

Building VET workforce capability
New language, literacy and numeracy
qualifications and units of competency in
TAE10

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The need for a range of solutions

- More than 4 million employed people (40% of the total workforce) and 360,000 unemployed people (60% of the unemployed population) do not have sufficiently high literacy skills to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work.
- Yet only a small percentage of the population who require assistance with their LLN, in either the working or unemployed categories, will end up in specialised LLN skills development programs (such as the LLNP or WELL programme).



Not all people needing assistance with LLN will present in a LLN specific program.

Some will present in mainstream VET.

The majority (in work) may not be picked up in any training activity at all.

Of those unemployed many will not present in education programs and will only receive support through services they access as part of social or community welfare.

The issue for the VET and broader education sectors

- LLN are key underpinning skills for technical, generic, employability and learning to learn skills at all levels of the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)
- They are part of all delivery, whether this is through Training Packages or through Adult Basic and General Education accredited courses.
- A number of key policy documents suggest the need for action - *Adult Literacy and Lifeskills survey data* (ABS, 2007) , *Skilling the Existing Workforce* (AiG, 2008), *COAG Skills and Workforce Development targets* (COAG, 2009), *Australian Workforce Futures* (Skills Australia, 2010)



Define Foundation skills as combination of LLN as defined by ACSF and Employability Skills (in absence of a definition).

Delivery mechanisms of Foundation Skills, in:

- Adult Community Education (ACE) Sector
- Commonwealth funded programs
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector

Emphasise that these are not context free skills – you always need them for a purpose

Emphasise they are not skills that are only needed at low levels or by 'equity groups' – Foundation skills required at all 5 levels of ACSF, found at all levels of AQF, part of a skills continuum.

Building VET workforce capability

We need a set of options that suit:

- Volunteers
- 'Frontline' community services and health workers
- Workplace trainers and assessors operating in enterprises
- Vocational trainers and assessors operating in RTOs (public and private) training vocational 'students'
- Vocational trainers and assessors in RTOs (public and private) delivering TAE Cert IV quals
- VET practitioners wanting to specialise in LLN
- LLN specialists wanting professional development or a change in context of provision



To cover all areas we need a set of options so that people can 'take on' the LLN capability building challenge

Part of a broader skills development plan

Currently:

- Community Services and Health ISC national skill set for LLN volunteers and
- a unit to be used in frontline worker qualifications e.g. welfare, housing, carer roles etc
- IBSA also investigating skill sets for workplace supervisors as part of Australian Industry Group LLN project.

Watch the broader policy space in 2011 with:

- Productivity Commission's study of the VET workforce
- National regulation and quality arrangements for the VET sector and the establishment of the National Standards Council (NSC) for VET
- Research by the Australian College of Educators on behalf of DEEWR on the quality of teaching in VET.



IBSA work is part of a number of current projects in this area and work underway to build units and skill sets for specific audiences now.

In 2011 three key policy 'events' will help shape the future of VET workforce capability and how we might regulate and 'measure' it.

Initial findings from Discussion Paper

- Agreement that 'LLN is an issue'
- Different solutions needed for different 'types' of VET practitioners - one size will not suit all
- Agreement that practical solutions are needed for trainers with work expertise and industry knowledge but no LLN training
- Division of culture and understandings around LLN



Discussion paper went out to broad VET practitioner audience

30 responded. More people who have a direct interest in LLN or delivering LLN qualifications responded than non-LLN specialists, so we have to take this into account when analysing the data.

But although there were contested views the points on the slide are certainly areas of agreement.

Respondents to the initial consultation

- **Larger dual sector RTOs and public RTOs**

Infrastructure and resources to deal with LLN. In practice, support may be inconsistent

- **Smaller public and private RTOs**

Limited internal capacity to support upskilling and learner needs.

- **Other miscellaneous respondents**

LLN has inadequate organisational recognition. The broader system cannot support LLN needs.



