

Assessment by professional conversation

Why was this process appealed to me

I've been a learning and development professional for 10 years. I started as a trainer before moving onto instructional design and consulting roles. In that time I've started two adult learning qualifications and finished neither.

I gave up on a my post graduate diploma through Massey University because I struggled with the how disconnected it felt from real-world learning and development. I gave up on my NZQA Certificate in Adult Education because all the paper-work associated with the NZQA was overwhelming and I found it too difficult to interpret exactly what was required to complete the qualification.

To add to this confusion with the NZQA paperwork, it seemed the only way to gain my qualification was to do what a number of my colleagues did, and complete all the training all over again from scratch. As a learning professional with enough on-the-job experience to have completed the qualification several times over, I couldn't see how redoing the training would hold any value for me at all. I wanted to stretch my skills and seek out new knowledge. Redoing all the training I'd already done so I could complete a box ticking exercise went against the grain of everything I believe about adult learning!

Some people would say that I should have done it years ago when I first started as a trainer. But hindsight is 20/20. So here I am 10 years later and in a very similar position to a large number of Learning and Development professionals in New Zealand.

So when Helen spoke to me about the assessment by professional conversation process, I was really keen to give it a go!

Preparing for this process

After attempting to decipher the NZQA qualification on my own several times, I was apprehensive that the professional conversation process would still be an arduous task. I was mistaken.

Helen provided me with a clear overview of the process including, how long it would take, what was expected of me, and the evidence I would need to provide for the entire qualification. In reality, printing my evidence to take to my meeting with Helen was the longest part of my preparation.

The advantages

Helen's process for achieving the qualification is streamlined, accessible, and focused. Everything about the process is easy because she has obviously invested the time and energy into making sure that's the case.

At its most simplistic, the process involved Helen asking questions about my approach, experience, and decisions relating to learning solutions I had analysed, designed, developed, implemented, and evaluated. Helen's thoughtfully crafted process meant that after participating in a structured conversation about the evidence I produced I had completed my qualification.

What Helen brings to the process

I now have my level four Certificate in Adult Education and I couldn't be happier. Not only because I finally have my qualification but because working with Helen is a rewarding and inspiring process.

I feel the process works because of Helen's expert planning. She has accurately scoped out the length and requirements for the process and has developed robust tools that enable the process to happen. In addition to this, Helen knows NZQA and the Certificate in Adult Education inside out and has anticipated and allowed for any hurdles that need to be overcome.

I've had the pleasure of knowing Helen for almost 10 years. She trained me when I was a fresh-faced trainer all those years ago and she was the one who encouraged me to start my qualification. Lucky for me, Helen pursues everything she does with energy, drive, and a need to finish. I've never seen her give up without finishing and I'm truly grateful that even though I had given up on my qualification, she was determined that I would not.

If it wasn't for Helen and her assessment by professional conversation process, I wouldn't have finished my qualification.

Maree V. 2011.
