# TAELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills

Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills are key components in any job role because we need to communicate with others in a variety of ways and on a range of different levels. One of the most important factors in designing a training program is identifying the level of LLN skills required, not only to participate in the program but to perform effectively in the workplace.

However the program is constructed, the content and the training and assessment strategy of the program must be centred on the participants' ability to:

- take in the information you are offering
- digest this information
- transfer the information into useable skills and knowledge in their work roles.

In the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, the delivery and assessment of a training program follows very strict guidelines: these cannot be ignored or bypassed for a person who may have LLN issues. However, a trainer in the VET system is required to comply with the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations. In particular, SNR 16.5 states, 'Learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their *individual* needs'.

This means that training must be fair, accessible and equitable to all participants. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that a participant's LLN abilities are determined prior to the delivery of the program. If the participant's LLN levels are found to be below course requirements, adjustments may have to be made in order to accommodate them.

## Understanding language, literacy and numeracy (LLN)

*Language* is the method we use to communicate with each other. Whether this is in the form of speaking, listening, reading, writing or some form of visual communication, language is what makes us able to understand other people. The level of language skills a person has will determine how clearly and productively they will be able to make others understand their meaning and function in workplace and social contexts.

*Literacy* refers to a person's ability to read and write and take in information, process it and draw conclusions. Literacy involves a combination of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing: making sense of the written word and allowing us to interact with one another to achieve particular goals. It also allows us to explain ourselves, explore new issues and provide information clearly and concisely.

*Numeracy* refers to a person's ability to use mathematical concepts needed to function efficiently in the workplace and in social contexts. It involves the practical application of absorbing, using and critically evaluating information of a numerical or graphical nature. Depending on the context, then, this might include having an understanding of how numbers work and the spatial and graphical concepts used to take measures and solve problems.

## Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)

**NOTE:** *The full version of the ACSF is available from the **Department of Industry**, www.industry.gov. au (search for ACSF). We recommend it as further reading, and only briefly cover it here.*

While the performance levels of the **Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)** operate along the same lines and principles of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) they are not, in fact, the same. The AQF provides general guidance on the level of performance expected of a training participant *within qualification levels* Certificate I through to Advanced Diploma (in VET)—Certificate I having very basic entry level skill and knowledge requirements and a Diploma or Advanced Diploma having much higher expectations of entrants. The ACSF is concerned with the level and depth of an individual's abilities in a range of **core skills**, as outlined below, rather than looking at what is needed to fulfil qualification guidelines. The ACSF provides the foundations and benchmarks for the development of training plans based on the individual's abilities rather than qualification requirements.

The 2006 international Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS) found that approximately 40 per cent of employed and 60 per cent of unemployed Australians had poor or very poor (Level 1 or 2) English language, literacy and numeracy skills. Level 3 is regarded as the 'minimum required for individuals to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work in the emerging knowledge-based economy'. Improving LLN skills contributes to more effective participation in training or in the labour force with associated benefits for individuals and society. Furthermore, each new role and responsibility an individual takes on will require new or enhanced core skills. A range of strategies was therefore needed to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges.

The ACSF was developed as a strategic instrument to provide benchmarks against which performance can be described and measured in each of the five core skills. It allows you 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 skills are an integral part of our lives; how well we are able to communicate and use these core skills has a direct (or indirect) impact on the physical, social and economic wellbeing of individuals, as well as on workplace productivity and safety, community interaction and capacity, and, ultimately, our national economy.

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. These performance levels range from 1 (low level of performance, where a person may still require a high level of support) to 5 (high level of performance, where a person is able to function autonomously and to a high degree). It also takes into account:

- *the degree and nature of support available*—when we learn new things we are, normally, supported in a number of ways, which may include support from colleagues or mentors, demonstrations of a task, 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 capabilities.
- *the familiarity with the context*—this refers to the prior knowledge or experience a person can bring to a situation, or may be able to relate to, in order for them to function in a given role; the more familiar they are with their surroundings or their tasks the greater the level of their confidence and ability.
- *the complexity of the text*—this includes written, diagrammatic, visual and oral communications used in work, study and everyday life. 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 complex piece of equipment will require very different skill levels to reading a customer enquiry email.
- *the complexity of the task*—our ability to interpret text and perform tasks will be influenced by the level of difficulty and complexity in interpreting the information required to carry out a task and in actually carrying out the task.

Table 3.1 shows how the five levels of performance relate to these factors.

**Table 3.1** • **ACSF performance variables grid**

| | Support | Context | Text complexity | Task complexity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | • Works alongside an expert/mentor where prompting and advice can be provided | • Highly familiar contexts<br>• Concrete and immediate<br>• Very restricted range of contexts | • Short and simple<br>• Highly explicit purpose<br>• Limited, highly familiar vocabulary | • Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 steps<br>• Processes include locating, recognising |

*continued*

**Table 3.1** ● *continued*

| | | Support | Context | Text complexity | Task complexity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Five levels of performance** | **2** | • May work with an expert/mentor where support is available if requested | • Familiar and predictable contexts<br>• Limited range of contexts | • Simple familiar texts with clear purpose<br>• Familiar vocabulary | • Explicit tasks involving a limited number of familiar steps<br>• Processes include identifying, simple interpreting, simple sequencing |
| | **3** | • Works independently and uses own familiar support resources | • Range of familiar contexts<br>• Some less familiar contexts<br>• Some specialisation in familiar/known contexts | • Routine texts<br>• May include some unfamiliar elements, embedded information and abstraction<br>• Includes some specialised vocabulary | • Tasks involving a number of steps<br>• Processes include sequencing, integrating, interpreting, simple extrapolating, simple inferencing, simple abstracting |
| | **4** | • Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources | • Range of contexts, including some that are unfamiliar and/or unpredictable<br>• Some specialisation in less familiar/known contexts | • Complex texts<br>• Embedded information<br>• Includes specialised vocabulary<br>• Includes abstraction and symbolism | • Complex task organisation and analysis involving application of a number of steps<br>• Processes include extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting, abstracting |
| | **5** | • Autonomous learner who accesses and evaluates support from a broad range of sources | • Broad range of contexts<br>• Adaptability within and across contexts<br>• Specialisation in one or more contexts | • Highly complex texts<br>• Highly embedded information<br>• Includes highly specialised language and symbolism | • Sophisticated task conceptualisation, organisation and analysis<br>• Processes include synthesising, critically reflecting, evaluating, recommending |

