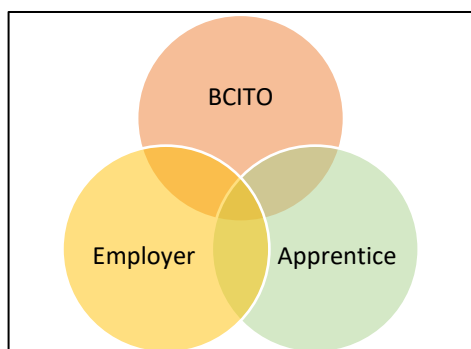


Models of Workplace Learning

A report has recently been released by the Commonwealth of Learning in Canada. It was commissioned to support and promote the combination of open and distance learning with workplace-based learning and work. The research is built around three New Zealand case studies; the BCITO; Careerforce; and the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (OPNZ).

In essence the case studies highlight three different approaches used by each of these organisations in relation to particular qualifications. For BCITO a Level 4 Certificate in Carpentry; for Careerforce Level 2 and 3 certificates in the health and wellbeing sector; and for OPNZ a Level 5 Certificate in Adult Tertiary Teaching. All the organisations engage with industry to develop these qualifications. The models used by each of them are shown in the figures below.

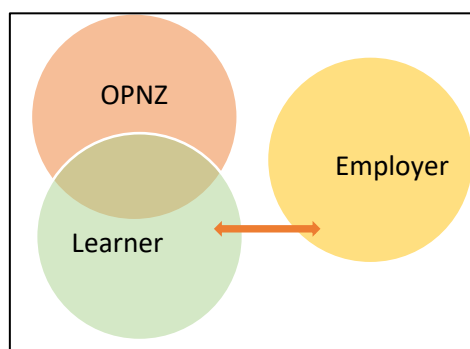
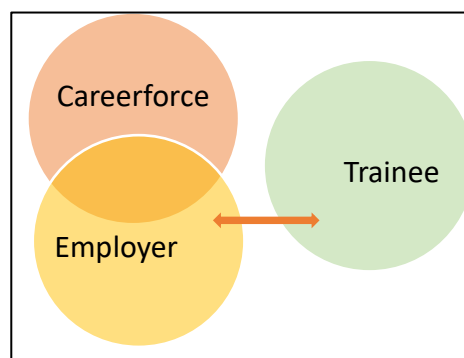


The **BCITO** model is described as a high-touch model with visits from training advisors who engage with apprentices and employers. Paper-based learning materials support the theoretical aspects of the learning. Training Advisors conduct assessment through professional conversations with apprentices.

Employers support learning by providing authentic contexts that align with the learning and assessment materials and sign off on apprentices' practical skills.

Careerforce uses a high-touch model with employers and no touch with trainees. Trainees are supported by in-house trainers and in some places by peer mentors. Their learning materials are provided online with the majority of trainees downloading this and working in a paper-based way.

Assessments for Level 2-3 submitted online. Practical work is assessed by trained in-house assessors and verified by supervisors.



The **OPNZ** uses a more traditional distance learning approach which is low-touch with learners and which has no direct connection with employers. In addition to learning materials online, support is available for learners via email and phone.

Employers observe and verify learners' practice /work and written assessments are submitted online.

The report concludes that considerable value accrues to learners and trainees/apprentices, employers and education providers through the combination of ODL and workplace learning. For example:

- learners and trainees/apprentices develop theoretical, technical/practical skills at the same time; and while working they develop employability skills
- employers have access to theoretical thinking and the opportunity to grow new employees
- education organisations have direct connections with industry and workplaces and can use this knowledge to inform ongoing programme development (p. 3).

The full report can be accessed at <http://oasis.col.org/handle/11599/3529>