

(Chapter 6)

## **TAELLN501 Support the development of adult language, literacy and numeracy skills**

### ***Introduction***

In the town of Blackwater, QLD, a working father and son attended a mandatory three-day training course to gain access to a mine site in order to carry out grass clearing around the perimeter of the site. The work had been done by the two for many years at the local airfield, but due to legislative requirements, they now had to pass the AQF level 2-3 induction course in order to continue employment. Sadly, the father, a man of 57 years, could not read or write sufficiently to understand the training materials even at the most basic level. They were unable to complete the course and lost access to their livelihood almost immediately.

This story is not unusual in Australia, with ABS figures indicating almost 50% of working age Australians are at or below the minimum language and literacy standard to participate gainfully in society. In response, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has released the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults. According to the published information:

*“...all Australian governments have committed to a target that, by 2022, two thirds of working age Australians will have literacy and numeracy skills at Level 3 or above (refers to the levels in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey undertaken in 2006 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics).”*

Language, literacy and numeracy skills, more broadly referred to as Foundation skills, are now front and centre of a key change in the way we approach adult learning. Specifically, vocational training and assessment. This unit of study is aimed at VET practitioners and managers who can influence and improve upon the way foundation skills are assessed and supported in a real learning environment.

Your knowledge of the ACSF and other key frameworks, programs and guidelines will distinguish you as a professional trainer and assessor and a critical member of any RTO.

### ***Learning Outcomes***

The skills required to confidently assist candidates with LLN deficiencies are highly valuable in today's VET environment. This chapter encompasses and expands upon the key concepts raised in our Vocational Training and Assessment (Certificate IV) textbook, with a view to embody higher-level skills and knowledge than those delivered as a part of that certificate.

READING: The national foundation skills strategy: <https://goo.gl/6ORFrZ>

After successfully completing this unit of study, you will be able to:

1. Analyse the purpose and context for LLN development
2. Determine learners' LLN skill level
3. Design and apply strategies to develop LLN skills
4. Review strategies
5. Develop and extend own and others' LLN practice

## Element 1 - Analyse the purpose and context for LLN development

It is easy to assume that everyone entering the workforce comes out of school with the necessary skills to read and write and have at least basic numeracy skills. As indicated in our introduction, however, this is not necessarily the case. According to the ABS 2007 Migrants, Education and Training Report, it has been established that one sixth of the Australian workforce was educated overseas<sup>1</sup> and, so, will have difficulty with their language skills, if not with other aspects of their general education. More importantly, however, it must be considered that there is a *marked difference* between the literacy and numeracy skills taught in the school system to that which is required in the workplace. For example, unless a person was aiming for a career in engineering or a scientific field, algebra or calculus is of little use in working out what change to give a customer or reading complex sales performance reports.

### ***The current function of LLN skills in Australian society***

This can have a significant impact on an individual's participation in work, education and the community. LLN development must therefore be considered in terms of *purpose* and *context*.

**Purpose** may relate to (but is not limited to);

- an in depth understanding of the LLN requirements of the industry, organisation or job role
- accurate identification of LLN skills of the learner before any training is designed
- inclusion of clear advice on the LLN skill requirements of the tasks to be performed
- development of strategies to both overcome LLN issues within the workforce and ensure each member of staff is afforded equal opportunity to succeed in their role.

**Context** that affects language use can include:

- how the choice of linguistic style is affected by roles and relationships. For example, the linguistic style will vary greatly depending on the work environment; working in a childcare environment will require a very different style of language to working in a nightclub, on a construction site, or in a legal office. Thus, any training design will need to take workplace roles and context into consideration.
- how levels of formality are affected by factors such as age, role and ethnicity. Not everyone appreciates being addressed by their first name upon being introduced just as not everyone appreciates being referred to as "*guys*". The level of formality used in addressing others will depend on your relationship to them. For example, you would never call your company's group chairman by their first name (unless they invited you to).

---

<sup>1</sup> ABS 2007 Migrants, Education and Training Experience Report.

- how meaning making relies on linking to context. Extracting the meaning of an instruction, or a conversation, depends very much on the context in which it is placed. Describing a workplace process to, a new colleague, can be confusing and complicated if the description of that process is not put in proper context. For example, if you explain steps 5 and 6 of a process before you have explained steps 1 to 4, or if you don't explain how the process relates and contributes to the "whole, they may not understand the process and mistakes will invariably ensue.
- how people may be more proficient in some contexts and less in others. In our Vocational Training and Assessment textbook we discussed the principles of adult learning; how people learn by visual, auditory or kinaesthetic means. This means that participants in a training program will all have different strengths and weaknesses, and these will need to be considered in the development of the program. Then, too, they may have specific skills or talents that allow them to understand some concepts quicker than others.

### ***LLN competence in Australia***

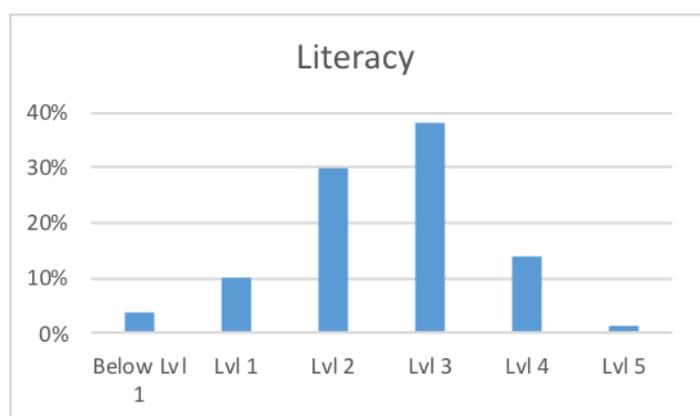
Clearly, then, Language, literacy and numeracy skills are the essential ingredients that are needed to help people be productive, not only in their work environment, but also to continue to learn and develop. They help people to participate fully in society.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) research<sup>2</sup> conducted in 2011-12 LLN proficiency was grouped into six different skill levels with "Below Level 1" being the lowest and "Level 5" being the most proficient. The ability to problem solve in a technology rich environment (PSTRE) was grouped into four levels; "Below Level 1" being the lowest and "Level 3" being the most proficient.

### ***The Statistics***

For Literacy skills;

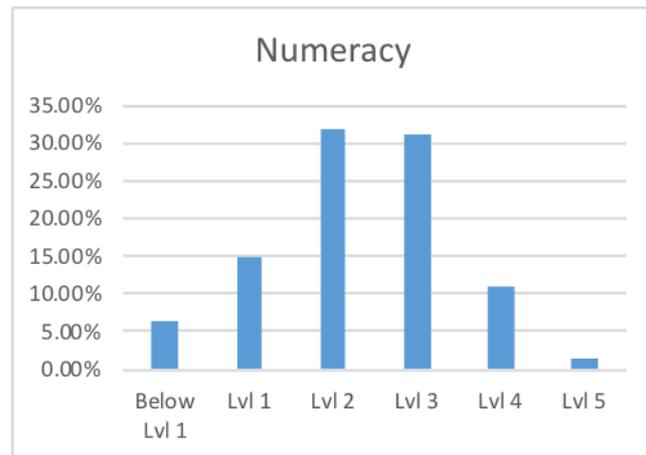
- 3.7% (620,000) of Australians aged 15 to 74 years had literacy skills at Below Level 1
- 10% (1.7 million) at Level 1
- 30% (5.0 million) at Level 2
- 38% (6.3 million) at Level 3
- 14% (2.4 million) at Level 4,
- 1.2% (200,000) at Level 5.



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4228.0Main+Features202011-12>

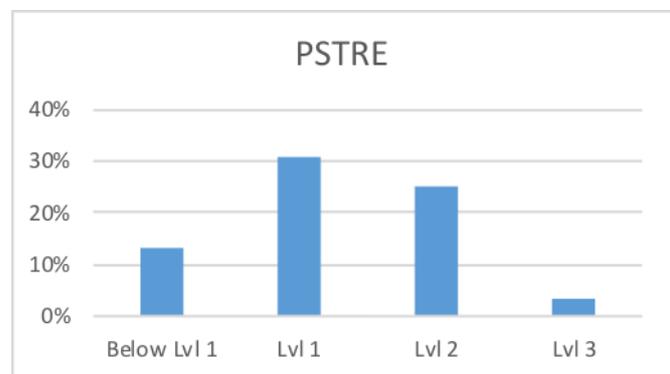
For numeracy, the figures were somewhat lower.

