

Introduction to the publication

Language Literacy and Numeracy in VET

How both teachers and their students develop and apply their language, literacy and numeracy skills is an important factor in determining the quality of any vocational program: whether it is for apprentices in the trade area, for traineeships and for learners in any certificate or diploma program. In fact LLN skills development is important for all study and work both formal and informal, including degree and post graduate programs.

This professional development handbook will demonstrate a number of different strategies to assist teachers to focus more on the language, literacy and numeracy of their courses. The activities demonstrated within it will help students develop language and literacy strategies such as speaking, reading and study skills that will carry them into further learning in educational settings or workplaces.

About this publication

This publication, *Enhancing Teaching: Integrating Language Literacy and Numeracy into VET programs*, is designed as a professional development handbook. In it we have included ideas to stimulate discussion about LLN issues. We have also included strategies for addressing a number of common LLN related learning barriers and models of simple but effective activities for integrating language and literacy within mainstream vocational teaching. These activity models are ideas that teachers can adapt to use in their own teaching in most vocational fields.

As authors of this professional development kit, we believe that learning happens most effectively: when learners are engaged in mutual dialogue and activity, accompanied by input of new ideas; when they are given opportunities to relate new content to existing knowledge and experience and when they are encouraged to reflect on its possible application to their own situation.

Using the publication for interactive professional development

This publication is therefore designed primarily to be used in interactive professional development situations, with a facilitator and any group of participating vocational teachers. It contains suggested activities that can be used to facilitate discussion and reflection and gradual content input. The activities come with prepared overhead master copies and are supplemented by reading material for both facilitators and participants. Further details are outlined below.

Using the publication as reading for awareness

If the interactive professional development is not possible then the handouts and background readings can be read as stand-alone documents. These will raise awareness of LLN issues within the VET sector and provide suggested strategies to overcome them.

Facilitators

For the most effective Professional Development sessions it is preferable that the facilitator of the activities within this kit has a background in language, literacy and VET, or cooperates with a colleague who has this background knowledge.

Structure of the publication

The Sections

The publication is divided into sections as follows:

Section 1: LLN Awareness – Explores the meaning and scope of LLN (language, literacy and numeracy) and associated issues.

Section 2: Promoting better learning: Dealing with students' learning barriers – Investigates the literacy modes used in teaching and learning, some of the common learning barriers related to the memory, attention span and learning styles and integrated LLN strategies to overcome the barriers. Activities in this section demonstrate the suggested strategies as well as providing opportunities for reflection on their application in participants' classes.

Section 3: Integrated LLN activities for VET teaching – Contains demonstration versions of four 'activity models' which can be adapted to integrate language into a wide variety of VET programs. The activities of this section are designed to be combined with those of other sections within professional development workshops.

Section 4: Assessment issues relating to LLN in VET – Looks at pre-course assessment of LLN as well as LLN related issues in ongoing assessment practices. As with section 3, Activities within the section demonstrate assessment techniques as well as facilitating reflection and discussion about their effects and potential applications.

Section 5: Models of integration for LLN in VET – Looks at possible strategies for supporting students with LLN during their VET program and facilitates discussion of adaptation to participants' environments.

Content of the Sections

Each of the sections contains:

Topic readings – Brief overviews of the topics serve as background reading for the facilitator to assist in preparing and presenting sessions. These may also be distributed to practitioners to reinforce the professional development sessions, and in some cases they are recommended reading material to be used during the PD sessions.

Facilitator Introduction to the Section – These provide an overview of the purpose of the section as well as general advice or tips related to the activities within it.

Facilitator Activity Descriptions - These are suggested step by step guidelines for facilitating each of the activities. They include preparation advice and suggested questions and prompts for starting discussions. Of course, we assume that experienced presenters will adapt these to fit their own needs and preferences.

Overhead Transparency Masters – of stimulus materials, discussion questions, teacher quotes, summaries and snippets from readings. These can be photocopied to create overhead transparencies or copied as PowerPoint displays for use during the PD activities.