Standards

24. There were very few low-level comments regarding the literacy (Reading and Writing) standards, therefore no changes have been made to the draft standards following public consultation.
25. One concern that was raised, however, was that the amount of writing required to be submitted to meet the Writing standard may not be enough for accurate assessment of foundational literacy.

Action: Include in discussions regarding the external assessment brief with the A&A team at NZQA.

Numeracy Standard

26. Most of the low-level comments during Feedback Hubs and public consultation were in relation to numeracy. Specifically, the two pieces of feedback we heard repeatedly from the sector were that:
 - a. exponential and step functions/graphs should be excluded from the benchmark; and that
 - b. calculating a mean should be included in the benchmark.

Please see **Annex 2** for an analysis of options for these issues.

27. There were also some concerns that the workload may be too high for a single assessment.

Action: Include in discussions regarding the external assessment brief with the A&A team at NZQA.

Low-level feedback and actions across the supplementary materials

28. During the public consultation period, many participants showed their support for the Unpacking documents which accompanied the standards and Learning Matrices. In particular, a lot of positive feedback was given for the section that clarifies what falls within (and outside of) the benchmark.
29. However, some teachers noted that the supplementary documents were too wordy and filled with jargon.

Action: Conduct another plain language review of the supplementary materials

30. There were also some comments about the reference to biculturalism and “participating in a bicultural society” in New Zealand. While acknowledging NZ's foundation as a bicultural society, participants also wanted acknowledgement and inclusions of Aotearoa New Zealand's multicultural landscape.

Action: Consult Māori policy team on the most appropriate wording to acknowledge biculturalism and multiculturalism.

31. There was some confusion in the sector regarding the purpose of the Learning Matrices, and some concern voiced to us by teachers that the Learning Matrix were being taken as a teaching and learning programme by their colleagues. As a solution, some suggested that the Learning Matrix document be renamed to avoid the word “learning”, however we note that this name was chosen to achieve greater consistency with RAS.