*Source: Adapted from Australian Core Skills Framework, www.industry.gov.au*

A person operating at levels 1 or 2 may be able to perform familiar tasks in familiar environments, but may require a high degree of support and assistance when undertaking more complex and involved tasks in the workplace. A person operating at levels 4 or 5 can work unsupervised to complete complex tasks and may even mentor less experienced colleagues.

Coupled with this, at each level, within a given core skill, there are also:

- *performance indicators*—which describe achievement at a given level. There are 11 indicators (Table 3.2)
- *a set of performance features*—whcih provide more specific information about the indicators
- *aspects of communication*—which represent different contexts in which the core skills might be used and that will influence how an individual relates to a given situation. For example:
  - personal communication: expressing your own thoughts and ideas
  - cooperative communication: interacting within groups
  - workplace or procedural communication: performing tasks or interacting with colleagues
  - technical communication: using tools and technology
  - systems communication: interacting within an organisation
  - public communication: interacting with the general public.

Table 3.2  •  **ACSF performance indicators**

| Core skill | Indicator number | Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning** | 1 | Awareness of self as a learner, planning and management of learning |
| | 2 | Acquisition and application of practical strategies that facilitate learning |
| **Reading** | 3 | Audience, purpose and meaning-making (able to analyse and interpret meaning) |
| | 4 | Reading strategies |
| **Writing** | 5 | Audience, purpose and meaning-making |
| | 6 | The mechanics of writing |
| **Oral communication** | 7 | Speaking |
| | 8 | Listening |
| **Numeracy** | 9 | Identifying mathematical information and meaning in activities and texts |
| | 10 | Using and applying mathematical knowledge and problem solving processes |
| | 11 | Communicating and representing mathematics |

*Source: Adapted from Australian Core Skills Framework, www.industry.gov.au*

Depending on the situation, the level of communication required may be more or less formal and complex.

## Indicators

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

Learning, reading and writing:

- the first indicator describes a person's performance in terms of their own goals and purposes in the activity and their ability to make sense of the material and the overall management of the process involved in learning, reading or writing. This could involve relatively simple tasks or could be quite complex
- the second indicator focuses on how they will go about achieving the desired outcomes.

Oral communication:

- the first indicator focuses on speaking skills
- the second indicator focuses on listening skills.

Numeracy:

- the first indicator focuses on identifying what mathematical concepts may be required to perform a task
- the second indicator focuses on mathematical procedures and processes required to actually perform the task/s
- the third indicator focuses on the ability to explain the mathematics involved and its meaning in relation to the task.

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 an individual to complete it to the required standard. For example, someone who has demonstrated level 1 in reading will have achieved both 1.03 and 1.04. Someone at reading level 4 will have achieved both 4.03 and 4.04 (Table 3.3). Understanding this will give you a good idea of what type and degree of training to provide.

**Table 3.3 ● Example of ACSF reading indicators by level**

| Level | Indicator | |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | 1.03 | Identifies personally relevant information and ideas from texts on highly familiar topics |
| | 1.04 | Uses a limited range of strategies to locate specific information and construct meaning from explicit and highly familiar texts |
| **2** | 2.03 | Identifies and interprets relevant information and ideas from texts on familiar topics |
| | 2.04 | Uses a number of reading strategies to identify and interpret relevant information within familiar text types |
| **3** | 3.03 | Evaluates and integrates information and ideas to construct meaning from a range of familiar, and some unfamiliar, texts and text types |
| | 3.04 | Selects and applies a range of reading strategies as appropriate to purpose and text type |

| Level | Indicator | |
|---|---|---|
| **4** | 4.03 | Interprets and critically analyses complex texts |
| | 4.04 | Applies appropriate strategies to construct meaning from complex texts |
| **5** | 5.03 | Organises, evaluates and critiques ideas and information from a range of complex texts |
| | 5.04 | Draws on a broad range of strategies to build and maintain understanding throughout complex texts |

*Source: Adapted from Australian Core Skills Framework, www.industry.gov.au*

What all this means is that an individual's LLN abilities and their workplace/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.

## Employability and foundation skills

For adults, LLN is about more than just the ACSF; it also encompasses an adult's abilities to function effectively in the workplace. The ACSF should therefore be used in conjunction with employability skills and foundation skills.

Every training package includes information on employability skills and foundation skills, which are centred on language, literacy and numeracy.

### Employability skills

In 2002, the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry produced the Employability Skills for the Future report. The principles they identified in 2002 still hold true today. In their report, they identified eight key, generic employability skills that an individual should have along with relevant job-specific and/or technical skills (Table 3.4). The report indicated that the skills and knowledge contained in the key competencies of training packages, at that time, needed to be revised and expanded to reflect rapidly changing workplace requirements and include a broader range of skills that employers required.