- 6.5% (1.1 million) of Australians had numeracy skills at Below Level 1
- 15% (2.5 million) at Level 1
- 32% (5.4 million) at Level 2
- 31% (5.2 million) at Level 3
- 11% (1.8 million) at Level 4 and
- 1.4% (230,000) at Level 5.



For PSTRE, an estimated 25% (4.2 million) of Australians aged 15 to 74 years were not classified. However;

- 13% (2.2 million) of Australians were assessed at Below Level 1
- 31% (5.3 million) were assessed at Level 1.
- 25% (4.1 million) had skills at Level 2, and
- 3.2% (540,000) at Level 3.



### ***Analysing the LLN requirements of the training specification or learning situation***

Not all workplaces are the same. Not all people are the same. The LLN issues and challenges can therefore manifest differently across industries and workplaces. For example, someone working in the administration area of a solicitor's office would need a higher degree of literacy skills than someone working on a construction site. They would need to read and interpret legal information *very exactly*; any misinterpretations or errors could have serious legal consequences. A person working in the construction industry, on a building site, however would need greater skills in numeracy. The success of their building project will depend upon their ability to accurately calculate measurements. They would also need good problem-solving skills to cope with the many unexpected issues that continually crop up on a building site. That is not to say that a construction worker can ignore reading and writing skills, as they will need to interpret not only the mathematics of an architectural design but must be able to make sense of written instruction.

It is important, therefore, to recognise the degree of literacy and numeracy required between occupations and industries when analysing training specifications or learning situations. Training programs must be designed with your learning cohort in mind to ensure the best outcome for the learner and the workplace. Your program needs to be developed not only around the skills required to competently do a job, but also around the existing skill levels of the training participants; allowing them to fully engage and take on the information you are imparting.

There are similar challenges, however, that are faced across all industries. These can include<sup>3</sup>;

- inadequately prepared workforce entrants with no real notion, or unrealistic expectations, of what will be expected of them once they commence work.
- the challenges of an ageing workforce. These represent twofold issues for the work environment. Firstly, the loss of experience and expertise in specific roles and industries as the workforce ages and people retire. Secondly, the (often) inability of more mature workers to accept or keep up with modern technology or mobile methods of doing business.
- increasing use of technology – following on from the point above, the increased use of technology has led to a decrease in the need for literacy and numeracy skills; technology does it all for you. There are pros and cons; while the more mature colleagues may take longer to understand and work with technology, younger staff members may become too dependent on it. In the event of a breakdown or system failure they are often unable to revert to manual, non – technological ways of getting a job done. An example of this is the inability of some younger staff members to manually count our change in a retail environment without the use of computers or calculators.
- increasing compliance requirements. Many industries are now heavily regulated and require staff to follow strict regulations, some of which include participating in training courses in order to continue in their job roles. A lack of LLN skills can be a serious disadvantage here and affect future career aspirations.
- a demand for higher level skills. Many employers, today, require applicants or workforce entrants to have university degrees – regardless of whether the role the applicant is to fulfil actually warrants such a level of education or not. Again, this impacts significantly on those with LLN issues. Employers may also be spending less time on training of new entrants than is ideal and they may, then, have higher expectations of these entrants – they need to “hit the ground running”.

These are considerable barriers to learning and to an effective workforce

**Reading: No More Excuses; an industry response to the LLN challenge:**

[http://oggiconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NoMoreExcuses\\_FINAL-single-page.pdf](http://oggiconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NoMoreExcuses_FINAL-single-page.pdf)

---

<sup>3</sup> [http://oggiconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NoMoreExcuses\\_FINAL-single-page.pdf](http://oggiconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NoMoreExcuses_FINAL-single-page.pdf)

## ***Using the Australian Core Skills Framework in the analysis process***

With the challenges facing both workers and employers, it becomes clear that strategies need to be devised that provide accessible and relevant training. Before you can hope to analyse the LLN requirements of your training program, however, you need to have a sound understanding of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) and how it can be used to develop such strategies, and the resources used to build LLN skills appropriate to vocational work. Strategies that might, for example, include describing the LLN requirements integral to vocational competence and then designing training and assessment programs appropriate to learner needs.

The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) was developed for just that purpose; as a strategic instrument to provide benchmarks against which performance can, firstly, be described and, then measured in each of the five core skills. It allows trainers to assess, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, a person's current skill levels in relation to functioning socially, in the workplace or in a learning environment.

The five core skills are;

1. Learning
2. Reading
3. Writing
4. Oral Communication
5. Numeracy.

These are the cornerstones upon which a person may build their career. How well they are able to communicate and use these core skills will have an impact on the physical, social and economic wellbeing of individuals, workplace productivity and safety, community interaction and capacity, and, ultimately, on the national economy as a whole.

## **ACSF Performance Levels**

A key feature of the ACSF is that it takes into account the factors that influence a person's performance in each of the five core skills. Performance levels range from low level of performance (1) where a person may still require significant support, to high level of performance (5) where a person is able to function autonomously and to a high degree.

The level of **support** needed by workers, their familiarity with task **context** as well as the **complexity of text and tasks** involved in a job role, as outlined briefly below, is considered in the LLN evaluation process.

### **Support**

When we learn new things, or are confronted with unfamiliar tasks or challenges, we are normally supported in a number of ways. These may include support from colleagues or mentors, demonstrations on how a task is to be performed, or through training. The level of support needed will be influenced by the required performance level in that skill area or task and an individual's existing capabilities.

### **Context**

This looks how a person relates to a given environment, their ability to function effectively in their role, and how it contributes to the organisation's overall operations. The more familiar they are with their surroundings, processes or their tasks, the greater the level of their confidence and their ability to recognise context and draw appropriate conclusions.

### **Complexity of text**

How well an individual copes with the complexity of text will depend on their overall capabilities in terms of performance levels. For example, reading and understanding the technical specifications for a complicated piece of equipment will require very different skill levels to reading a customer enquiry email. The more advanced their reading levels, the greater their ability to deal with and analyse complex texts. Complexity of text includes written, diagrammatic, visual and oral communication that are used in work, study and everyday life.

### **Complexity of the task**

Both our ability to interpret text and perform tasks will be influenced by the level of difficulty and complexity in firstly; interpreting the information required to carry out a task and secondly; in actually carrying out the task to the required standard. The more complex a task, that may have many layers, the greater the skills needed to fulfil it competently. So a person operating at levels 1 or 2 may be able to perform familiar tasks in familiar environments, but may still require a high degree of support and assistance when undertaking more complex and involved tasks in the workplace, whereas a person operating at levels 4 or 5 can be left to work unsupervised to complete complex tasks and may even mentor less experienced colleagues.

Table 6.1, below, shows the ACSF performance variables grid.

ACSF Performance Variables Grid				
SUPPORT	CONTEXT	TEXT COMPLEXITY	TASK COMPLEXITY	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works alongside an expert/mentor where prompting and advice can be provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly familiar contexts</li> <li>Concrete and immediate</li> <li>Very restricted range of contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short and simple</li> <li>Highly explicit purpose</li> <li>Limited, highly familiar vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 steps</li> <li>Processes include locating, recognising</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May work with an expert/mentor where support is available if requested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiar and predictable contexts</li> <li>Limited range of contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple familiar texts with clear purpose</li> <li>Familiar vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explicit tasks involving a limited number of familiar steps</li> <li>Processes include identifying, simple interpreting, simple sequencing</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works independently and uses own familiar support resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range of familiar contexts</li> <li>Some less familiar contexts</li> <li>Some specialisation in familiar/known contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine texts</li> <li>May include some unfamiliar elements, embedded information and abstraction</li> <li>Includes some specialised vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tasks involving a number of steps</li> <li>Processes include sequencing, integrating, interpreting, simple extrapolating, simple inferencing, simple abstracting</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range of contexts, including some that are unfamiliar and/or unpredictable</li> <li>Some specialisation in less familiar/known contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex texts</li> <li>Embedded information</li> <li>Includes specialised vocabulary</li> <li>Includes abstraction and symbolism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex task organisation and analysis involving application of a number of steps</li> <li>Processes include extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting, abstracting</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autonomous learner who accesses and evaluates support from a broad range of sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad range of contexts</li> <li>Adaptability within and across contexts</li> <li>Specialisation in one or more contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly complex texts</li> <li>Highly embedded information</li> <li>Includes highly specialized language and symbolism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sophisticated task conceptualisation, organisation and analysis</li> <li>Processes include synthesising, critically reflecting, evaluating, recommending</li> </ul>

Table 6.1: ACSF Performance Variables Grid - Source: Australian Core Skills Framework

The function of an LLN program, then, is to provide candidates with the means to improve their performance levels, through training and hands on experience.