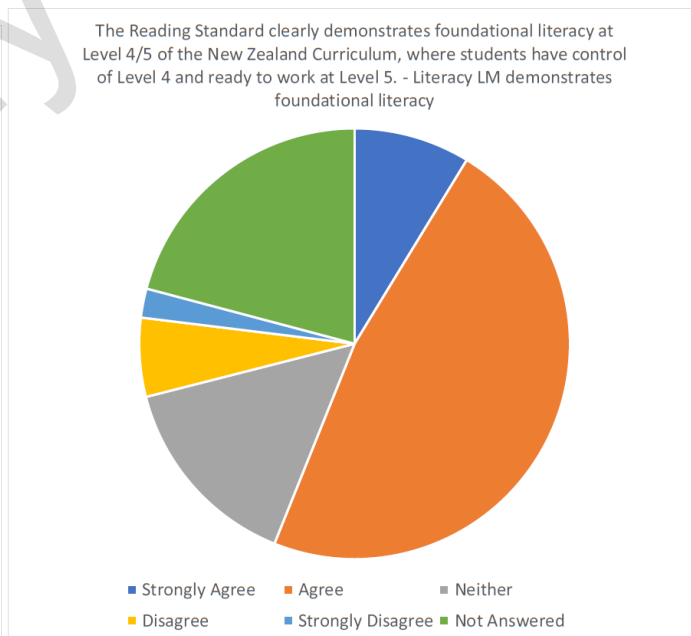
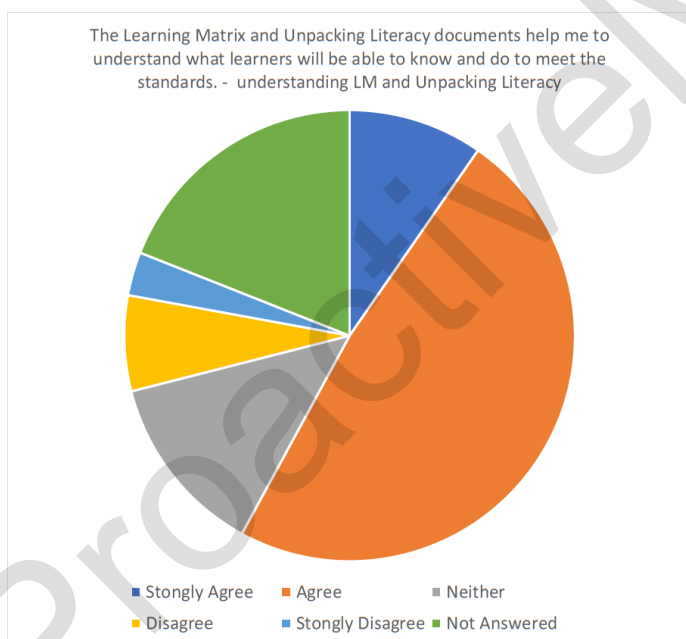
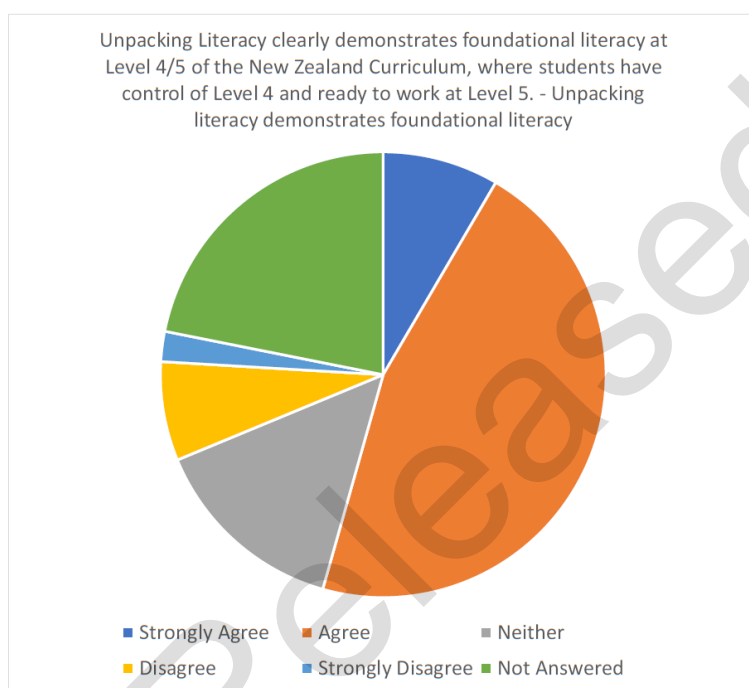
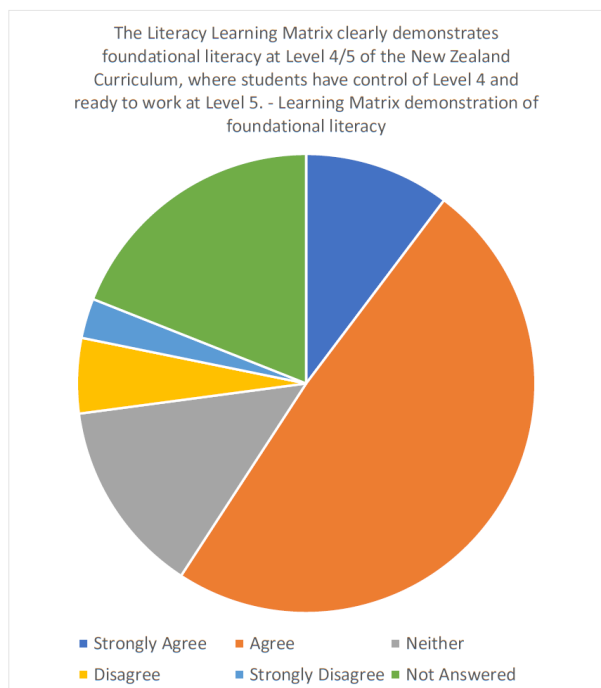
Action: Use clear and consistent messaging to convey that the Learning Matrices are not intended to be a teaching and learning programme.