Employability skills describe non-technical skills and competencies that have always been an important part of effective and successful participation in the workplace. Their inclusion in training packages represents a step forward for competency-based training: transitioning into a system that develops the full range of transferable skills, attitudes and behaviour required for successful participation in the workplace. For example, BSB training package employability skills are shown in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4** • Employability skills from the Business Services Training Package and how these relate to ACSF core skills

| Employability skill | Industry or enterprise requirements for this qualification include | Relates to core skill |
|---|---|---|
| **Communication** | • communicating verbally with others in negotiation, training and questioning<br>• writing a range of simple documentation and communications | • Oral communication<br>• Writing<br>• Learning |
| **Teamwork** | • completing individual tasks to support team goals<br>• conveying workplace procedures and work instructions to team members | • Oral communication<br>• Writing |
| **Problem-solving** | • resolving issues and conflicts with team members<br>• using manuals and other documentation to overcome problems with information technology or other office equipment | • Learning<br>• Oral communication<br>• Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Numeracy |
| **Initiative and enterprise** | • demonstrating individual responsibility for completing tasks<br>• suggesting improvements to support the development of improved work practices and team effectiveness | • Learning<br>• Oral communication<br>• Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Numeracy |
| **Planning and organising** | • contributing to planning processes with team members to meet expected outcomes<br>• gathering, organising and applying workplace information for the organisation's work processes and information systems | • Learning<br>• Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Oral communication<br>• Numeracy |
| **Self-management** | • identifying development needs and seeking training to fill needs<br>• monitoring and recording the performance of own work area | • Learning<br>• Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Numeracy |
| **Learning** | • developing a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of products and services<br>• identifying priorities and pursuing personal work goals according to organisational objectives | • Learning<br>• Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Numeracy |
| **Technology** | • using information communication technology to communicate with team members or clients<br>• using word processing packages, spreadsheets or databases to produce written correspondence and reports | • Oral communication<br>• Learning<br>• Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Numeracy |

Table 3.5  •  **Foundation skills for unit of competency TAELLN411, showing how each skill relates to the unit's performance criteria and the skill levels required**

| Foundation skill | Performance criteria | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Reading** | 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1 | • Analyses training specifications, training materials, LLN specific resources and validated tools based on the ACSF<br>• Interprets information from enrolment records and pre-training assessments |
| **Oral communication** | 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1 | • Uses appropriate language with consideration to vocabulary, tone and pace to talk with learners and other vocational education and training (VET) colleagues<br>• Uses language that demonstrates cultural sensitivity and builds and maintains understanding and rapport |
| **Interact with others** | 3.2, 4.1 | • Collaborates with colleagues and support specialists to design and implement effective learning strategies<br>• Considers how others should be involved, often using consultative or collaborative processes when evaluating practice |
| **Get the work done** | 2.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 | • Uses formal and informal processes to monitor implementation of solutions and reflect on outcomes |

In addressing the employability skills of a training package or unit of competency, you will by default also be addressing the five core skills.

## Foundation skills

Foundation skills are defined as a combination of English LLN and employability skills (Table 3.5). The development of an individual's foundation skills includes both attaining the necessary skills and critically applying these skills at various levels in the workplace. These skills are fundamental to participation in the workplace, the community and in learning situations; people with higher LLN abilities are more likely to be employed, participate in their community, experience better health and engage in further training.

Foundation and employability skills are extremely important in gaining and retaining employment. The pivotal use of technology in communication means that foundations skills are increasingly important for effective participation in modern workplaces.

The ACSF, employability skills and foundation skills and their application in a training or workplace situation is not something that will necessarily make immediate sense to you as you read this textbook or study in your groups. As you begin to work with these concepts, however, your level of confidence in dealing with LLN issues will increase. We recommend that you download the ACSF document as outlined earlier in the chapter for your portfolio.

Let's now look at how these concepts work in the development of training programs.

## ELEMENT 1  Analyse LLN requirements

**When designing a learning program, you will have (or should have) a fairly good idea of who your participants are going to be. They may be:**

- **employees of a particular company**
- **individuals undertaking a traineeship or college course**
- **unemployed people on funded programs to help them get work.**

**Whoever they are, you will need some knowledge of their current needs and capabilities in order to provide the best possible outcome for them. An understanding of the ACSF will be of benefit here.**

### LEARNING OUTCOMES
**Upon completion of this section you should be able to:**

| 1.1 | **Determine LLN skill requirements of the training specification** |
|---|---|
| 1.2 | **Identify and analyse the LLN skill requirements essential to workplace performance** |
| 1.3 | **Determine the LLN skills of the learner group from validated tools and other sources** |

### Determining the LLN skill requirements of the training specification

Every training program will differ in the level of LLN skills necessary for people to participate successfully in the workplace. For example:

- An accountant or financial consultant will need a high level of numeracy skills to be able to undertake the many calculations needed in such roles, so programs based around finance and accounting must ensure that participants have the capacity to understand the volume of numeracy based learning involved.

- Administration staff will need excellent literacy skills in order to process the many documents they have to deal with each day, so a training programs participant will require sound reading and writing abilities in order to cope with and understand the program contents.

Training participants with less developed LLN skills may struggle in a program that requires a high level of LLN skills. Ideally, potential participants should be interviewed *prior* to commencement of a training program to determine whether their LLN skills are adequate and/or appropriate to the course they will be undertaking.

An important issue to consider when designing a program is what LLN skill levels are required for participation in the program or in the workplace. These LLN skill levels become part of the benchmark that prospective participants must meet in order to function successfully in the program or on the job.

Determining the skill requirements of your *training program* will fall into two categories:

**1.** LLN skill requirements based on formal training packages

**2.** LLN skill requirements based on organisational requirements.

## LLN skills required based on formal training packages

First examine the employability skills (or foundation skills) of the training package. These are influenced by AQF benchmarks and the ACSF levels of performance.