## Case Study

Gina has just finished a Bachelor of Business degree at university and is starting a new job as a sales coordinator for a large, multinational, insurance company. Her job involves being able to coordinate the sales force call sheets and diaries, setting up weekly sales meetings, analysing sales performance reports and passing on any performance-based issues to management. Although this is her first full time job, while studying for her degree, she worked as a part time receptionist in a local real estate agency. During her induction into the organisation the HR manager used the ACSF to ask a range of questions and set an assessment designed to gauge the support mechanisms she might need to help her integrate into the company. The results were looked at in terms of the ACSF performance levels as follows;

- **Support** – Undertaking a university degree requires high level literacy skills and the discipline to work through complex tasks to tight deadlines. So while she might be a new entrant into an unfamiliar work environment, Gina may well start out at a performance level of 1 or perhaps 2, and initially require a mentor, but she should very quickly move through the various levels until she is able to work autonomously.
- **Context** –as a new entrant into this organisation she will be unfamiliar with the industry specific context of many of the tasks she will be performing but will have a basic familiarity of working in a sales environment and should be able to make sense of how her work meshes with the organisation as a whole. She is therefore initially classed as a level 3 in this regard.
- **Complexity of text** – her ability to understand the complexity of text will be twofold; 1) She should have no trouble dealing with, and understanding, general texts and documents in the workplace and her performance here would be classed as level 5, and, 2) Understanding industry or organisational specific documents and information, on the other hand, may require some training and initial support. In this area, she may initially be classed as having a performance level of 3.
- **Complexity of the task** – having completed 3 years of university study, while at the same time working in a business environment part time, Gina understands the value of working in an organised and logical fashion, and her previous experience in a sales environment allows her to prioritise work demands and fulfil a range of generic tasks without supervision. She will, however, need some assistance with industry specific tasks for a short while. The HR manager initially classifies her, in this regard, as a level 3 to start with.
-

## Performance Indicators

Coupled with performance *level* the ACSF also specifies performance *indicators*.

These are statements that describe achievement at a given level. There are 11 indicators in total; Learning, Reading, Writing and Oral Communication have 2 indicators each while numeracy has 3 (as shown in table 6.2)

ACSF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		
Core Skill	Indicator Number	Description
Learning	.01	Awareness of self as a learner, planning and management of learning
	.02	Acquisition and application of practical strategies that facilitate learning
Reading	.03	Audience, purpose and meaning-making (able to analyse and interpret meaning)
	.04	Reading strategies
Writing	.05	Audience, purpose and meaning-making
	.06	The mechanics of writing
Oral Communication	.07	Speaking
	.08	Listening
Numeracy	.09	Identifying mathematical information and meaning in activities and texts
	.10	Using and applying mathematical knowledge and problem-solving processes
	.11	Communicating and representing mathematics

Table 6.2: ACSF Performance Indicators

Indicators *briefly* describe performance at each level of the five core skills. For example;

Learning	.01	Awareness of self as a learner, planning and management of learning
	.02	Acquisition and application of practical strategies that facilitate learning

Here the indicator **.01** relates to a person's attitude toward learning, what they hope to achieve through a program of study, and how they will go about preparing for participation in and managing a learning experience. The **.02** indicator might relate to how that person structures their training; how they will timetable and/or segment their learning in order to achieve their end results.

Looked at, together with performance levels, a person with very little work experience and currently operating at level 1 or 2, may have difficulty in organising themselves around a training plan; not really knowing where to start – whereas someone operating at level 4 or 5 might quickly sort out schedules and tasks they need to complete each day. Any training program you design would be structured accordingly.

Reading	.03	Audience, purpose and meaning-making (able to analyse and interpret meaning)
	.04	Reading strategies

When evaluating a person's reading indicators, the **0.3** indicator looks at how a specific text might impact on different people as well as the value a document has in relation to their workplace or job role. It gauges a candidate's ability to analyse the content of written material and how it relates to their own life, job role, workplace or the greater environment. The **.04** indicator relates to the strategies a person might employ to extract meaning from a text. For example;

- *Monitoring comprehension*; being aware of what they do and don't understand, within the material, and using appropriate strategies to resolve comprehension problems
- *Metacognition*; thinking about what they are reading and digesting the information for later use
- *Generating questions* about the text they are reading in order to gauge their own understanding of the material
- *Summarising* allows candidates to determine the salient parts of a text and put it into their own words; underpinning their understanding of the material
- Candidates might also employ a variety of ways that texts can be approached, depending on purpose of reader, for example skimming, scanning and critical analysis

With this in mind you can begin to use these indicators, in combination with performance levels, to determine the complexity of a task, and the skills required of, or demonstrated by, an individual to complete it. For example, a person who is evaluated, in their reading, with a performance level of 1 may well be able to deal with highly familiar texts and ideas. They may, however, have a limited knowledge of information sources and display a limited ability to connect complex information with workplace processes. Someone with a performance level of 5 in their reading, however should be able read and analyse a large variety of complex texts, draw conclusions from them and draw on a range of strategies to build on the information they have read.

What all this means is that both an individual's LLN abilities as well as workplace or training task requirements can be assessed with a fair degree of accuracy, making it possible to;

- determine the LLN levels required in specific job roles; ensuring that role incumbents have the necessary skills to carry out the work to the required standards
- design (or adjust) training programs to suit the appropriate levels
- enable a program to be developed to increase or enhance an individual's employability
- 

- Activity 1
- Using the above examples as a basis explain the meaning of the remaining indicators.

Writing	.05	Audience, purpose and meaning-making
	.06	The mechanics of writing

- 

Oral	.07	Speaking
------	-----	----------

Communication	.08	Listening
•		
Numeracy	.09	Identifying mathematical information and meaning in activities and texts
	.10	Using and applying mathematical knowledge and problem-solving processes
	.11	Communicating and representing mathematics
•		

### ***Aspects of communication***

Communication is an often-complex interaction and the way we conduct these interactions will depend on their context. Contexts, in which the core skills might be used, will be influenced by the way in which an individual relates to a given situation. For example;

- personal communication; expressing your own thoughts and ideas in a home or work life environment
- cooperative communication; interacting with groups in the family, workplace and community
- workplace or procedural communication; performing tasks or interacting with colleagues
- technical communication; effectively using tools and technology
- systems communication; interacting within an organisation and the ability to follow procedures
- public communication; interacting with the general public as a whole

Depending on the situation, the level of communication required may be more or less formal and complex and this, too, should be considered when developing LLN learning strategies.

### ***Analysing the LLN requirements of the training context***

With an understanding of how the ACSF works, you can use this information to closely examine each job role or function and determine the standards that must be met in order to competently complete each task. This might involve breaking down each task into individual steps and determining the skill levels needed by role incumbents. This information can then be used to develop the training context. This information can then be used to develop the training context.

### **Case Study**

Gina has spoken to the HR manager of her organisation and indicated that she would like to move up in her career; eventually looking at a management role. The HR Manager explains the skills and knowledge levels required of management staff in their organisation and, together, they look at her current skill and experience levels. From here they determine what training she might need. They concentrate, first on the LLN skill requirements;

- **Reading**; she must be able to gather, interpret and analyse industry specific text relating to organisational goals, standards and values to aid in planning and decision making

- **Writing;** She must be able to accurately record and report key information related to the organisational goals, standards and objectives and research, plans. She must also be able to prepare documentation for relevant stakeholders
- **Numeracy;** She will need to be able to identify and comprehend complex sales and budget performance figures to gauge how the organisation is doing in relation to key performance indicators.