Respondents came from 3 distinct groups.

Large RTOs – who have LLN specialists but often systemic blockers such as ‘who delivers TAA/TAE’ get in the way of them becoming directly involved in Cert IV elective delivery.

Smaller RTOs – who do not have LLN specialists and find it difficult to access them. LLN specialists in public RTOs can’t be ‘hired out’ to private RTOs. Lack of innovative business models. This group do not deliver elective specifically because of these resourcing issues.

Others – who reported the range of ways that attention to LLN is not working. Including 2 respondents from 2 different States who report obtaining a DEWWR LLN scholarship and not being able to find a qualification on offer in their State!

Expertise grows over time

- *'Teaching and learning, including addressing literacy and numeracy skills, needs to be at the core of VET practice.'*

As the Certificate IV can only be considered as an entry level qualification, VET professionals - VET practitioners continue to gain knowledge and understanding in teaching and learning as early career VET professionals.

It is critical that they are supported with further training as their understanding of VET grows during this phase.'



Need to acknowledge what a Cert IV is – entry level and that practitioners develop their skills over time.

Attention to dealing with LLN needs to be addresses across all levels of TAE.

Supporting industry-based trainers

- The current Cert IV elective assumes an awareness of the impacts of LLN on learning and workplace competence – many would struggle with it
- Regional and Industry-specific RTOs struggle to access LLN specialists. If the Certificate IV unit became available tomorrow, the sector does not have capacity to deliver.

'Mandating may not solve the issue. It may lead to 'slapdash' delivery!'



Most voted for mandating the Certificate IV but only with good PD to follow it.

HOWEVER it is clear that for smaller or regional RTOs that deliver TAA or TAE that mandating the LLN unit would create chaos because they don't have the LLN specialists available to deliver it now and so this would be worse.

If you mandated the unit in core and could not control how well it was delivered it could be counter productive.

We need to build an awareness at this level.

Supporting RTO-based trainers

- Although LLN is recognised as an important issue and there are more LLN specialists available to access – effective LLN skills provision it still is hostage to a range of variables.
- LLN is addressed by ‘remediating’ – provision of LLN support, not as ‘skills building’ for all students as part of their VET course.
- LLN specialists are not invited to deliver the Cert IV elective by those responsible for delivery of the TAA/TAE Training Package – what would need to happen for LLN to become a whole of organisation commitment?
- What can be done to support the skills of the ‘experienced VET practitioner?’



Respondents from large RTOs had higher expectations.

Lots of frustration about the ‘bolted on’ nature of LLN specialists within the RTO. Remediation rather than built in attention to foundation skills in VET.

Need to create business models for ‘sharing of expertise’. Need for bridging of cultures – LLN specialists and VET practitioners.

But should these higher expectations be about what lies beyond Cert IV? Is the Diploma a better place to build capacity?

The dilemma

Viewpoints on increasing uptake of the Level 4 LLN unit broke clearly into two categories:

'The unit should be compulsory. People should not have 'soft options' or 'escape clauses'

'The 'big stick' approach is counterproductive'



VET practitioners who work in TAFE or larger private RTOs are entirely different in view from Enterprise or industry-specific trainers – one lot want to see mandated quals and the other lot do not.

Cert IV TAE

- **Strengthen the references to LLN in core units** (design delivery and assessment)
- **Strengthen 'critical aspects of evidence'** so that the issue must be dealt with in both delivery and assessment of TAE Cert IV
- **Develop a 'Guide to LLN within Cert IV TAE'** to make explicit the requirements and expectations at this level
- **Develop an 'awareness raising unit'** that outlines the impact of LLN on the learning process and on development of vocational and higher level communication and numeracy skills
- **Develop a using the ACSF as a diagnostic tool unit** (as an elective)



Instead of using the mandating of the elective at Cert IV level – maybe the list of possible interventions is better in the short term.