Look closely at the core skills and how they relate to the performance criteria and required skills and knowledge of a unit of competency. For example, for the unit of competency BSBCUS301, a participant must be able to meet the performance criteria and required skills listed in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6  •  Unit of competency requirements showing skills needed**

| Elements and performance criteria of the unit of competency | | | Job skill requirements |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Identify customer needs** | 1.1 | Use *appropriate interpersonal skills* to accurately identify and clarify *customer needs and expectations* | Oral communication: Speaking – 3.07, 4.07 Listening – 3.08, 4.08 |
| | 1.2 | Assess customer needs for urgency to determine priorities for service delivery according to *organisational requirements* | Oral communication: Speaking – 3.07, 4.07 Listening – 3.08, 4.08 |
| | 1.3 | Use *effective communication* to inform customers about available choices for meeting their needs and assist in the selection of preferred options | Oral communication: Speaking – 3.07, 4.07 Listening – 3.08, 4.08 |
| | 1.4 | Identify limitations in addressing customer needs and seek appropriate assistance from *designated individuals* | Oral communication: Speaking – 3.07, 4.07 Listening – 3.08, 4.08 Learning – 3.01, 4.01 |
| **2. Deliver a service to customers** | 2.1 | Provide prompt service to customers to meet identified needs in accordance with organisational requirements | Oral communication: Speaking – 3.07, 4.07 Listening – 3.08, 4.08 |
| | **2.2** | **Establish and maintain appropriate rapport with customers to ensure completion of quality service delivery** | **Oral communication: Speaking - 3.07, 4.07 Listening - 3.08, 4.08** |
| | 2.3 | Sensitively and courteously handle *customer complaints* in accordance with organisational requirements | |
| | 2.4 | Provide assistance or respond to customers with *specific needs* according to organisational requirements | |
| | 2.5 | Identify and use available *opportunities* to promote and enhance services and products to customers | |

*continued*

**Table 3.6** ● *continued*

| Elements and performance criteria of the unit of competency | | | Job skill requirements |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3. Monitor and report on service delivery** | 3.1 | Regularly review customer satisfaction with service delivery using *verifiable evidence* according to organisational requirements | |
| | 3.2 | Identify opportunities to enhance the quality of service and products, and pursue within organisational requirements | |
| | 3.3 | Monitor procedural aspects of service delivery for effectiveness and suitability to customer requirements | |
| | 3.4 | Regularly seek customer feedback and use to improve the provision of products and services | |
| | 3.5 | Ensure reports are clear, detailed and contain recommendations focused on critical aspects of service delivery | |

| **Required skills** |
|---|
| Analytical skills to identify trends and positions of products and services |
| Communication skills to monitor and advise on customer service strategies |
| Literacy skills to: <br> • edit and proofread texts to ensure clarity of meaning and accuracy of grammar and punctuation <br> • prepare general information and papers according to target audience <br> • read and understand a variety of texts |
| Problem–solving skills to deal with customer enquiries or complaints |
| Technology skills to select and use technology appropriate to a task |
| Self–management skills to: <br> • comply with policies and procedures <br> • consistently evaluate and monitor own performance <br> • seek learning opportunities. |

*Source: www.training.gov.au/BSBCUS301B.*

In examining these criteria, you will need to determine not only which core skills are needed but also the performance levels required by the workplace. Using Table 3.6, performance criteria 2.2, as an example, we see that the organisation has stated that a person in this role must be able to communicate effectively with customers in order to establish a rapport. The organisation has stipulated this must be performed confidently and with little support. The oral communication requirements of the job (and therefore the person) is therefore set at a level 3 performance as a minimum; any communications training offered should address this level. Other clues can be found in specific trigger words such as *monitor* and *advise*. Such words indicate that skill levels need

to be of a relatively high level. To assist you in 'unpacking' a unit of competency and recognising its requirements, a list of trigger words is provided in Table 3.7. These words relate to terms used in the formal units of a training package.

If a unit of competency's performance criteria, skills and knowledge requirements specify that a learner must be able to *check*, *comply with*, *interpret*, *maintain records*, *monitor*, and so on, it means that reading and writing skills are needed to perform the task.

**Table 3.7 ● LLN trigger words**

| Reading | Writing | Numeracy | Speaking and listening |
|---|---|---|---|
| • according to signs, codes and labels<br>• appropriate documentation<br>• check<br>• comply with directions<br>• follow written procedures<br>• identify<br>• interpret and monitor<br>• legislative requirements<br>• marked out<br>• obtain information from written instructions<br>• understanding<br>• written reporting | • chart<br>• complete reports<br>• document<br>• identify<br>• inventory<br>• label<br>• maintain records<br>• marked<br>• monitor<br>• notes<br>• outline<br>• record data<br>• report<br>• tagged<br>• written reporting | • according to signs, codes and labels<br>• adjust<br>• allowance<br>• calculate<br>• collect data<br>• computations<br>• convert<br>• determine value<br>• estimate<br>• formula<br>• interpret charts and graphs<br>• levels<br>• measuring techniques<br>• perform<br>• size and proportion<br>• time<br>• tolerance | • access relevant information<br>• allocate<br>• clarify meaning or advice<br>• contribute<br>• delegate<br>• explain<br>• feedback<br>• follow verbal instructions or procedures<br>• identify<br>• inform<br>• liaise<br>• monitor<br>• refer to<br>• supervise<br>• team discussions<br>• use questions<br>• verbal reporting |

**TASK 13.1**

a. **Using Table 3.6, complete the remainder of the core skill requirements you think apply to the unit of competency's performance criteria and required skills. Also discuss what employability and foundation skills you think might apply to this unit.**

b. **Using work you completed in Chapter 1, Task 1.2b, describe the performance levels required to complete the tasks.**

## LLN skills required based on organisational requirements

These will be influenced by the organisation's *internal* standards. This means taking a close look at the tasks a worker needs to perform as part of their job, breaking the tasks into the individual steps needed to complete the tasks to the required organisational standards, and determining what skills will be needed to do this.