In addition to this she will need to fulfil other leadership criteria. She must;

- use appropriate structure and language when developing performance plans, or when seeking and providing information about organisational goals and objectives
- have an understanding of how her own role meshes with others and contributes to broader work goals
- monitor adherence to organisational policies and procedures and consider her own role in terms of its contribution to broader goals of the work environment
- collaborate with others to achieve joint outcomes, playing an active role in facilitating effective outcomes
- recognise the importance of taking audience, purpose and contextual factors into account when making decisions about what to communicate with whom, why and how
- develop plans to manage relatively complex, non-routine tasks with an awareness of how they contribute to longer term operational and strategic goals
- use systematic, analytical processes in complex, non-routine situations, setting goals, gathering relevant information and identifying and evaluating options against agreed criteria
- evaluate the effectiveness of decisions in terms of how well they meet stated goals

Based on these criteria, and with her previous study in the Bachelor of Business in mind, a training plan is developed for her to fill in any gaps and to provide her with industry specific skills needed to lead a sales team and meet organisational and industry standards.



## **Element 2 - Determine learners' LLN skill level**

As will have become evident throughout this topic, the development of appropriate training hinges on having determined the skill levels of your candidates, before designing your program. To do this effectively you need to identify each learner's LLN background, the factors or potential barriers that may affect the development of their LLN skills, and their actual, existing, LLN skill levels.

### ***Identify each learner's LLN background***

Identifying a learner's LLN background might relate to (but is not limited to);

- the level of education they have previously received
- their ethnic background – which may impact on their language abilities as well as on other aspects of their past education (positively or negatively)
- any previous work experience – to gain an insight into the candidate's industry knowledge

All of these things, among others, will influence the level of training and support they may need in order to function, effectively, in whatever environment they choose to work or operate in.

The process of establishing the learner's current capabilities should begin by conducting an interview with them; explaining the purpose of the LLN assessment interview and how the information gathered about their educational background and LLN skill level will help determine their future training and support needs. The assessor should also explain the evaluation process and what will be expected of learner.

An initial interview will allow the assessor to gain valuable information about the learner's oral communication and learning skills and provide the basis for developing appropriate tasks.

## ***Identify factors or potential barriers that may affect the learner's development of LLN skills***

Not everyone learns in the same way or has the same attitude towards learning situations.

There may be any number of barriers that could impact on the learner's ability to participate in a program and absorb information; everything from being frightened of failing, to thinking they know it all and don't need to be trained, and a myriad of other reasons in between.

General barriers can include (but are not limited to):

- social and cultural barriers; these might relate to peer pressure and/or family background which may carry a burden of expectation – engendering that fear of failure.
- practical and personal barriers; candidates may have issues with transport, time constraints, disabilities that impact their ability to take on new information, lack of access to information, cost of attending any training sessions and so on
- workplace barriers; the candidate may not have the support of their immediate supervisor or colleagues. They may have difficulty taking the time off work to attend training and so on
- emotional barriers; these could include a lack of confidence in their ability to learn, resentment at having to undertake training, resistance to change to name a few.
- Learning disabilities; these can affect how people absorb, and make sense of, information, how they communicate and how they learn new skills.

For a training program to achieve its outcome as effectively as possible, such barriers must be identified and overcome.

## ***Determine the learner's existing LLN skill level***

With all of this information at your disposal how, then, do you go about actually determining existing skills? Clearly – you must perform an assessment of the candidate's core skills and there are a number of methods that can be used to achieve this including:

- **Generic tasks** – can be used to assess general knowledge and skill levels that may be required, and that are common, across many industries. Such tasks might include;
  - Answering written (or oral) questions on general knowledge subjects; assessing the candidates reading, writing and numeracy abilities.
  - reading a range of basic documents and signs
  - performing generic tasks such as following workplace health and safety instructions
  - undertaking basic mathematical tasks such as retail-based sums such as counting change or adding amounts to be paid, or solving mathematical problems.

- **Multilevel assessment tasks** – These, again, might relate to generic tasks that cross various industries but would increase in complexity as the candidate moves through the assessment process. For example, asking the candidate to read a document and then extrapolate meaning, then move on to more complex material on the same subject and then discussing or debating what they have read. Multilevel assessments can also be applied to practical tasks where the candidate works through a number of processes beginning with easy steps and moving through to more complex parts of the task. This allows the assessor to gauge the full extent of the candidate’s abilities.
- **Industry specific tasks** – at this point the process would focus on the specific industry or organisation conducting the LLN assessment. Even within an office administration role, for example, the tasks and standards would vary greatly between industries and, so, the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively in a restaurant would be very different to those needed in a recruitment agency, a school, or a construction office. Any assessments you devise for candidates should, therefore, also take industry specific requirements and standards into consideration.

## **An Example of a generic LLN Assessment**

**Generic task:** Workplace safety aimed at core skills:

- Numeracy: level 1, 2 and 3 (multilevel assessment)
- Reading; level 2
- Writing; level 3

### **Assessor instructions**

There are three parts to this task and each requires the candidate to interpret written and/or visual information and respond to questions in writing.

This task requires the candidate to:

- read** the information provided in the case study and answer questions. Begin by handing out a copy of the case study and questions and read the information to them about work safety. Provide an opportunity for candidates to clarify anything they don’t understand, if necessary, before they complete the task
- answer a range of numerical questions about the information provided in the case study. Provide a copy of the graph to the candidates and, again, clarify any questions they have on what they are expected to do. They must then complete the questions relevant to the graph
- write a short report on what they have read, answering questions designed to gauge their comprehension of the case study scenario.

## **Safety in the workplace**

### **Part A**

R.J. Electrics is a large, successful, electrical contracting company that employs some 1,500 workers around the state. In 2015 they had a total income of \$5.5 million. In recent years, however, the company had become concerned about their workplace health and safety record as there had been an increased number of incidents and accidents, and even one death in 2013. The company were very worried about this record and were committed to improving their safety procedures. In 2015 they undertook a company wide program to train their staff on workplace safety. According to Jamie Allan (the Company Executive Officer), the focus of the training program was that workplace safety is everyone's business and with that in mind he appointed a workplace health and safety committee which included staff from all levels of the organisation. The success of the new program ensured that;

- staff were all given the opportunity to offer their point of view on what would make a difference to their safety in the workplace
- all staff were retrained in aspects of safety
- a system was introduced where the workplace health and safety committee met on a monthly basis to discuss safety issues and suggest improvements
- an induction program was introduced for new staff for correct use of equipment, and workplace health and safety procedures.