Additional actions for the supplementary materials

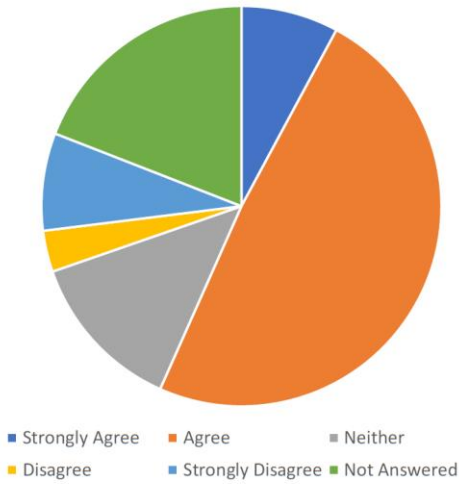
32. In addition to actioning the pieces of feedback above, these additional actions will be taken to iterate the Learning Matrix and Unpacking documents in time for the 2021 mini-pilot:
- QA of the Key Competencies/Tātaiako/Tapasā table in the Learning Matrices
 - Reiteration of the weaving diagram in the Numeracy Learning Matrix and Unpacking Numeracy documents
 - Minor wording changes for the in/out benchmark section of the Unpacking document – for clarity, and, in the case of Unpacking Numeracy, to be more inclusive of statistics (as opposed to mathematics)
 - Minor fixes of typographical errors

Annex 1 – Visual representations of the qualitative responses to public consultation

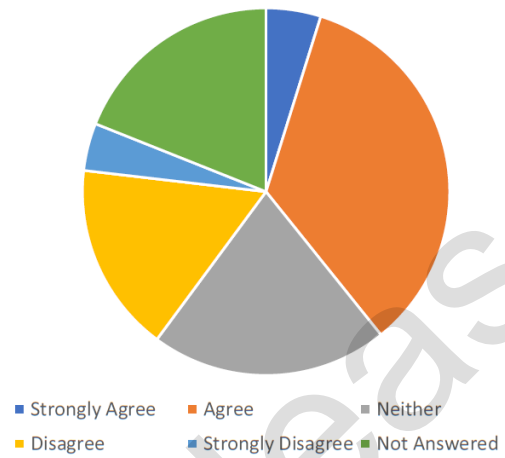
Literacy



The Writing Standard clearly demonstrates foundational literacy at Level 4/5 of the New Zealand Curriculum, where students have control of Level 4 and ready to work at Level 5. - standard demonstrates foundational literacy

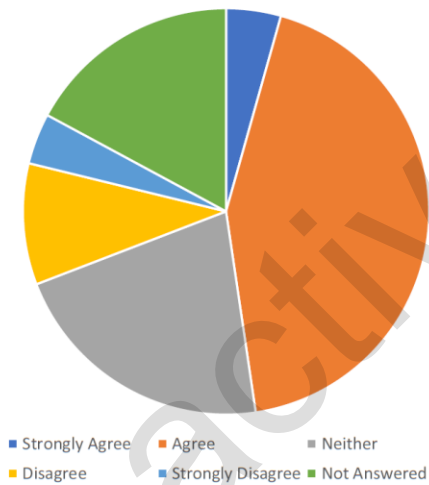


The literacy standards and materials reflect the Ministry's goal of excellent and equitable outcomes for learners. - reflects equitable outcomes for learners