For example, in Chapter 1 we looked at organisational policies and procedures in terms of using the information management system correctly. The task requirements included those in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 ● Organisational task breakdown showing skill requirements

| Task requirement |
| --- |
| • Correctly access the computer filing system |
| • Maintain security and confidentiality of login and passwords as well as information accessed |
| • Open and close files and documents correctly |
| • Create folders and documents in line with organisational policies and procedures |

Looking at these tasks with LLN skills in mind, the person in this role will need to be able to:

- read instructions, policy and procedure documents
- write documents, create files and folders, and use version control
- use numeracy skills for version control and filing documents numerically.

You will need to determine performance levels required for each task. For example, creating folders within the organisation's document filing system might be considered a responsible task and may, therefore, be rated at a performance level of 3, whereas maintaining and managing that system might be set at a level 4 or 5.

Whether the skills required are based on formal training packages or organisational requirements, it is essential to ensure before the program begins that participants have the necessary skills to complete the tasks or that reasonable adjustments are made (within organisational constraints) to accommodate them. If, in the end, a person simply does not have the LLN skills necessary to participate, then you may need to call upon special support. We will look at this in Element 2.

## Determining the LLN skills of the learner group

Having determined the level of LLN skills required for the training program and the workplace tasks, you must now determine the LLN skills of the participants and how they compare with the training package or workplace requirements. As facilitator, you will need to think about whether participants can:

- express themselves well enough to be understood clearly
- understand workplace instructions
- read and fully understand what they are reading
- write legibly and concisely to make themselves understood
- use numeracy skills at the appropriate level in order to fulfil their specific job tasks.

## OceanWorld: Determining the LLN skills

Gina 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, her administration skills will need to be fairly comprehensive and the organisation's management has set the skill requirements of the job at an average of level 4. Gina will receive training in the necessary skills to fulfil the role requirements;



**Figure 3.1** ● **Example of a spiky profile**

however, during her training needs analysis for the role, her trainer ascertains that while Gina's learning, reading, oral communication and numeracy skills are adequate, her writing skills fall far below the required level. The trainer therefore draws up a training plan that includes not only the role-specific training Gina needs but also focuses on her writing skills.
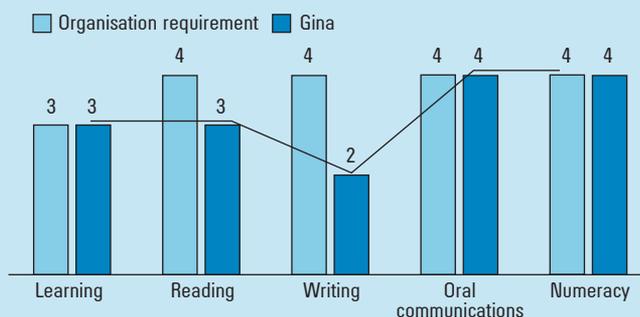
### The spiky profile

When determining a participant's LLN levels across the five core skills it may become apparent that their abilities range considerably between these skills—resulting in what is known as a 'spiky profile'. This means a person's reading abilities may score higher than their numeracy skills, or that they rate very highly in their literacy skills but have an average score in oral communication. You must take this into consideration in any learning program you design for these participants.

You can determine a participant's LLN skills in a number of ways, including (but not limited to):

- *interviewing candidates*
  - asking questions about their current role
  - getting them to describe, in detail, how they go about their tasks
  - getting their own understanding of the skill levels required to perform the task to the specified standards and whether they feel confident in these tasks
  - asking them where they feel they could improve
- *observation on the job*—watching candidates perform their daily tasks and taking note of the skills they display (compared to the levels required by the organisation)
- *asking participants to write something that would normally be required as part of their job*
- *asking participants to read from a range of workplace documents*
- *general testing of reading, writing and maths skills*—setting an assessment that will help gauge these skills
- *gathering information from supervisors who work with the participant*—they will have information on their actual skill levels compared to the skill levels required by the job.

Gathering information in this manner should give you a sound overview of your participants' LLN skills and help you determine if they will be able to participate confidently, where adjustments should be made, what level of support they will require or whether they may need specialist support.

**TASK 3.2**

a. **Research existing LLN tools on the internet.**

b. **Develop a range of tools that you could use in your workplace to determine the LLN skills of potential training program participants. These tools should, ideally, test an individual's reading, writing and numeracy abilities at different performance levels, but not be too much like an exam.**

## Considering cultural diversity

Another important issue to bear in mind when checking LLN levels is the diversity of the workforce. **Diversity** includes people from different language and cultural backgrounds and 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 the workplace, but they may have LLN issues that make it difficult to fully participate. It may be necessary to adjust a training plan or their workplace to accommodate their specific needs.

Reasonable adjustment is covered in detail in Part 3: Assessment. Briefly, however, *reasonable adjustment* means altering established methods of assessing competence to ensure that all participants have an equal opportunity to succeed. For example, if the usual method of assessing a subject is a written text and your participant's English language skills are at a low level, or if they have dyslexia, then oral questions or a demonstration of skills and knowledge might be more appropriate.