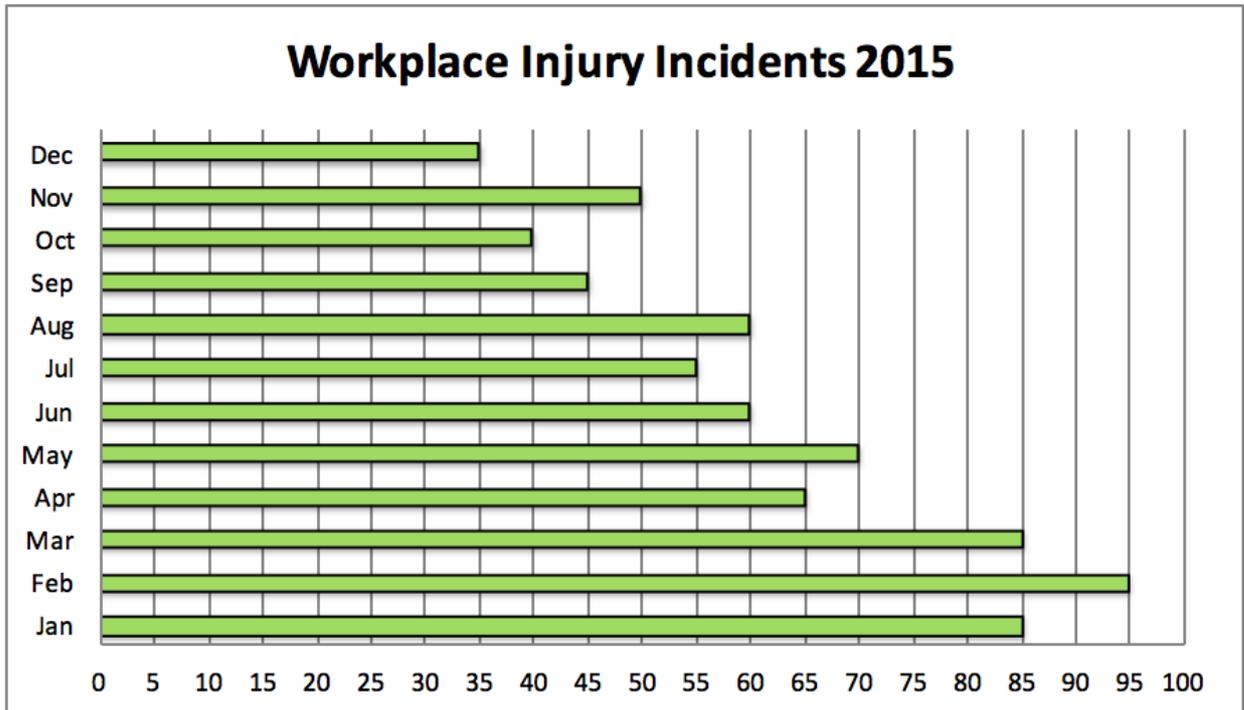
This workplace health and safety program was considered to be successful but was very expensive to implement and run. It cost approximately 3% of the 2015 income to implement.

### ***Answer the following questions;***

1. How many staff are employed at R.J. Electrics?
2. In what year did the death of a worker occur?
3. What was the total income in 2015?
4. Who is the CEO of R.J. Electrics?
5. Name two successful aspects of the workplace safety program.
6. How often does the workplace health and safety committee meet?
7. Approximately how much was spent on work safety in 2015? Show how you work out your answer.

### **Part B**

The following graph shows the number of workplace injury incidents that occurred during 2015. This covers all incidents ranging from very minor incidents (eg. cuts and bruises) to more serious ones requiring hospitalisation. Look at the graphs and answer the following questions.



1. Which month had the highest number of workplace injuries?
2. Which month had the lowest number of workplace injuries?
3. What was the total number of injuries in September and October combined? Show your working out.
4. What is the difference in the number of incidents between July and October 2015? Show your working.
5. What is the general trend in the number of incidents?
6. Between which two months did the injuries reduce by 50%?
7. In September 2015, 15 workers reported with back injuries. What fraction and percentage was this of the total for that month? Show your working.
8. Do you think that the safety program was effective? Explain your answer.

### **Part C**

- Use a computer to prepare a short report for R.J. Electricals' management outlining the program's success and recommending that it should continue for the next 12 months.
- Include a paragraph about why you think the program is important.
- Use the information in the graph in your report.

- Use capital letters, full stops, dot points and any other appropriate punctuation. You may like to use the space below to draft your report.
- 

## **Conducting the LLN Assessment**

A determination of a person's LLN skills cannot be accurately made by conducting one simple assessment. The *rules of evidence* state that there must be *sufficient* evidence gathered to make a sound judgement on a person's competence. The process of collecting LLN evidence should, therefore, be conducted with the same care and attention to detail as all other VET assessments you conduct.

This might mean selecting two or three different assessment tasks such as oral and/or written questions, demonstrations of skill or knowledge, a third-party report, or a discussion that allows for a free flow of information and the opportunity to "drill down" to determine the depth of knowledge or skill that the candidate might have.

The type of tasks you choose will depend on the initial interview you held with the candidate and the level of performance required by the role they are to fulfil; leaving the opportunity open to add further tasks of a more complex nature to truly test the candidate's ability.

### **Implementing the assessment**

When you have chosen appropriate tasks ask the candidate to complete the first one and offer support, if required. Bear in mind that the level of support you provide to the candidate can change their ACSF skill level result; if you were assessing at level 3 reading, for example, but had to provide significant support, then the result should be deemed less than level 3.

At this point you can decide on whether the remaining tasks are relevant or whether you need to select choose alternative assessments to complete the evaluation process.

### **Making the assessment judgement**

When all tasks have been completed a judgement can be made about the candidate's skill levels, remembering that you need to consider the support provided, the context, the task and the task complexity. Once the assessment process is complete the candidate should be advised of the results so that they can understand their LLN skill levels and what will happen next.

If the candidate's performance indicates that they are not operating at the required ACSF level to fulfil their role as effectively as possible it may be necessary to recommend LLN support and training.

## ***Mapping of levels and indicators***

Managing and leading staff means ensuring that they are given every opportunity to succeed in their roles. Good HR management then also means keeping a record of staff performance and the progress they make so that they can be assisted in taking the next step in their career paths or become more effective in their environment.

Each of the assessment tasks should, therefore, be mapped to the ACSF performance levels and indicators. This provides a record of candidates starting point and their progress throughout their learning journey. Each task within the activity is mapped to one or more skill level indicators, and the aspects of communication have also been identified.

<b>Task: Safety at work</b>	<b>ACSF skill level indicator</b>	<b>ACSF skill level achieved</b>	<b>Date of assessment</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Part A Reading</i>	<i>2.03 2.04</i>	<i>1.03 1.04</i>	<i>15 June</i>	<i>Candidate required significant assistance with reading the case study Recommendation: to be discussed with supervisor</i>
<i>Part B Numeracy</i>	<i>1.09 1.10</i>	<i>1.09 1.10</i>	<i>15 June</i>	<i>Candidate completed task without assistance</i>
<i>And so on</i>				

With this information on hand, you should now be able to design and apply a strategy to develop a candidate's LLN skills.

## Element 3 - Design and apply strategies to develop LLN skills

The definition of the term strategy is *'a plan of action, devised for long term or an overall aim'*. Designing a strategy is, therefore, not a task to be undertaken lightly as the organisation may be basing far reaching and costly decisions on this plan. It needs careful consideration of all factors that might impact on the organisations ability to achieve their ultimate aim.

Depending on the size and nature of the organisation and what is to be achieved, designing strategies can be a complex matter – but can also be fairly simple. How and why they are designed will depend entirely on the organisation and the needs it has identified. When designing a strategy aimed specifically at developing LLN skills of its own staff, for example, the organisation may need to consider;

- the industry in which it operates, and the standards to which tasks need to be completed, from both organisational and legislative perspectives.
- learner needs and capabilities in relation to environment in which they operate
- resource constraints, capabilities and facilities and how these will impact on any training and support requirements
- milestones and deadlines for achieving the ultimate aims

These may be only some of the issues that need to be thought about and addressed in any strategy you design.

### Useful documents:

NCVER – Adult literacy and numeracy research and future strategy;

<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/file/0018/9162/adult-literacy-and-numeracy-2162.pdf>

No More Excuses;

[http://oggiconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NoMoreExcuses\\_FINAL-single-page.pdf](http://oggiconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NoMoreExcuses_FINAL-single-page.pdf)

When developing a strategy, one of the first things you need to determine is its objective. Without this there is little point in having a strategy, and all other components will follow on from it. In the case of an LLN program, the objective might be to *“ensure that all staff have improved their literacy skills by 50% within the next 12 months”*. This is a measurable goal and progress can therefore be monitored. The company may then put steps in place to develop the reading and writing skills of their staff, in the initial stages, with the other core skills to follow.

## Analyse the learner's strengths and needs

We have already covered methods by which you can determine your learner's LLN skill levels, but in order to design a sound strategy around developing these skills you also need to understand their strengths and needs. A person may not necessarily display the same levels of competence across language, literacy or numeracy.

