Language Literacy and Numeracy Policy for trainers and learners at Skills Strategies International

At Skills Strategies International Delivering learning that encompasses a focus on language literacy and numeracy is considered to be part of the art of good teaching and training.

Trainers should make it their business to know where the learners are at in terms of back ground that is relevant to their training program – and this includes language literacy and numeracy.

Introduction to Language Literacy and Numeracy Pre Assessments

With a focus on Language Literacy and Numeracy and particularly diagnosis of learners with LLN development issues, a plethora of assessment tools have emerged to assess learners prior to entry to their course.

Every vocational course offered at Skills Strategies International is different in terms of the level and kind of LLN required at entry as well as during the program. Some VET courses require an understanding of higher level concepts and so a LLN test which assessed only competency in lower level competencies would be inappropriate. Another issue is that learners can only be assessed to the level of the test – and not beyond it.

Some Units of competence are more literacy intensive than others. For example units in customer service tend to have a high emphasis in oral skills but other than reading customer service surveys, very little emphasis on numeracy. It is pointless therefore to test for skills that are not going to be needed in the course.

At Skills Strategies International we predominantly deliver user pay courses where the learner is in the workplace and wanting more skills to improve their employment position. These learners tend to be task oriented and focused on achieving the vocational competencies. This should not put us off integrating literacy support mechanisms. However these are likely to be in the form of document formats and processes related to the workplace.

Customisation of Pre-Assessment tests

Pre-entry assessments need to be customised to reflect the requirements of the course being undertaken. The tasks and texts in the test need to relate to the skill requirements in the qualification being undertaken. At the same time it is important that they do not require in vocational skills that are part of the course (unless it is an RPL application)

The tasks chosen may be ones that the trainer knows prove difficult – but they should be those that are going to be undertaken in the course. If you have a bank of pre-assessments and one can be sourced that is similar to one in the course then using that, or making small modifications would be acceptable. The assessment is to be saved to the students file for future reference.

Mapping the tasks to the ACSF may be useful in providing a benchmark but it is more important that the skills relate to the units of competence being delivered.

Some tasks that may provide valuable insight into learner skills may include:

- Reading documents that are required in the course eg Customer Service Procedures
- Perform simple but related calculation eg performing a mark down calculation for retail
- Write a memo or email
- Create a spreadsheet

Issues with formal pre-course tests

Formal pre- course tests put significant pressure on the learner who will feel that their course entry is in jeopardy. An informal interview and activity may be a better way of identifying skills deficits. Peer and learner self-assessments have a high degree of subjectivity and pre-course a learner may inflate their capacity. However once they are enrolled learners tend to be more realistic about their levels of performance. Documented evidence from the LLN is to be saved to the students records for future reference.

Interviews

Although interviews are time intensive, they can provide valid and useful information about pre entry LLN skills of students. Questions about educational background assist teachers in identifying students who may need additional LLN support with their course. LLN issues related to interrupted schooling history, non-completion of secondary education or non-completion of requisite subjects can indicate students who will require extra or targeted support to successfully complete their VET program.

Observations

As well as analyzing the results of any formal or non-formal assessment you can also gain very useful information about LLN skills by observing how students are responding to either an assessment or even the enrolment process. LLN support needs may also be indicated by the length of time any assessment or enrolment process is taking students.

Introductory activities

Introductory activities can be team building and getting to know you activities and provide the trainer with insightful information about the skill requirements of the learner.

This online manual aims to collect a raft of different strategies which will assist trainers to get insight into their learner's skills without putting impost on the curriculum or the learner.

1. The minimum evidence of English literacy and language skills required for College entry at qualification level is:

Qualification level	English Language Skills	English Literacy Skills	Numeracy Skills
Certificate II	Able to make suitable enquiries about the Course by phone	Completion of College Enrolment Form questions	No minimum
Certificate III	Able to make suitable enquiries about the Course by phone	Completion of Multiple Information Systems Assessment	Completion of Multiple Information Systems Assessment
Certificate IV	Completion of Year 12 or a Certificate III course in the English language	Completion of Year 12 or a Certificate III course in the English language	Completion of Multiple Information Systems Assessment
Diploma	Completion of a Certificate IV course in the English language	Completion of a Certificate IV course in the English language	Completion of Multiple Information Systems Assessment
Advanced Diploma	Completion of a Certificate IV course in the English language	Completion of a Diploma course in the English language	Completion of Multiple Information Systems Assessment

2. Specific additional qualification requirements in addition to the qualification level requirements are:

Qualification	English Language Skills	English Literacy Skills	Numeracy Skills
Certificate II, III in Financial Services			Basic numeracy skills to year 10 "pass" level
Certificate III in Accounts Clerical			Basic numeracy skills to year 10 "pass" level
Certificate IV in Accounting , Bookkeeping			Above average numeracy skills to year 10 level
Diploma of Accounting			Above average numeracy skills to year 10 level