**TASK 3.3**

**Use one simple and one complex task from your own workplace:**

a. **Break them down into individual components that must be performed.**

b. **Determine the organisation's skill requirements and performance levels of each task and component.**

c. **Rate your own performance of these tasks against the criteria you have established.**

d. **Rate two workplace colleagues against the criteria.**

**You can use the template in Figure 3.2 if you wish.**

| Task | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Task component | Required standard | Organisation | Individual |
| | | Performance level | Performance level |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

**Figure 3.2** ● **A sample template**

## ELEMENT 2 Select and use resources and strategies to address LLN skill requirements

**Having established the LLN needs of both the program and its participants, you need to develop strategies to address these so that all participants are able to complete the program successfully. This may mean looking at appropriate resources and how best to apply them.**

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Upon completion of this section you should be able to:**

**2.1** Identify resources to support LLN skill development

**2.2** Use learning and assessment materials to support identified LLN requirements, customising where necessary

**2.3** Apply learning support strategies in training delivery appropriate to LLN requirements and learner group

**2.4** Determine assessment strategies appropriate to LLN requirements and learner group

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### Identifying resources to support LLN skill development

#### Stakeholders

Working with LLN issues can present challenges and may mean that you need to work with stakeholders from a range of different areas and organisations. These stakeholders may include:

- workplace colleagues who can assist with providing support
- interpreter services that can help with participants' language difficulties
- LLN specialist services for more complex issues or problems (we discuss these services in more detail later in this chapter).

#### Program materials

You may also need to use a range of written training resources to assist and support a participant. A number of existing resources can be used to improve a person's LLN skills, ranging from complete study guides to adapting resources to person's LLN skill levels. For example:

- PowerPoint presentations can be adapted to suit those with visual or reading difficulties.
- printed text can be enlarged for ease of reading.
- graphics or photographs can be used in place of text to make important points.
- course notes and handouts can be produced that address a person's particular learning style (see Part 2: Training delivery).

- assessment tools can be devised that appeal to a participant's preferred style or accommodate their LLN needs.

These are only some of the ways to use existing resources. Online sources of LLN materials include (but are not limited to):

- Taking the Lead, www.takingthelead.com.au (information from Service Skills Australia): provides a range of information and tools on working with LLN issues
- Australian Council for Adult Literacy, www.acal.edu.au: provides a range of papers, reports, providers and links that can be useful in working with LLN.

## Using learning and assessment materials to support identified LLN requirements

When developing study guides or assessment tools, the important issue is assessing the participant's ability to actually undertake a task. While this may involve reading, writing or numeracy skills, these may be of secondary importance, so assessments should be devised to accommodate participants' LLN skill levels.

You need to make sure that the type of assessment you choose allows participants to demonstrate their competence in what you are intending to assess. For example, written tests can assess people's reading and writing skills more than they test actual understanding of content. A person who fails a written test may, in fact, know the answer but may have difficulty reading the question or writing the answer. It may be more appropriate to use:

- oral questioning
- observations and/or demonstration of skills.

As a further example, assessing an individual's ability to offer customer service by giving them a written assessment will not properly assess the actual skills required for the job; the participant may be able to offer exemplary customer service skills but have difficulty reading questions or writing answers. A better assessment would be by demonstration or role play rather than a written test or project.

The assessment tool must always take the participant's LLN skills into consideration. You will need to look at:

- skills they already have
- their preferred learning style. Do they learn best by watching a demonstration of a task, reading about the process or actually performing the task?
- their current LLN skill levels.

You can then determine the best and fairest method of delivering the program and of assessing competence in a given unit.

You also need to consider the context and conditions under which the training and assessment will take place. For example, the context could include:

- *the environment in which the training takes place*—this may affect the type and range of assessments available and will, therefore, affect the level of adaptability that can be offered
- *information gained from an LLN specialist, including results from prior assessment*—this information is important as it will also help determine the type and range of assessments you can offer.

## Applying learning support strategies in training delivery

In some cases, an employer may wish to offer more extensive assistance to a valued employee. This may mean engaging in longer term programs that will help the employee adjust to their role and its benchmarks in a more structured manner. In cooperation with specialist support services, you can use a range of methods and strategies, including:

- demonstrating LLN practices to be learned in a workplace context so that participants can clearly observe what is required of them
- using plain English appropriate for the participant
- providing interpreters where language problems are clearly evident
- using graphics and photographs wherever possible to make a point and ensure understanding
- using video and/or audio recordings of texts and other material to support the training program
- providing simplified explanations of underpinning principles and concepts, such as breaking tasks down to step-by-step components and ensuring that participants are clear on each step before moving on to the next
- encouraging use of participants' personal word lists and dictionaries. This could include asking them to paraphrase what they have heard in order to check their understanding of a topic
- mentoring in a learning situation—ensuring that another team member or training mate is available to assist the person for a given period of time
- acknowledging and building on current strengths of participants. It is important to encourage them and help them build their self-esteem
- providing opportunities to discuss, attach importance to, and build on different culturally based behaviours and values.

Such strategies allow people to participate in the learning process at their own level, gaining confidence and upgrading skills and knowledge steadily as they move through the training program.

**TASK 3.4**

a. Research resources you could use to develop a training program around the tasks you identified in Task 3.3.

b. Describe how these could be adapted to suit the LLN requirements of new staff members:
   – at performance levels 1–2
   – from different cultural backgrounds where English language is a slight issue.