### The Spiky Profile

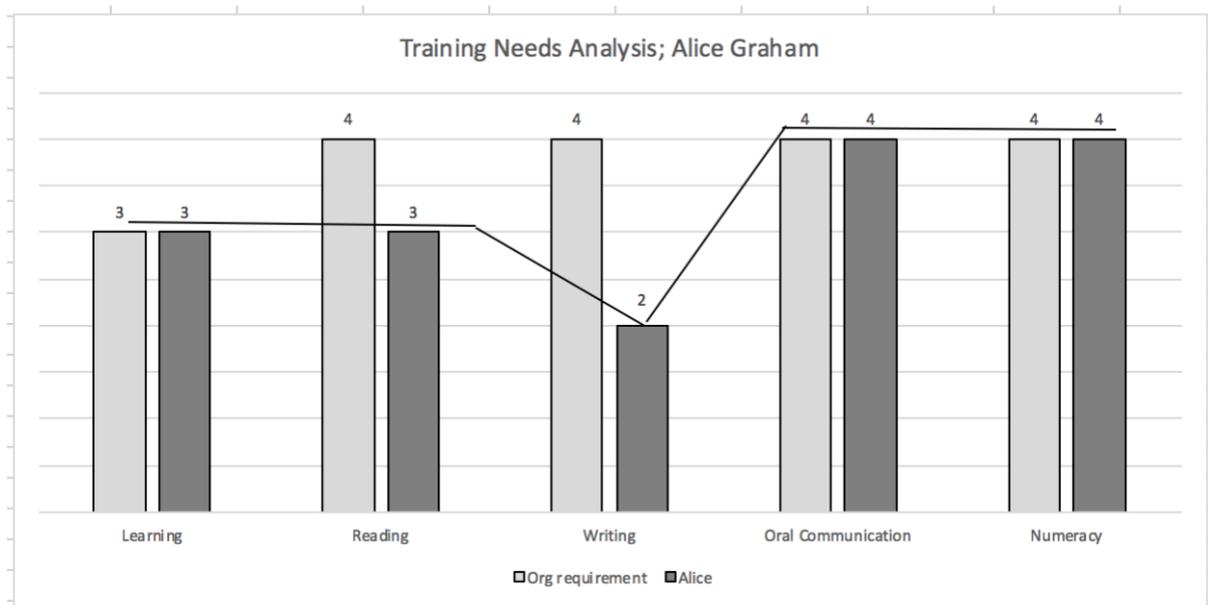
When evaluating a candidate across the 5 core skills, their abilities may vary considerably between them – resulting in what is known as a 'spiky profile'. What this means is that a person's strengths may lie in their *reading* abilities whereas their *numeracy* skills may be lacking, or that they rate very highly in their *literacy* skills but have an average score in *oral communication*. Therefore, any strategies to improve LLN skills you design for these candidates must take their strengths and needs into consideration.

### Case study

Alice is the shift supervisor in one of *OceanWorld's* food outlets. She has been offered the opportunity to take over the restaurant's management position. In this role administration skills, such as reading and writing, will need to be fairly comprehensive and the organisation's management have set the skill requirements of the job at an average of ACSF level 4.

She will be given training to provide her with the necessary skills to fulfil the role requirements, however during her Training Needs Analysis for the role her trainer ascertained that while her learning, reading, oral communication and numeracy skills were adequate to the job requirements, her writing skills fell far below the required level.

A training plan was, therefore, drawn up to provide Alice with not only the role specific training she needed but that would, also, focus on her writing skills.



Another important issue to bear in mind, when analysing the learner's strengths and needs, is the diversity of the workforce. Diversity might include people from different language and cultural backgrounds or people with disabilities that may affect the way in which they communicate and absorb information. People from diverse backgrounds have a lot to offer and contribute to their environment, but they may have LLN issues that make it difficult to fully participate. It may be necessary, therefore, to factor diversity needs into any strategy you develop by ensuring flexibility and that reasonable adjustments can be made while their skills are being improved.

### ***Examine a range of strategies to develop reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy skills***

Methods of developing the five core skills will vary and, as we have discussed, may depend on both the specific requirements of the industry and the learner themselves. In this section we will look at developing reading and writing skills – and challenge you, via an activity, to research methods of developing speaking, listening and numeracy skills on your own.

### ***Developing effective reading skills***

A major issue in the development of reading ability is the fact that there are so many different genres of text and, therefore, different challenges to reading comprehension; reading a complicated legal document requires a very different level of skill and approach to reading a fictional novel or a comic book. The use of different strategies may be therefore necessary to help learners understand when and why to choose particular texts, how to monitor their success, and how to adjust them as needed to achieve a reading goal.

Strategies that seem to be most effective include training in *metacognitive* processes; that is the learner's own awareness in regard to identifying difficulties in comprehension, why these difficulties may come about, and ways in which they can be resolved. In general, however, strategies for developing reading skills can include;

- ensuring that learners have sufficient practice in using their new skills. This includes both formal practice, such as participating in structured assignments that develop comprehension, as well as informal practice, that may include reading materials from outside the classroom environment that the learner is, personally, interested in.
- motivating the learner through engagement with literacy tasks and extensive reading practice. People are often more engaged when reading assignments provide learning that can be translated to things that are useful to, and valued by them, in their daily life.
- improving reading fluency; developing efficiency in reading a greater variety of words and longer text. Learners will often develop a deeper understanding of words by encountering them multiple times in multiple texts and discussions.

Simply; strategies revolve around encouraging learners to state their own reading goals, predictions, questions, and reactions to written material, and giving them an understanding of the importance of an extensive reading practice with many types of text.

## ***Developing effective writing skills***

People write for all manner of different reasons. They may need to record information, persuade a client to buy a product, learn something new or any number of other purposes. They may be communicating, entertaining or expressing their opinions. The way in which you write for one particular purpose does not necessarily mean that you would write in the same manner and style for other purposes. For example, a formal letter, written by a legal company, would be very different in both its language and its style to a post made on the company's website, or on your personal social media platforms.

When developing LLN strategies it should also be considered that reading and writing are closely intertwined. People with good writing skills, read as much as they practice writing; they use the information they gain from reading literature and text, and apply ideas and styles to their own work.

Writing is a foundation in adult education; from writing a shopping list or a social media post to structuring a paper or proposal, writing skills are a necessary part of everyday life.

While daily practice is the key to improving a skill, there are a range of strategies and activities that can help in learning essential writing concepts including;

- encouraging learners to read as often as possible. The more types of reading a learner engages with, the more they learn about variety – which they can then bring to their writing. Learners should, for example, be encouraged to read a good essay, a dialogue, a short fiction piece, or any other kind of writing, and then to study the type of writing they're working on in relation to what they have read
- Transcription is a method that can be used to improve writing. Learners record a conversation, an essay or a story, then, replay the recording and transcribe it into the written word. This strategy can demonstrate to the learner how writing is a form of conversation, an argument, or an informative lecture.
- Most people use writing skills on a regular basis even if they don't always recognise it. Something as simple as writing a shopping list is a form of **prewriting**. Prewriting activities can lead to strong writing skills through the use of:
  - brainstorming - can help learners choose and develop a topic, then take a deeper look into their subject and move on to the next phase; freewriting
  - freewriting - involves jotting down the ideas or thoughts the learner might have on a subject before beginning any research. It should be noted that freewriting is not about sentence structure, grammar, or punctuation, but rather about gathering information and ideas and then putting them onto paper.
  - outlines - come in many different forms including mind-mapping, bullet points and alphanumeric. Whichever one works best for an individual will depend on their learning styles. Outlines can often help learners understand the purpose, audience, and other crucial information needed for a writing assignment.
- Studying the writing process – in developing writing skills, it is important for learners to recognise that a *great* piece of writing undergoes many stages and changes before it becomes a finished product. Such stages might include prewriting, writing, editing, and revising. As an LLN trainer you could develop multi level writing activities taking in each of these stages to help learners understand and practice each part of the writing process.

- Using writing exercises – these are commonly used in writing groups and educational settings. Writing exercises, such as the one below, help learners think about words and how to best use them. If there is a particular format or style a learner is working on, the trainer should find exercises that focus on developing those specific skills to help them improve.

**Example of a writing exercise (possible ACSF level 4)**

Write a sentence of no less than 15 words without using the letter E

*“Today our sky is cloudy and dark .... gloom sits upon our cabin and surrounding lands as rain starts to fall”*

**Activity 2 - Research**

Based on the information on reading and writing strategies above, think about strategies you could use to develop the numeracy, speaking and listening abilities of your LLN training candidates.