Diploma TAE- *The place to build capacity of the experienced VET practitioner*

- Include the *Cert IV TAELLN401A* as a **core unit** in the Diploma
- Design a **new core unit** for the core of the Diploma
- Keep **current Diploma 'theory unit'** as a elective
- Develop a **using the ACSF as a diagnostic tool** unit (as an elective)
- Increase number of VET practitioners who can deliver LLN unit content



Many see the Diploma as the place for deepening teaching skills and a place where practitioners want to spend time examining deeper pedagogy.

These options are not set in stone as yet but are suggestions for a way forward.

Vocational Graduate qualifications

We need more VET practitioners with a specialisation in LLN, who might come through:

- education pathways
- VET training pathways

'We need an approach that enables more people who are able to deliver the LLN content of IBSA Packages before we mandate the elective'



There was widespread agreement that we need to generate more specialists by implementing the VGC and VGD.

Also, IBSA qualifications are just part of the bigger picture. Higher Education may develop other options.

IBSA control over its own products.

Perhaps will look at a 3- 5 year picture and consider including more in Cert IV over time once capacity is raised within sector to deliver.

Who are the new VGC & VGD qualifications for?

Provide teaching and educational leadership skills for people working:

- in formal educational settings in the public or private sector (e.g. TAFE colleges, Private providers or ACE community houses),
- in informal education settings, social welfare and community-based settings (e.g. housing agencies, libraries, neighborhood houses, CFA fire sheds)
- in workplace settings (e.g. vocational/workplace trainers and assessors) and in correctional settings.



There are two university courses in adult LLN available at present (Griffith and UTS) and a number of State accredited courses (at VGC and Cert IV level).

The new VGC and VGD provide skills for a broad range of practitioners working in a range of delivery contexts.

Vocational Graduate Certificate in Adult LLN Practice

May provide:

- **credentials** for existing language, literacy and numeracy teachers and trainers who may not have specific language, literacy and numeracy qualifications
- **skills refreshers** for existing language, literacy and numeracy teachers and trainers who may need specific skills for changing job requirements (such as an upgrade of numeracy skills or delivery to CALD learners)
- **professional development** for existing language, literacy and numeracy teachers and trainers who may want to shift their delivery practice from classroom to the workplace or vice versa
- **upskilling for teachers** wanting to move into literacy and numeracy teaching in VET from the schools sector
- an opportunity for **teachers and trainers wanting to move from a vocational skill area into language, literacy and numeracy teaching** to gain underpinning knowledge and skills
- **effective strategies to support VET teachers and trainers** who want to better integrate language, literacy and numeracy skill development into vocational training with their practice



Diverse ways in which the units can be delivered according to needs of individuals.

e.g. Numeracy upskilling, Move from classroom based to WELL

The Vocational Graduate Diploma of LLN Leadership

May provide:

- **credentials for existing language, literacy and numeracy teachers** and trainers who are working as managers or learning leaders within their organisation **who may not have specific adult language, literacy and numeracy qualifications**
- **professional development opportunities** for existing language, literacy and numeracy teachers and trainers who may want **to shift their emphasis from delivery practice to research or resource development**
- **professional development opportunities** for teachers or trainers to develop skills in **formulation of workplace or community based learning programs**
- **career pathway opportunities** for policy makers, program coordinators, managers, HR managers, business consultants within a registered training organisation (RTO), **social welfare practitioners, or educational design or learning and development professionals** to develop their skills in adult language, literacy and numeracy



The flexibility issue is even more important here.

See User Guide for detail- available on IBSA site.

Where are we at?

- Place of electives in Cert IV and Diploma currently under review
- VGC and VGD are endorsed and various RTOs are in the process of placing them on scope or mapping them to current existing qualifications for 2011 delivery
- User Guide available on IBSA website
- IBSA to manage a DEEWR funded support materials project in 2011.
- Online RPL tool in development
- New rounds of DEEWR funded scholarships (for new practitioners) available (across 4 years)