## ELEMENT 3  Use specialist LLN support where required

There may be instances in which reasonable adjustments or other accommodations made are not sufficient. In these cases, LLN specialists may be able to provide further support.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon completion of this section you should be able to:

3.1  Review course demands and learner profile to determine if specialist LLN support is required

3.2  Access specialist LLN support where available

3.3  Integrate specialist LLN support into training or assessment practice where required

### Reviewing course demands and learner profiles

Determining a person's LLN skill level is often simply a matter of conducting a pre-enrolment interview and gauging their skills during this conversation. You can usually get a clear idea of people's skills just by talking to them. In Element 1, we looked at methods of determining the core skills of the participant. The evidence collected using these methods can help. Where some doubt arises, you may need to ask the prospective participant to complete an LLN test that further clarifies their skill levels. This may include reading, writing or maths tests at various levels, from elementary to more advanced. The outcome of these conversations and tests will assist you to determine a person's readiness to participate in the program or workplace.

If you find LLN skill levels are still below the standards required for the training program or workplace, you may wish to seek specialist support.

### Accessing specialist LLN support

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, a person may need greater levels of support than can be offered through normal processes.

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

- a *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 teammate or colleague is appointed to assist a worker in the performance of their daily tasks until they are able to function unassisted.

There are some excellent assistance programs on LLN matters:

- *state adult literacy and numeracy councils*:
    - Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council, http://valbec.org.au
    - NSW Adult Literacy and Numeracy Council, www.nswalnc.uts.edu.au
    - Queensland Council for Adult Literacy, www.qcal.org.au
- *the Department of Industry site, www.industry.gov.au (via the 'Skills' tab)*. You can access information on:
    - Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program
    - Australian Core Skills Framework
    - LiteracyNet
    - Core Skills for Work Development Framework
    - LLN Practitioners Scholarship Program
- *ACER (The Australian Council for Educational Research), www.acer.edu.au/tests/fsat*. ACER has been contracted by the Department of Industry to develop an interactive online Foundation Skills Assessment Tool (FSAT) to identify and measure an individual's foundation skill levels. The tool will be freely available to assist learners, job seekers, trainers, educators and employment services practitioners to assess their own or a client's foundation skill levels, and identify any gaps in skills and knowledge. It will use the theoretical underpinnings of the Australian Core Skills Framework (language, literacy and numeracy) and the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework (employability skills).

## Integrating specialist LLN support into training or assessment practice

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

- *determine what needs to be done*—for example, will the student 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, roles and responsibilities should be set into a formal strategy document with timeframes for the completion of each step. This ensures that the person's improvement program moves forward at a measured and monitored pace.

Having determined appropriate strategies, you can customise training programs to accommodate individual needs.

**TASK 3.5**

You have been asked to run a short training program for participants undertaking an ESL (English as a Second Language) course. Most of the participants come from South-East Asian backgrounds. Research and describe the resources and/or specialist support you could use or call upon to assist with your program.

## ELEMENT 4 Evaluate effectiveness of learning support and assessment strategies in addressing LLN requirements

Continuous improvement should be a fundamental strategy in any organisation that wishes to operate successfully and achieve the best possible outcomes for its clients.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES
**Upon completion of this section you should be able to:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.1 | Seek feedback on learning support provided and assessment strategies used |
| 4.2 | Evaluate learning support and assessment strategies used |
| 4.3 | Determine areas for improvement based on evaluation |

### Seek feedback on learning support provided and assessment strategies used

The first step in evaluating the success of a learning support program's performance is to gather feedback and generate discussion and debate on any issues arising. You can gain feedback using:

- *formal and/or informal performance appraisals with supervisors and managers*
- *formal and/or informal discussions and evaluation sessions with the program participants*
- *personal reflection*—thinking about the way you delivered the program, or particular work methods, and ways of improving
- *routine organisational methods for monitoring program delivery such as:*
  - surveys conducted with clients, the organisation and program participants. This is usually done by way of forms with a number of set questions. Clients can complete them while they are on the premises or they can be emailed to customers as an online form

– *focus sessions with colleagues or clients.* This type of feedback session produces better results for an organisation compared to written questionnaires. In a focus session, you talk to clients (or colleagues) directly. While you can ask the same questions as those on the written questionnaire, you can 'drill down' and get more in-depth and clear information than with the written questionnaire.

## Evaluating activities

In evaluating performance, fully discuss any issues relating to the tasks undertaken and identify opportunities for improvement. Discussion should revolve around the challenges experienced and all evaluation participants should be encouraged to be constructive and open in their opinions about the success (or failure) of the program and measures taken.

Questions to ask when evaluating the program may include (but are not limited to):

- What did you do well and how could this be repeated or improved upon?
- Did the program achieve what it set out to do?
- If not, why were the goals or objectives 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 service 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.

## Future planning

The evaluation process and the questions asked should provide the foundation for future planning and continuous improvement. A list of tasks should result. Areas identified as having worked well can still be improved upon. Areas identified as being problematic can be properly dissected and discussed in terms of how these issues can be resolved.

The cycle of innovation and improvement begins with tasks being allocated to relevant, qualified 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.

**Continuous improvement** is, essentially, an incremental strategy. It is based upon a belief that improvement occurs through a never-ending series of small changes. Even in the face of enormous, innovative improvement, there will always be the opportunity to take further, small-step changes.

Advantages of continuous improvement are:

- First, the recognition that processes must be improved before performance can be enhanced fosters a process-oriented thinking. Focusing on ways to constantly improve the process becomes part of a workplace movement in which those closest to the problem—usually front line staff— become involved and responsible in getting things right.
- Second, a continuous improvement culture can and does complement innovative leaps and breakthroughs. In order to have a long-lasting effect, leaps and breakthroughs need to be followed up with continuous improvement activities.

**TASK 3.6**

a. Explain the techniques and methods you have used in your work role to gather and evaluate feedback on your performance.

b. Describe what steps you took to make improvements, based on that feedback.