***Design training and assessment to build LLN skills***

Your LLN development strategy will form the basis of your training and assessment approach; you know who your learners are, understand their strengths and needs, and you know what your organisation’s requirements are in terms of the standards needed to undertake a range of tasks. Your strategy document should take all of this information and use it to design a training and assessment plan that will best achieve the outcomes you have set.

Where, however, do you start?

This is where a knowledge of the ACSF performance levels and indicators can help you. For example, when designing training and assessment activities for a new entrant into your work environment – someone who may have learning disabilities or mental challenges – your activities and assessments, in this instance, may be aimed at an ACSF level of 1.

	SUPPORT	CONTEXT	TEXT COMPLEXITY	TASK COMPLEXITY
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works alongside an expert/mentor where prompting and advice can be provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly familiar contexts</li> <li>• Concrete and immediate</li> <li>• Very restricted range of contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short and simple</li> <li>• Highly explicit purpose</li> <li>• Limited, highly familiar vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 steps</li> <li>• Processes include locating, recognising</li> </ul>

The new entrant;

- would have very little, or no, knowledge of the tasks they will need to complete as part of their new job. Training and assessment design would therefore need to include comprehensive support and mentoring in the organisational structure as well as each of their allocated tasks for a period of time. (SUPPORT)
- they may have difficulty making connections between the work they will be doing and how this relates to their work environment (CONTEXT). Any training should be designed to help them gain an understanding of their job, in context with the organisation; show how each task they undertake contributes to the overall workplace operation; and the importance of getting the tasks completed to the right standards.
- The learner has indicated that they like to read, and their general reading abilities have been deemed to be moderate – at ACSF level 2 to 3. The organisation, however uses a range of manuals, policy and procedure manuals that are complex and specific to their industry. So, while the organisation can make reasonable adjustments by amending some of its material to encompass a range of signs and graphics, the learner may, never the less, need some skill development training in understanding and reading complex industry terms and instructions (TEXT COMPLEXITY).
- The learner may also need to receive training that shows how each task should be undertaken in a step by step method, with practice opportunities at each step. This will help to ensure they are able to confidently complete the tasks assigned to them. Then, too, where the work to be undertaken involves and depends on accurate skills (such as numeracy) the difficulties associated with the task increase markedly. The learner’s current capabilities will therefore need to be evaluated precisely so appropriate training and support can be provided. (TASK COMPLEXITY and SUPPORT)

This process would be followed for each learner, based on their identified performance levels.

When developing these training and assessment activities, you may also need to consider *performance indicators* to gain an insight into the learner’s *style* in responding to the training you will be providing to them. This will help to ensure that the training and assessment activities are aimed not only at their specific performance level, but also at the manner in which they might approach the work.

### **Activity 3**

Using the information above, your own industry and a job role within it, as a basis, design a training and assessment program for this new entrant.

### ***Access relevant LLN resources***

Few training and assessment programs can be, successfully, run without a range of relevant resources. In general, these might encompass such things as a venue appropriate to the training to be delivered, audio visual equipment, appropriate staff to fulfil various functions, and so on.

You may also need to use a range of written training resources to assist and support a learner in improving their skills. For example:

- PowerPoint presentations that can be adapted to suit those with visual or reading difficulties

- printed text that can be enlarged for ease of reading
- graphics or photographs that can be used in place of text to make any necessary points
- course notes and handouts can be produced that address a person’s particular learning style
- assessment tools can be devised that appeal to a participant’s preferred style or accommodate their any specific needs or issues.

In terms of LLN, the resources may need to be somewhat more specific and specialised; resources that can help with the development of core skills.

LLN materials will vary and can come from a range of sources. We have set out a list of *general* sources below, suggest however that you research materials appropriate to your industry, organisation and specific needs and keep a file for future reference and use.

Description	Website
ACER – LLN resources for teaching and learning	<a href="https://www.acer.org/cspa/lln-resources-for-teaching-and-learning">https://www.acer.org/cspa/lln-resources-for-teaching-and-learning</a>
Language, Literacy & Numeracy Network. A network of Adult Learning Australia	<a href="http://www.llncommunity.com.au/resources">http://www.llncommunity.com.au/resources</a>
Australian Government – Department of Education and Training	<a href="https://www.education.gov.au/literacy-net-general-resources">https://www.education.gov.au/literacy-net-general-resources</a>
ACT Government – Language, Literacy and Numeracy – Free Online Library	<a href="http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/skillscanberra/news/news_files/news-items-2015/april-2014/language,-literacy-and-numeracy-lln-free-online-library">http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/skillscanberra/news/news_files/news-items-2015/april-2014/language,-literacy-and-numeracy-lln-free-online-library</a>

### ***Modify resources to meet LLN needs, and in relation to context***

Materials given to LLN learners can be produced in-house to the exact specifications set out by your organisation. Depending on the learner, their current capabilities and issues they may be facing, any resources you provide may also need to be tailored to their specific needs.

Where materials are obtained from generic, external sources (such as those in the table above) however, you may need to modify them to cover your program’s requirements more accurately.

It is important to bear in mind that “modifying” means that you should contextualise the materials provided to better suit your needs. It does not mean that you should change the nature or meaning of the material. Modifying resources to meet LLN needs in relation to context can mean, for example;

- Changing the way in which the material is presented. For example, if a resource uses complex language, or is printed in small type face with very little “white space” you might modify it by increasing the font size, producing accompanying images, graphs or other visual clues that interpret the content, for people with visual impairments or with limited English language skills
- Including examples of how a principle can be applied in a work environment, based on your own organisation; allowing learners to better relate to the principle involved
- Setting activities around the material that relate to the learner’s own work role or environment – providing practice opportunities that help to embed the information



#### **Activity 4**

Using one of the websites and sources listed in the table above. Choose an activity and modify it for a specific work role in your organisation.

### ***Implement the program***

An LLN training and assessment program should be implemented in much the same way as any other vocational education program; with just as much care and attention to detail. Depending on the organisation and the programs purpose, the implementation process might, for example, include;

- choosing an appropriate venue – this might be a classroom, a workplace area or a combination of both, depending on the material to be delivered during a given session.
- ensuring you have sufficient staff to support the program. There are many people involved in the successful delivery of training and assessment including (but are not limited to);
- Trainers who deliver the lesson. They may also be the people involved in the assessment process.
- Administration staff who will be responsible for sourcing venues, training and assessment materials, audio visual equipment and much more
- Specialists, who may be called in to provide instruction on specific skill areas.
- ensuring you have appropriate resources available for the core skill involved and that they are aimed at the right performance level.
- providing information to both staff and learners;

- advising staff about their roles; what each staff member is expected to contribute – where, when and how.
- advising learners about things such as venue, access, timeframes, what will be expected of them and so on. This should ensure that they will be properly prepared when they arrive for their first session
- providing learners with an outline of program delivery and assessment procedures. This might also include telling them how they will be evaluated and what redress opportunities they have, should they not agree with any judgements made.
- Keeping accurate records of the program delivery and assessment process for future plans and monitoring of performance.

## **Element 4 - Review strategies**

A strategy document is of little use if it is filed away – never to be looked at again. It is a ‘living document’ that must be revisited regularly to ensure that objectives are being met and that strategies and tactics are still relevant to organisational or learner needs.

It is essential, then, that your strategy document is reviewed on a frequent basis, adjusted where necessary and innovative ways sought to make continual improvements.

### ***Monitor learner progress***

The objective of an LLN strategy should be to improve your candidate’s core skill performance levels. That being the case, the strategy review process should therefore begin with monitoring these performance levels.

Any objectives within the strategy document should be measurable so that progress can actually be gauged in a useful way; in terms of LLN objectives you might determine that a learner’s language, literacy and/or numeracy skills must improve by an agreed percentage, or amount, over a specified period of time.

For example, Alice Graham’s training needs analysis showed that her writing skills needed to be improved. A strategy was developed to help her improve these skills with the agreed objective; *“Alice will be able to write at ACSF performance level 4 within the next six months”*. Relevant tactics were then designed to help her achieve this. At regular intervals, during this six-month period, Alice’s writing abilities will be assessed and, depending on the outcome, a determination will then be made if further training and support is needed, or if Alice has achieved the stated objective.