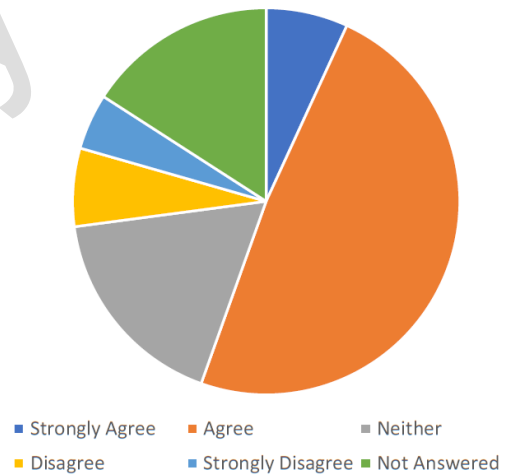


Numeracy

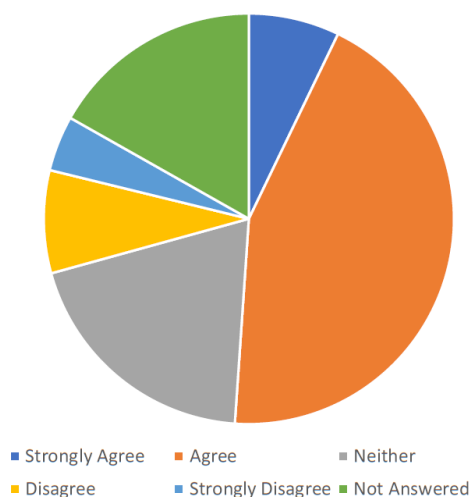
The Numeracy Standard clearly demonstrates foundational numeracy at Level 4/5 of the New Zealand Curriculum, where students have control of Level 4 and ready to work at Level 5. - Standard demonstrates foundational learning



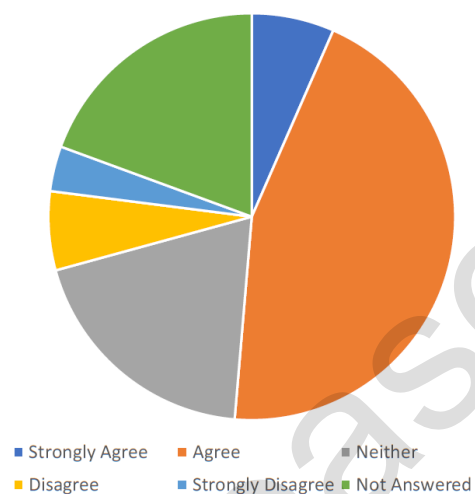
The Numeracy Learning Matrix clearly demonstrates foundational numeracy at Level 4/5 of the New Zealand Curriculum, where students have control over Level 4 and are ready to work at Level 5. - Learning Matrix Numeracy



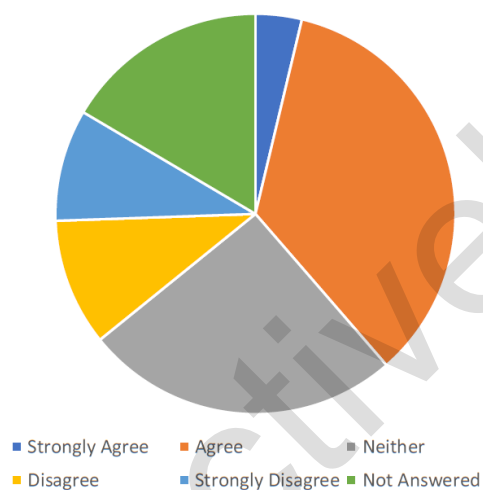
Unpacking Numeracy clearly demonstrates foundational numeracy at Level 4/5 of the New Zealand Curriculum, where students have control of Level 4 and ready to work at Level 5. - Demonstrates foundational numeracy - LM



The Learning Matrix and Unpacking Numeracy documents help me to understand what learners will be able to know and do to meet the standard: - Understanding LM and Unpacking Numeracy



The numeracy standard and materials reflect the Ministry's goal of excellent and equitable outcomes for learners. - Standard reflects equitable outcome for learners



Annex 2 – Analysis and options regarding the numeracy standard

Exponential and step graphs/functions

1. We received a high number of responses from the sector that exponential and step graphs/functions are not appropriate at Curriculum Level 4/5 and should therefore be excluded from the numeracy benchmark.
2. In the New Zealand Curriculum, exponential and step graphs/functions are not at all in Level 5 and appear for the first time in Level 6.
3. This is consistent with the internal stakeholder feedback we received in 2020. Following that feedback loop, the Ministry had previously requested (through a feedback report) that the Numeracy Expert Writing group remove exponential functions from the Learning Matrix.
4. The writing group did not remove them completely, choosing instead to amend the matrix "to reflect that candidates need to be able to interpret graphs with everyday simple exponential functions, nothing more complicated."
5. However, as this issue has been raised again through the public consultation process, the following options are available:

Option 1 (Recommended)

The Ministry, as the SSB, excludes exponential and step graphs/functions from the numeracy benchmark. This option is supported by the numeracy SME on the Literacy & Numeracy project.