## ASSESSMENT TASK 3.1

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In terms of performance level indicators, how would you (in general) rate the following training candidates:
   a. a new entrant into the industry—they have just left school and have little knowledge of the industry
   b. a new entrant into the industry—they have been in the workforce for 15 years and have excellent work skills
   c. an existing staff member undertaking progression training with their organisation—they have been in their current role for five years but have not had much experience outside their own role.
2. Discuss how a combination of ACSF, employability skills and foundation skills can assist in the development of a workplace training program.
3. Describe the process you would use to:
   a. determine the skill levels required of a specific workplace task
   b. determine individual staff capabilities in completing task requirements.
4. Discuss a range of instructional strategies to address identified LLN needs of participants.
5. Describe the purpose of 'reasonable adjustment' and discuss how this could be used to accommodate LLN needs in assessing student competence.
6. Research a range of specialist services that can provide support to participants with LLN needs. Provide a list of these resources to your trainer, and keep a copy in your portfolio of useful information.

## ASSESSMENT TASK 3.2

# PROJECT

Based on the work you did in Tasks 3.3 and 3.4, where you listed the components of two workplace tasks, for each of the two tasks:

1. Research and customise (or develop) a learning resource for training programs at two levels of performance: Levels 1–2 and 4–5.
2. Discuss the instructional strategies that you would use for each of these programs.
3. Assume that a participant on one of the programs has a severe hearing impairment and you have a Japanese staff member with limited English language skills on the other.
   a. Discuss what specialist support you might require and give actual source information on these services.
   b. In addition to the specialist support services, discuss what other methods that you would use to accommodate these participants.
4. Develop at least two assessments for each of the programs and for each level, which take LLN issues into account.
5. Develop a feedback form to gather information evaluation information.
   a. After you have run the sessions (Assessment 3) hand out the form.
   b. Collate the collected information.
   c. Provide a report on the findings and include your recommendations for improvement.

## ASSESSMENT TASK 3.3

# TRAINING SESSION OBSERVATION STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prior to commencing the training session, run a number of short icebreakers designed to gain general information about your participants' LLN skills.
2. Using the work you did in Assessment task 3.2, you will now be required to deliver:
   a. one training session at performance level 1–2
   b. one training session aimed at performance level 4–5
3. You will also be required to use the assessment tools you developed to assess your session participants' competence.
4. Hand out the feedback form you developed in Assessment task 3.2.
5. Collate the results from the forms returned to you.
6. Evaluate the feedback received.
7. Write a short report outlining the findings and how you intend to make improvements, based on the feedback received.

*Note: This assessment may be combined with training and delivery assessments in Part 3: Delivery. Discuss this with your trainer.*

## COMPETENCY MAP

| Element | Performance criteria | Task | Assessment tasks | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 |
| **1.** Analyse LLN requirements | **1.1** Determine LLN skill requirements of the training specification<br>**1.2** Identify and analyse the LLN skill requirements essential to workplace performance<br>**1.3** Determine the LLN skills of the learner group from validated tools and other sources | 3.1, 3.3 | 1, 2, 3 | 1 | 1 |
| **2.** Select and use resources and strategies to address LLN skill requirements | **2.1** Identify resources to support LLN skill development<br>**2.2** Use learning and assessment materials to support identified LLN requirements, customising where necessary<br>**2.3** Apply learning support strategies in training delivery appropriate to LLN requirements and learner group<br>**2.4** Determine assessment strategies appropriate to LLN requirements and learner group | 3.2, 3.4 | 4, 5 | 1, 2, 4 | 2, 3 |
| **3.** Use specialist LLN support where required | **3.1** Review course demands and learner profile to determine if specialist LLN support is required<br>**3.2** Access specialist LLN support where available<br>**3.3** Integrate specialist LLN support into training or assessment practice where required | 3.5 | 6 | 3 | |
| **4.** Evaluate effectiveness of learning support and assessment strategies in addressing LLN requirements | **4.1** Seek feedback on learning support provided and assessment strategies used<br>**4.2** Evaluate learning support and assessment strategies used<br>**4.3** Determine areas for improvement based on evaluation | 3.6 | 7 | 5 | 4 |

| Performance evidence (of the ability to): | Tasks | Assessment tasks | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 |
| • use tools to identify the LLN skill requirements (reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy) of the training specification and/or assessment process relevant to vocational delivery | 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 | 1, 2, 3 | All | - |
| • use various sources to gather information on the current LLN skills of a learner group | 3.2, 3.3 | 1, 2, 3 | | 1 |
| • identify available sources of support to address at least two of the identified LLN skill needs of the learner group | | 2, 6 | | 2 |
| • customise and use at least two learning resources to address LLN requirements | 3.4 | | 1 | 2 |
| • select, use and review at least two instructional strategies that directly address the identified LLN needs of the learner group | 3.2 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| • use advice from specialist LLN practitioners to inform practice | | 4, 6 | 3 | 2 |
| • select, use and review at least two assessment strategies that cater for the identified LLN needs of the learner group | 3.2 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| • determine areas for improvement of own practice | 3.3 | | 5 | 4 |

| Knowledge evidence (to complete the unit requirements safely and effectively, the individual must): | Task | Assessment tasks | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 |
| • specify the critical LLN skills essential to workplace performance in an identified industry or sector | 3.1, 3.3 | 2, 3 | | - |
| • identify cultural and social sensitivities relevant to communicating with individuals who are identified as requiring LLN support | 3.3 | | 3 | All |
| • identify sources of resources, strategies and LLN support available in own training organisation and procedures for accessing them | 3.4 | 3, 6 | 1, 2, 4 | All |
| • explain techniques for evaluating own training and assessment practice | 3.6 | 7 | 5 | 4 |