Learner progress can, generally, be monitored by;

- regular assessment of the learner’s current abilities; comparing them to their starting point performance to measure any improvement in skill levels.
- direct observation of the learner in the process of completing their regular duties
- one on one discussions with the learner about their work, the LLN training program and their own feelings about how they are progressing

### ***Seek support and feedback from colleagues, and LLN specialists***

The purpose of monitoring learner progress is to ensure the LLN program is achieving its outcome and that the learner’s core skills are improving. By monitoring progress throughout the program, you can quickly identify any issues or areas where outcomes are not being met, and offer additional assistance to the learner, or make appropriate adjustments to the program.

You cannot be with the learner all the time, however, and may not necessarily always be aware of any areas of concern. In order to monitor progress as effectively as possible, you may need to seek support and feedback from a range of stakeholders in the program.

These stakeholders may include;

- Workplace colleagues who can assist with providing support to varying degrees
- Interpreter services that can help with language difficulties
- LLN specialist services for more complex issues or problems.

For the most part, participants will be able to participate successfully in a training program unassisted, or with a measure of reasonable adjustment. In some instances, however, a person may need greater levels of support than can be offered through normal processes and specialists may need to be brought in.

Specialist LLN support can come from a range of sources, including (but not limited to):

- specialist in-house support services—depending on the size of the organisation, there may be a training and development department that is capable of providing LLN support services
- Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program
- specialist consultants, who can be engaged on a case-by-case or one-off basis to assist participants
- mentoring, where a team mate or colleague is appointed to assist a worker in the performance of their daily tasks until they are able to function unassisted

Once you have determined that a person requires specialist support, you will need to plan exactly what *type* of support is needed. At this point it is important to:

- determine what needs to be done; for example, will the learner need to:
  - take specialist classes to bring their LLN skills up to the required standards?
  - work with a mentor to help them on the job or during the training program?
- allocate roles and responsibilities—it is important to determine who will work with the individual and exactly what part they will play in developing their LLN skills
- set strategies—the steps to be taken along with roles and responsibilities should be set into a formal strategy document along with timeframes for completion of each step. This ensures that the person’s improvement program moves forward at a measured and monitored pace.

## ***Review strategies***

Review of any workplace plans and strategies is an important component of any business venture. The review process ensures that the organisation is staying on track to meet its objectives and allows them to proactively adjust to emerging trends and technologies.

When looking at how effective your organisation’s strategies are, information should be gathered from a range of sources such as trainer, assessor or learner feedback as well as documentation created during the course of the program delivery such as assessment papers, validation documents, survey forms and questionnaires and so on. These sources, among others, should then be analysed for positive and negative aspects of the strategy.

Some of the questions that should be asked during the review process could include:

- What did we do well? - what did learners like about the program, what activities and assessments worked and how can we capitalize on these issues and improve upon them?

- Did the program achieve what it set out to do?
- If not; what were the reasons why the goals or objectives were not achieved?
- What issues or problems did you face?
- In dealing with any problems or issues;
  - Why did they happen in the first place?
  - Was there a breakdown in communication?
- Is the program being offered as good as it could be?
- Were any problems or issues encountered along the way resolved successfully?
- What can be done to prevent these problems in future?

By asking these, and other relevant questions, you can contribute to the continuous improvement program of the organisation. We will look at continuous improvement in a little more detail in the next section.

## **Element 5 - Develop and extend own and others' LLN practice**

The learning process will never stop. Nor should it. New information is constantly becoming available on LLN practices and innovations are being made to the way in which training is delivered and assessed. In order to keep your finger on the pulse of all these changes and innovations, it will be necessary to continually develop your own skills and share any new information or techniques with your learners and colleagues alike.

### ***Source and access opportunities, to extend you own and others' practice***

This means accessing, reading and analysing current research on LLN practices and incorporating new knowledge into practice. This is an essential part of the training and assessment process, not only for reasons of staying in touch with trends and improving your workplace LLN practices, but also to ensure you continue your development and growth as a professional in your industry.

There are many sources of information on LLN practices, aside from those already mentioned in this chapter. Other sources can include (but are not limited to):

- attending courses on LLN issues and practices
- attending seminars or webinars
- attending conferences
- undertaking your own research via government organisations or associations
- subscribing to news from relevant organisations on the internet
- networking with other LLN practitioners

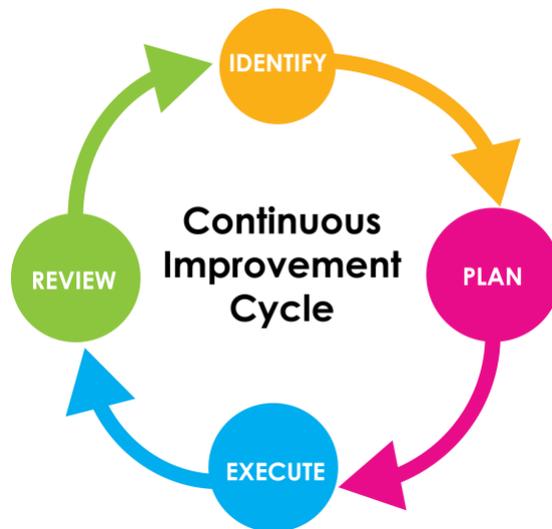
There is a vast amount of information available from an equally vast array of avenues; everything from organisational websites to scholarly articles. Keeping up to date with LLN practices, then, is a matter of *regularly* checking for updates and new information from all of these, and other industry based, sources and networks. Information that can then be incorporated into the organisation's review process and used to continually improve LLN and other strategies.

### ***Propose and implement improvements to LLN practice***

The review process, and the questions asked, should not only be used to ensure the organisation is on track with its current objectives, but should also provide the foundation for future planning and continuous improvement. It should result in an action plan with new strategies and tactics for moving forward;

- areas that have been identified as having worked well could still be improved upon.
- areas that have been identified as having issues or problems can be properly dissected and discussed in terms of how these issues can be resolved.

The cycle of review and improvement then begins again with improvements made to strategies and processes, tasks being allocated to relevant team members, schedules and timeframes set and progress monitored on a regular basis. This cycle forms the basis of the organisation's continuous improvement program.



The advantage of continuous improvement is in the recognition that current processes must be improved before performance can be enhanced - fostering a process-oriented thinking. The focus on ways to constantly improve strategies and practices becomes part of a workplace movement in which those closest to a process become involved in, and responsible for, identifying both positive and negative aspects of a current practice and suggesting ways to enhance it or overcome problems.

By continually reviewing the organisation's strategies and practices better, more innovative and "in touch", methods of addressing LLN issues can be absorbed into every day workplace culture.

#### Activity 5

- Explain the techniques and methods you have used, in your work role, to gather and evaluate feedback on your performance.
- Describe what steps you took to make improvements, based on that feedback
- 

#### ***Provide assistance and advice to less experienced trainers, and assessors***

Not everyone on your team will have the same level of knowledge or expertise when it comes to LLN practices. Some members of the team may be new to the job or industry, while others may be experts in one field but know very little about others.

Trainers and assessors have a great deal of responsibility. Depending on the circumstances, a learner has come to you to be educated in a field that they are unfamiliar with, and that may pose difficulties for them. They will be relying on you to help them towards a better life and career. It is, therefore, a very important part of your role as a trainer / assessor to give them as much assistance towards their goals as you can.

This extends itself to providing guidance and advice to less experienced trainers and assessors so that all parties in a learning program can benefit;

- the learner, through having a team of competent trainers and assessors to work with the organisation, by having well a well-trained team that can be relied upon to deliver the LLN program to a successful outcome
- the trainers and assessors you are assisting, by increasing their confidence and capacity to work competently
- yourself, through the satisfaction of being able to share your knowledge and expertise – helping to shape the upcoming generation of trainers and assessors.

Language, literacy and numeracy are everyone's problem. As we indicated in our introduction, almost 50% of working age Australians are at or below the minimum LLN standards to participate, effectively in society; making it difficult for people to integrate into their communities or find meaningful, long term work.

It is vital that this situation be addressed, wherever possible, by introducing quality LLN programs in the workplace and the community at large.