Option 2

No change, but emphasise further that learners only need to interpret graphs with "everyday, simple" exponential functions.

Additional note (27 May 2021): The Ministry chose to adopt Option 1.

Calculating the mean

6. Several participants in the public consultation period questioned why the calculation of means was not included in the numeracy benchmark. This is an issue that has previously been considered by the Numeracy Expert Writing Group, following the internal Ministry feedback loop.
7. The rationale given by the writing group is that, while the calculation of a mean itself is at a level suitable for Level 4/5 of the Curriculum, the numeracy standard requires learners to not only demonstrate the skill, but to also understand and reason with the mathematical concepts. It is this understanding and reasoning that creates the complexity for calculating a mean. They expressed their wish to keep calculation of means outside the numeracy benchmark.
8. The following options are presented:

Option 1 (Recommended)

Keep as is, with the expert writing group's rationale for the exclusion given through public communications.

Option 2

Include the calculation of means in the foundational numeracy benchmark.

Additional note (27 May 2021): The Ministry chose to go with a third, unlisted option – namely, to clarify that learners are expected to calculate mean as an operation on number, but not expected to reason with mean as a statistical measure of central tendency.

Content Ideas in unit standard

9. A third issue that was raised during the recent feedback loop (though not as a result of feedback hubs or public consultation) was the explicit inclusion of the seven numeracy Content Ideas within the unit standard document itself.
10. The NZQA facilitator who has been involved with the numeracy work has recommended against the explicit inclusion of the Content Ideas within the document. Their view is that such curriculum-related content is inappropriate to be included within a standard, and that a link to the Numeracy Learning Matrix would suffice.
11. This issue has previously been considered by members of the Literacy & Numeracy project team, who are of the view that the Content Ideas should be included in the standard. As the numeracy standard will require learners to demonstrate a “interweaving” between Process and Content Ideas, and the assessment will make up a sampling from both types of ideas, the recommendation is to make the Content Ideas visible somewhere in the standard – in addition to the Process Ideas (which have been expressed as Outcomes of the unit standard).
12. The following options are presented:

Option 1 (Recommended)

Keep the Content Ideas in the standard document, and include in discussions with A&A as the review the standards for listing.

Option 2

Remove the Content Ideas from the unit standard document; replace with a link to the Numeracy Learning Matrix.

Additional note (27 May 2021): The Ministry chose to adopt Option 1.

Annex 3 – Summary of actions arising from this feedback report, by theme

Changes to standards

- Conduct another plain language review of the supplementary materials (both lit + num)
- Consult the Māori policy team to determine the most appropriate wording regarding biculturalism and multiculturalism
- QA of the Key Competencies/Tātaiako/Tapasā table in the Learning Matrices
- Reiteration of the weaving diagram in the Numeracy Learning Matrix and Unpacking Numeracy documents
- Minor wording changes for the in/out benchmark section of the Unpacking document – for clarity, and, in the case of Unpacking Numeracy, to be more inclusive of statistics (as opposed to mathematics)
- Minor fixes of typographical errors

To inform further Literacy & Numeracy work

- Ministry to continue with the compilation of support materials and external development of teaching and learning guidance, with an emphasis on exemplars
- Progress work of alternative pathways/user groups, with a focus on the literacy demands of the numeracy standards as assessment is developed.

To inform external communications

- Communicate to the sector the provisions for specific groups, as they are developed.
- Working with RAS, frame comms messaging carefully to distinguish the literacy and numeracy standards from the Level 1 Achievement Standards, and to introduce the new benchmark for foundational literacy and numeracy.
- Use clear and consistent messaging to convey that the Learning Matrices are not intended to be a teaching and learning programme.

To include in discussions with NZQA

- Include in discussions regarding the external assessment brief with the A&A team at NZQA whether the workload required by the Writing standard is sufficient for valid assessment.
- Include in discussions regarding the external assessment brief with the A&A team at NZQA whether the workload required by the Numeracy standard is proportionate to its credit value